

## **Residents Council November 6-2009**

### **Topic: Gossip in the residential community**

#### **Before check-in, prelude, and formal council process**

1. Request was made for identification of resident who had requested the topic.
2. Inquiry was requested into how the Council form and theme is set by request of one resident.
3. Request was made to revise the evening's resident Circle agenda for evening to include residents' farewell appreciations round.

#### **Formal Council**

1. Some expressed difficulty knowing how to address the topic of gossip outside any context, without knowing the reason a council on gossip was requested.
2. Request to not use email to the resident community for making negative accusations about another; First response to a conflict is to engage in practice of direct communication, face-to-face.
3. Reminder that procedures for addressing conflict are already in place as set out in the Statement of Right Conduct.
4. A resident feels owed an apology for being accused of gossiping, but expects to never receive one.
5. Comments on what is and isn't gossip.
6. Personal experiences were offered about being a perpetrator of negative gossip.
7. Personal experiences were offered about being a target of negative gossip.
8. Personal experience was offered of the residential sangha as a refuge from an environment in which there was a "toxic" level of gossip.
9. Personal insights were offered about impact of self and community from gossiping.
10. Personal experience about being the target of negative gossip: Feeling disappointed by members of residential community. Feeling (1) unprotected from negative gossip, (2) that no one inquired or showed interest about this resident's well-being, and (3) some residents participated in expanding the chain of negative gossip.
11. Process of reactively taking sides to negative talk by and about another—creating, participating in polarization, the acceleration of that polarization.
12. Negative gossip destroys trust and the community itself.

## **Post-council Items**

Recommendations:

1. Nonviolent Communication workshop for Residents

## **Facilitators' Notes**

1. Each resident is empowered to offer up Residents Circle input for these gatherings: Council, business agenda, themes, topics, etc. We suggest that there be clarification regarding to whom, by whom, and how best to communicate this, and how to attend to the scheduling of agenda items.
2. Forward agenda of upcoming Residents' Circle to RC in a timely way.
3. Residents practice the Council intention of lean speech; to share together the attention to time constraints and number of people remaining to speak in a round in the Circle.
4. All participants are accountable to the Circle. Collectively, we hold the container and field for each other.

Next Residents Circle gathering: **Friday, January 29, 2010, 7-9:00 p.m.**

Facilitators: Kaizen and Lynda

A topic: Pet policy with input from Executive Circle and Buddha Hand Circle.

Mukei and Dokai

Residents Circle Co-facilitators

November 6, 2009