**Feathers**

An old proverb tells the story of a person who repeated a rumor about a neighbor. Soon, the whole community had heard the rumor. Later, the person who spread the gossip learned that the rumor was untrue. He was very sorry and went to an elder in the community who had a reputation for great wisdom to seek advice. The elder told him, “Go to your home and take a feather pillow outside. Rip it open and scatter the feathers, then return to me tomorrow.” The man did as the elder had instructed.

The following day, he visited the elder. The elder said, “Go collect the feathers you scattered yesterday and bring them back to me.” The man went home and searched for the feathers, but the wind had carried them all away. Returning to the elder, he admitted, “I could find none of the feathers I scattered yesterday.” “You see,” said the elder, “it‘s easy to scatter the feathers but impossible to get them back.” So it is with gossip; it doesn’t take much to spread hurtful words, but once you do, you can never completely undo the damage.

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