

What Are The Seven Conditions That Have to be Met to Speak Lashon Hara L'Toeles?

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Question: We mentioned that the Chofetz Chaim lists the seven conditions that one needs to adhere to in order to speak *Lashon Hara l'toeles*. Does one have to memorize these conditions and go through them in his mind before he ever speaks *Lashon Hara* for a *toeles*?

Answer: The seven conditions must be met when saying *Lashon Hara l'toeles*. However, I would say that when one is acting in good faith and has good intentions, he will almost always be meeting those conditions. For simplicity's sake, we can consolidate the seven conditions into four:

1. The speaker's intention must be to help the one he is relaying the information to, not to harm the one he is speaking about. For example, if workers in a store were rude to him, he is only allowed to relate this information to others if his intention is to protect others from a bad experience of shopping in that store. He cannot intend to take revenge on the store.
2. The speaker must cause as little harm as possible to the one being spoken about. If it is possible to achieve his goal without harming the one he is speaking about, he must do so. In the example of the store with the rude workers, if it would be possible to rectify the situation by speaking to the owner or manager, rather than spreading the information to other customers, he must do that.
3. In most cases, the speaker has to know that the information is true, and that relaying it will bring about a positive result. It cannot just be speculation.

If the *Lashon Hara* will lead someone to do something that is forbidden by halacha, it cannot be relayed. In the example of the store, if the workers are under contract and halachically cannot be fired at this time, yet the speaker knows that his *Lashon Hara* will cause the owner to transgress halacha and terminate them, he is not permitted to say it.