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When gossipmongers band into 'hate clubs'

By **BETTYJO BOUCHEY WORKBYTES**

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I'm not entirely sure what is so alluring about it, irresistible even. It's like a fender-bender on the Northway that distracts drivers and backs up traffic for hours. As moths are drawn to a flame, so are we drawn to negativity.

I'm not saying that everyone is, but the average citizen has fallen prey to the sweet aroma of a good rumor or a scandal here and there.

We like to build up idols only to yank them off their pedestals when they least expect it. We have become a judgmental society, without knowing the truth of a particular situation. When America is out for blood, by josh, we'll get it. Right now, there is probably a group of employees banding together at some company bad-mouthing their boss and plotting a way to overthrow a leader they consider unskilled, undeserving or just plain "un."

I have written articles about gossip before, but this article concerns the "hate clubs."

Yes, readers there is such a thing. I have only recently been introduced to this concept. These loosely organized groups don't call themselves hate clubs but their conversations and actions deserve such a label. These are the people who intentionally undermine authority, keep the rumor mill grinding and try to drag down those around them.

For most of us, no matter our style, actions or overtures will attract a hate club at some point in our careers. Having been in one myself when I was much younger, I believe the target of this honor is typically reserved for those in power.

So, Generation X, as you climb the ladder of success there will be two groups on the ground: Those rooting for you, waiting anxiously for the transforming change you will bring to the organization, and those who can't wait to see one of the rungs break beneath your weight; they may even have greased a couple in case you are skinny.

And, no, I'm not a hypocrite; I can recognize the tone of the beginning of this article and now purposefully turn the page. Here are my suggestions, friends, to help you through this awkward development in your career:

1) Stand and deliver. This is by far the best suggestion I have for you. Just keep plugging away with your head held high. Continue to prove to yourself and your manager why you have the position you do.

2) Kill 'em with kindness. This is something my mom always said to me when I was growing up and faced one teenage drama or another. Do not let your knowledge of their exclusive club membership affect how you treat them. Show them that unchecked emotions are not

part of your management style.

3) Forgettaboutit. To dwell on and dissect your every action in the presence of the club would only drive you insane. Consider these trials steps on the long road to Platinum Elite status.

It's likely that none of these things will make you feel better. No one takes pleasure in knowing he or she isn't liked, but you should try to find a way to move on, which is really the biggest piece of advice I can give you.

In some ways it's flattering to know that people actually dedicate time trying to drag you down -- it could be worse; they could be trying to kill you. Right?! My mom also used to say: What doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Be strong, Gen X.

NextGen Workbytes is written locally by and for Gen Xers learning the realities of the workplace. Bettyjo H. Bouchey is vice president of campus operations at Empire Education Corp. in Albany, and is involved with a local young professionals' group.