



# MIKEY D'S STORYTELLIN' BLOG

2020/09/26 BY ORIGMIKEYD

## How to Stay Friends & Influence People. A Strategy.

I scoured the topography of the internet, searching every metaphorical hill and valley for information to establish a social media strategy to counteract “the grandmother problem.” While not referring explicitly to the elderly, “the grandmother problem” can be defined as any close relatives and friends whom we care about sharing misinformation or disinformation on their social media.



Though both misinformation and disinformation are dubious, it is vital to note the distinction between them. The definition of misinformation is far broader than the one for disinformation.

## misinformation noun

Save Word

mis-in-for-ma-tion | \ ,mis-in-fər-mā-shən \

### Definition of *misinformation*

: incorrect or misleading information

// Indubitably, a great deal of paranoid and otherwise irresponsible *misinformation* about the Kennedy assassination has traveled far and sold well ...

— Ronnie Dugger

// A muddle of *misinformation* keeps clouding the debate over hormone-replacement therapy for women.

— Melinda Beck

// Each of these pieces of information (and *misinformation*) about me is sold for about two-fifths of a cent to advertisers, which then deliver me an Internet ad, send me a catalog or mail me a credit-card offer.

Merriamwebster.com defines **misinformation** as **“incorrect or misleading information.”**

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/misinformation>

The definition of disinformation is more specific and devious.

## disinformation noun

Save Word

dis-in-for-ma-tion | \ (d)is-in-fər-mā-shən \

### Definition of *disinformation*

: false information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth

Merriamwebster.com defines **disinformation** as **“false information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth.”**

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With the political climate so charged, a person might not think it is worth it to engage with friends or family on inaccurate posts or when someone deliberately posts disinformation.

If you choose to give their misinformative social media posts the time of day, a simple strategy might help prevent a falling out or unfriending.

## How Do You Talk to Friends and Family Who Share Misinformation?

As we gear up for an election cycle already plagued with mistruths, PEN America offers some tips on how to engage with friends and family who share misinformation online.

**Ms.** Ms. Magazine

In an enlightening article by Ms. Magazine headlined “How Do You Talk to Friends and Family Who Share Misinformation?”, the organization writing the piece, PenAmerica, shares their strategy about how to talk to family and friends about posting false info.

<https://pen.org/how-to-talk-to-friends-and-family-who-share-misinformation/>

PenAmerica's original information.

PenAmerica suggests five tips to help. 1. Try to verify that the content is misleading or false before you engage, 2. Do not always engage because doing so may boost their post, giving the unreliable post more visibility, 3. Do not embarrass the person publically; send an empathetic private message containing the correct information, 4. Don't escalate the situation, and 5. Be a resource for others.

## Here's How Fake News Works (and How the Inter...



Though many articles and videos give similar advice, a couple expanded upon the strategies PenAmerica laid out in their Ms. Magazine article.

## How false news can spread - Noah Tavlin



<https://www.kuow.org/stories/how-do-i-get-my-relative-to-stop-sharing-stuff-that-s-clearly-untrue-and-other-tips>

Writing for NPR associate KUOW.org, Kim Malcolm in her article “How do I get my relative to stop sharing stuff that’s clearly untrue?” and other tips” writes that people should know

the difference between misinformation and disinformation. She also advocates using the techniques developed by digital media analyst and Washington State University professor Mike Caulfield. His model is S.I.F.T.

S.I.F.T. stands for

**“STOP:** What is the source of information here? Often a quick check can answer that, but at other times you may need to dig deeper to verify some claims.

**INVESTIGATE THE SOURCE:** How knowledgeable is the group that’s behind this information? Do they have an agenda? What do other groups say about them? Start with Wikipedia and go from there.

**FIND TRUSTED COVERAGE:** Check out multiple sources to see what they say about the issue, and see if there is a consensus developing. Look for analysis or reporting you can trust.

**TRACE TO THE ORIGINAL:** Trace the quote or clip back to where it came from. See if there’s a longer version, the raw tape or transcript, so you can see what happened before and after, for fuller context. Check to see if a research paper linked in the story is presented accurately.”

<https://mitpress.mit.edu/blog/keep-calm-and-dont-spread-misinformation>

M.I.T.’s blog talks about another philosophy. In it, they discuss University of Southern Indiana’s Erin Gibson “Whoa. Wait. What?” approach. Though in the piece, she uses Whoa. Wait. What?” as steps we can take to think before we repost, I believe we, as social media users, can co-opt it to combat “the grandmother problem.”

The first step, “Whoa” asks a reading to look beyond a headline. If we get surprised when reading the post or content, we move on to the “Wait” phase.

The second step, “Wait” we pause and reflect before responding.

In the final step, “What?” we ask a couple of questions.

Relevant questions a person can ask are, “How does the person who wrote it want me to feel? How does it make me feel?”, “Is there really an action I can take, and what would be

the consequences of that action?”, “What does the person who wrote it want me to do, or what solution does it suggest? Does this agree with me?”

In this context, “Does this agree with me?” means is the info or content posted meant to take advantage of my opinions or feelings.

The above post from a Ruth Bader Ginsburg Facebook group I belong to shows another strategy a person can use when dealing with “the grandmother problem.” It talks about trying to change a Trump Voters’ mind.

The post’s transcript says:

“For those who think we cannot change Trump voter minds, here are some thoughts. The most important thing is to plant seeds of doubt. They are being told to believe only what they are told. One little thread of truth can unravel everything for them. When trying to make a point, only deal with the issue. Do not put down Trump, or them for voting for him. That will only make them defensive.

Word your response in a way that they will actually read it. Don’t say “ Trump is lying about children not being effected by covid!”. Instead say, “587,000 children have tested positive for covid”.

Use facts, preferably by a source they cannot dispute. Reuters, The Hill, etc. I have seen people stopped short because they can’t come back with “fake news”.

Don't expect instant gratification. It is hard for people to admit they are wrong. Plant the thread of doubt and walk away. Some of my most vocal Trump friends have become very quiet after those threads of doubt have taken hold. They are intelligent people, who will take those threads and have open eyes the next time they are told something that is incorrect.

Never say "I told you so." Respect people who come out of the fog. Respect is something we need to return to, and it can start with us.

"We can disagree without being disagreeable." RBG"

## Tweets by @davidmweissman

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David Weissman Retweeted



**Lindy Li**

@lindyli

GOP introduces constitutional amendment to ban flag-burning

But it's ok for Trump cultists to use the flag to assault police officers at the Capitol?

50m

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**David Weissman**

@davidmweissman

Wrong, defending seditious Republicans undermine the rule of law.

<https://twitter.com/MarshaBlackburn/status/1404870177095929866>

14m

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David Weissman Retweeted



**Brian Caskey**

@BrianCaskeyNC

Replying to @davidmweissman

Well, I can tell you that [@tedcruz](#) doesn't know how to hold a fishing rod. And you know that if he holds it like this, he can't possibly cast with a baitcasting reel, so somebody else is casting it for him in this photo op.

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[Embed](#)

[View on Twitter](#)

While viewing different sites to develop my strategy, I also thought it was crucial to find examples of people whose minds had changed because of social media discussions. A notable example of this is David Weissman. He was a former Trump supporter who engaged in a Twitter dialogue with Sarah Silverman.



## Sarah Silverman

Over time David Weissman and Sarah Silverman became Twitter friends. He credits her with changing his mind about supporting Trump.

Left: David Weissman after he left MAGA. Right: David Weissman in MAGA

<https://forward.com/scribe/402478/i-was-a-trump-troll/>

The link is a blog by David Weissman telling his story about changing his mind about Trump and the Right Wing.

The tweet David says changed his mind about Trump and Liberals.

Sometimes ignoring a person is the best way to stay friends. If you choose to engage with people online about sensitive topics, it is essential to have a strategy, so discussions remain civil. By uses all or some of these you can help improve or solve “the grandmother problem.”

 **UNCATEGORIZED**