

Avery Stanley

Professor Vertiz

Writing 109GS

May 10, 2024

Is Gossip Good for Me?: Why Female Gossip Podcasts are Actually Beneficial

Some may ask, “What’s better than a wild night out on the town with your girlfriends?”

This is a question I have thought of myself on many instances, but to which I answer: the morning after.¹ The morning after includes iced lattes, bagels with cream cheese gobbled onto them, and hours of hilarious material to debrief with my girlfriends. The gossip of the night is riveting, even through our hangover haze, and it makes the night out feel worth it, despite any minor headaches we may be battling. To anyone who has not experienced this phenomenon, I offer to you this solution: the gossip podcast.



Tana Mongeau (right) interview with Alex Cooper (left) (*Call Her Daddy*, Youtube).

¹ “A Post-Night-out Debrief Is Non-Negotiable: Here’s Why.” Her Campus, June 10, 2023. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://www.hercampus.com/school/u-mass-amherst/a-post-night-out-debrief-is-non-negotiable-heres-why/>.

² “Tana Mongeau Exposed (Full Interview).” YouTube, December 6, 2020. Accessed May 10, 2024.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13p_dTc_vzU.

From pillow parties to pillow talk, young women grow up with each other, sharing bits and pieces of their lives, both the innocent and scandalous. Girls talk of first kisses, sworn enemies, bad sex, and everything else under the sun with each other. But these relationships don't always come so easily.

Being a [“girl’s girl”](#)³ has recently become more popular in the mainstream media, but it hasn't always been that way. Pitted against one another constantly for looks, smarts, behavior, etc., who can even blame us for not feeling like a girl’s girl? We're taught and trained to compete with each other. How are you supposed to bond with someone you are trying to beat in all aspects of life? Well, and dare I say it, the answer may be something we are often shamed for. The art of gossip!

Girls are often told from a young age, “Don't be a gossip!” This sentiment is commonly used when expressing that you should not talk bad about someone behind their backs or tear down other women. While these sentiments are both admirable and true, that is not all that gossip is and can be. Certain kinds of gossip can be key in the formation of relationships between women based on shared common interests and engaging topics.

In order to understand why gossip can be good for you, it is important to analyze what gossip truly is. The [Cambridge Dictionary defines gossip](#) as, “Conversation or reports about other people's private lives that *might* be unkind, disapproving, or not true.”⁴ The key word here that I wish to emphasize is “might.” I like to believe there are many ways to gossip without being

³ McNeal, Stephanie. “Are You Woman Enough to Be a Girl’s Girl?” Glamour, April 12, 2024. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://www.glamour.com/story/are-you-woman-enough-to-be-a-girls-girl#:~:text=It's%20unclear%20why%20the%20term,the%20girl%20and%20girl%20culture>.

⁴ “Gossip” | Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/gossip>.

viscous or unkind, and that this type of gossiping can build better social relationships, particularly between women.

My belief is supported not just by my own experiences, but also by psychology studies which highlight the importance of gossip for mental health and relationship building. For example, a study done by the [Dartmouth COSAN Lab](#) asserts that,

“Gossip is largely a means of exchanging information with others and forming relationships. It therefore can build trust between people and initiate societal links that become stronger the more communication takes place.”⁵

This conclusion ultimately reveals that gossiping does not always need to take place in a negative context. It can be used as a healthy method of communication, particularly between women who use gossip as a way to connect with other women.

A new way to engage in non harmful gossiping is through popular female podcasts, such as *Call Her Daddy* by Alex Cooper and *CANCELLED* by Tana Mongeau and Brooke Schofield. The *shtick* of these podcasts is that they are hosted by female comedians who are known for their candid nature and reversal of common gender practices. They talk freely of their sexual exploits, as Cooper describes her own podcast as “a woman’s locker room conversation that *we should* be

⁵ MD, Faisal Tai. “The Potential Social Function of Gossip.” PsychPlus, June 19, 2023. Accessed May 10, 2024.

<https://psychplus.com/blog/the-potential-social-function-of-gossip/>.

able to have.”⁶ The podcast hosts are not afraid to bring up any [social media drama](#)⁷ that may be conspiring, even if it may be controversial, which is what inspired Mongeau naming her podcast *CANCELLED*. Mongeau and Schofield talk of nasty ex-boyfriends with no fear of name-dropping, and often speak of their experiences with friendship drama.



Call Her Daddy (Spotify)



CANCELLED (iHeartRadio)

These podcasts are an encapsulation of young female friendship in many different ways. The casual conversation feels almost like you are listening to a close girl-friend on a Facetime Call. It is hard not to become enthralled in their conversations and feel like you know the people, or “characters”, that they are speaking about.

⁶ Hibben, Aya. “Hibben: ‘Call Her Daddy’ Is the Opposite of Empowerment - the Daily Utah Chronicle.” The Daily Utah Chronicle - The University of Utah’s Independent Student Voice, October 7, 2021. Accessed May 10, 2024. <https://dailyutahchronicle.com/2021/10/07/hibben-call-her-daddy-empowerment/>.

⁷ “Call Her Daddy Podcast Drama Explained - A Timeline.” Accessed May 10, 2024. <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/lifestyle/a32628219/call-her-daddy-podcast-drama-timeline-explainer/>.

⁸ “Call Her Daddy.” iHeart. Accessed May 10, 2024. <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1139-call-her-daddy-29901383/>.

⁹ Tana Mongeau & Studio71. “Cancelled with Tana Mongeau.” Spotify. Accessed May 10, 2024. <https://open.spotify.com/show/3HaUSQyHM1LNcOZEsg4Be6>.

My point however, is not that you should have joy from watching others bashing exes online or airing out their dirty laundry. But rather, that it is important to have intimate conversations about difficult to discuss topics, and these podcasts allow for that. These topics that society has deemed as “taboo” for women to speak about are now becoming normalized in a healthy way, in large part due to gossip. These interactions can allow people to feel like a part of a group, making the building of female friendships to be that much easier.

Likewise, it is important to note that these podcasts have at times received criticism for being too provocative and risqué. The *Daily Utah Chronicle* clocks *Call Her Daddy* for its, “[frequent] use [of] raunchy and explicit language”, saying that its attempt to turn around social norms is “filled with internalized misogyny.”¹⁰ The *CANCELLED* podcast also receives similar criticism as it is often explicitly detailed and full of sexual innuendos. These criticisms, in my opinion, reek of slut-shaming and misogyny. Critics simply don’t feel comfortable with the way in which women detail their graphic sexual encounters in the same way men do. If critics feel this strongly about a podcast, imagine if they heard the conversations teenage girls have before bed during a sleepover.

Ultimately, these podcasts have valuable attributes that help women build relationships with one another. *The Harvard Crimson* says, “...watching “CANCELLED” conjures the same feeling in young women that sitting on the floor of a dorm room the morning after Halloween and dishing the dirt on the events of the previous evening would offer.”¹¹ From the perspective of

¹⁰ Hibben, Aya. “Hibben: ‘Call Her Daddy’ Is the Opposite of Empowerment - the Daily Utah Chronicle.” *The Daily Utah Chronicle - The University of Utah’s Independent Student Voice*, October 7, 2021. Accessed May 10, 2024. <https://dailyutahchronicle.com/2021/10/07/hibben-call-her-daddy-empowerment/>.

¹¹ “‘CANCELLED’ with Tana Mongeau: How a Vegas Party Girl Is Building the Hottest New Podcast: Arts: The Harvard Crimson.” *Arts | The Harvard Crimson*. Accessed May 10, 2024. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2023/12/12/tana-mongeau-cancelled-podcast-tanacon-girl-talk-party/>.

a college-aged woman, *The Harvard Crimson* has it spot on, as listening to these podcasts is synonymous with many of my female friendships. From deep, personal conversations to “wait-HOW deep was he?”, gossiping can be good for the soul and good for female friendship.



12

Female Friendships Example (Pinterest)

¹²“Lunch Outing!: Life Vision Board, Vision Board Images, Vision Board Photos.” Pinterest, January 6, 2024. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/1900024837573190/>.

Works Cited

- “A Post-Night-out Debrief Is Non-Negotiable: Here’s Why.” Her Campus, June 10, 2023. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://www.hercampus.com/school/u-mass-amherst/a-post-night-out-debrief-is-non-negotiable-heres-why/>.
- “Call Her Daddy Podcast Drama Explained - A Timeline.” Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/lifestyle/a32628219/call-her-daddy-podcast-drama-timeline-explainer/>.
- “Call Her Daddy.” iHeart. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1139-call-her-daddy-29901383/>.
- “‘CANCELLED’ with Tana Mongeau: How a Vegas Party Girl Is Building the Hottest New Podcast: Arts: The Harvard Crimson.” Arts | The Harvard Crimson. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2023/12/12/tana-mongeau-cancelled-podcast-tanacorn-girl-talk-party/>.
- “Gossip” | Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/gossip>.
- Hibben, Aya. “Hibben: ‘Call Her Daddy’ Is the Opposite of Empowerment - the Daily Utah Chronicle.” The Daily Utah Chronicle - The University of Utah’s Independent Student Voice, October 7, 2021. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://dailyutahchronicle.com/2021/10/07/hibben-call-her-daddy-empowerment/>.
- “Lunch Outing!: Life Vision Board, Vision Board Images, Vision Board Photos.” Pinterest, January 6, 2024. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/1900024837573190/>.
- McNeal, Stephanie. “Are You Woman Enough to Be a Girl’s Girl?” Glamour, April 12, 2024. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://www.glamour.com/story/are-you-woman-enough-to-be-a-girls-girl#:~:text=It's%20unclear%20why%20the%20term,the%20girl%20and%20girl%20culture>.
- MD, Faisal Tai. “The Potential Social Function of Gossip.” PsychPlus, June 19, 2023. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://psychplus.com/blog/the-potential-social-function-of-gossip/>.
- Tana Mongeau & Studio71. “Cancelled with Tana Mongeau.” Spotify. Accessed May 10, 2024.
<https://open.spotify.com/show/3HaUSQyHM1LNcOZEsG4Be6>.

“Tana Mongeau Exposed (Full Interview).” YouTube, December 6, 2020. Accessed May 10, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13p_dTc_vzU.