
Advice from Socrates.

The triple filter test: three questions to ask before you pass on what you've heard.

Advice from Socrates.

In Ancient Greece, Socrates was widely lauded for his wisdom. One day, the great philosopher came upon an acquaintance who ran up to him excitedly and said, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?"

"Wait a moment," Socrates replied. "Before you tell me, I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test.

"Before you talk to me about my student, let's take a moment to filter what you are going to say."

1

Truth

"The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?"

"No," the man said, "actually I just heard about it and..."

"All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not."

2

Goodness

"Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?"

"No, on the contrary..."

"So," Socrates continued, "you want to tell me something bad about him, even though you're not certain it's true?" The man shrugged, a little embarrassed.

3

Usefulness

Socrates continued. "You may still pass the test, because there is a third filter: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?"

"No, not really."

**"Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful,
why tell it to me at all?"**

The man was defeated and ashamed. This is the reason Socrates was a great philosopher, and held in such high esteem.

The triple filter test.

Before you pass on what you've heard, ask yourself three questions.

Is it true?
Is it good?
Is it useful?

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Don't seek to be a person of Importance.
Seek to be a person of Value.

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