

# BLUE

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## 3 EASY STEPS TO SELLING JUST ABOUT ANYTHING WITH SILENCE



by [Sharon Saylor](#) on October 25, 2012

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Do you spend a lot of time trying to sell to others without much success? If so, you'll probably want to look at this simple secret to look brilliant and sell just about anything to anyone. You might be saying, "Impossible... one simple secret?"

### **So, what is that secret?**

Talk less... a lot less. Even if you don't think you talk too much, most people are surprised to learn they are talking far more than they think they are. Just about everyone is uncomfortable with long silence and will fill the verbal void. Those inexperienced with the magic of silence will want to resolve the tension and make everything okay. Don't! During your silence is when the actual secrets to successful selling are revealed.

That's right; the less you talk, the more they share with you. Just like in science, as the universe

fills a vacuum, people will fill silence. Do a little experiment. Ask a question of someone, then wait. Wait in silence even after their answer. Notice the overwhelming urge to say something? Others will fill the verbal space you leave. The more space you leave, the more likely they are to tell you exactly what they are struggling with, what their challenges are and in turn, how you can be of service.

The key to successful selling is to use the Pareto 80/20 rule. The prospect should be talking a minimum of 80% of the time. So how do you get someone to talk that much? There are three specific ways to get people to open up and they work both in person and over the phone.

1.) Use intentional curiosity by asking questions with an open palm facing upward hand gesture. Interestingly, gestures can be heard as well as seen. Any movement changes the quality of your voice, so use an upward open palm gesture both in person and on the phone, it sends a “seeking information” message. Intentional curiosity questions cannot be answered with a yes or no and often sound like a short story. For example, “Sue, many of our clients <in the same situation> have seen <quantitative or qualitative> results by <give one or two benefits of your service or product>. Just for my understanding, what are you finding that works?”

2.) Once you have them sharing, to appear you are holding your part of the conversation, your silence isn’t really silent; actively listen with verbal pauses. While listening, nonverbally acknowledge that you are paying attention by nodding, smiling when appropriate and not fidgeting, including not looking at your watch or phone. Use simple verbal cues that you are listening such as “I see,” “Uh-huh,” and “Tell me more.”

3.) Stay present in the moment. Our brain gets bored easily and hijacked often. Staying present is often the hardest of the three skills to do. Set an intention to stay externally focused by listening for, and picking out, key words or phrases from what the person says. Practice carefully listening and observing more while analyzing and judging less.

The number one challenge I see people have when trying to stay present is that they get their emotions ramped up at the same pace or accelerating past those of the prospective customer. The prospect’s anxiety of being “sold” often sets into motion our own anxiety we have around selling someone. Yours and the prospect’s emotions are important to pay attention to. This emotional ramping up or anxiety can take several forms, including getting so excited and thinking, “They like me, they really like me!” or so utterly depressed when things are going poorly that you begin to sound needy or desperate. Our anxiety can also be due to a fear of a person bringing up something personal or emotional. That is an irrational fear, they wouldn’t have mentioned it if they didn’t want to talk about it.

**Silence is the essential, yet most often overlooked key to selling.**

Talking less gives you the opportunity to maintain emotional control by breathing fully and deeply. Breathing completely relaxes the body and gets extra oxygen to the brain, so you do not allow yourself to get overly excited, drawn down by anxiety or lost in an inner dialogue.

When you talk less, it also helps you gain clarity about your prospect's challenges and expectations, since they are talking over 80% of the time. Talking less helps you distinguish between your assumptions about what they want and need and what they actually want and need.

The insights gained by remaining silent will help you truly solve their problem.

As a professional, it is your job to help your prospect through that "being sold" anxiety and into that place of excitement where they know that they have finally solved their problem. This is accomplished by utilizing the three steps to respectful listening above. Once you can know exactly what problem they have, you can determine if you have the answer for them or can refer them to a source that does.

Either way you look brilliant and they appreciate that someone finally understands them.

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