

TAKE THE 80/20 challenge to become a better communicator!

Why take the challenge? Let's work together to improve our communication skills. To what end? To clearly ask for what you need. To break through some intimacy roadblocks. To better understand your partners – personal and business. To increase your bottom-line by making sales to those who need what you have You name it.

I have a friend and colleague who decided to experiment with the way she approached business events and social gatherings. She just decided to ask questions – clarifying, probing – to show real interest in the person she was talking to. The response? “*You are such a great communicator*”. She's tried this technique a number of times with similar response. This does not mean she gets her needs met or she establishes the relationships she was looking for – but what a great exercise to try. People love that you are interested in them. Just don't forget about your needs. 😊 What is your goal in the conversation?

And, let's face it, most of us do not meet the 80/20 standards of listening/speaking – active listening 80%; talking 20%. Here's the deal. Set a goal for yourself. For this month, in the following circumstances I am going to Write it down (and don't forget to take the **Communications Self-Assessment** before you begin (visit the 80/20 Challenge blog entry from _____ date:

1. Take every opportunity to:

- **If you are a talker** – admit it. Now try to close your mouth altogether – even be a passive listener and see how it feels.

If you are talker – speak but only ask questions, show you understand what they just said, or that you agree with a nod or a “interesting” or “ah ha”. Respond briefly if someone asks you a question and then ask them another.

- **If you are shy and quiet**, set a goal to say something to one person, ask a question in a meeting, push yourself to offer an opinion

2. Each time you have challenged yourself by stepping out of your comfort zone write down how you felt, what results did you get, where there any surprises. Then set the next goal to get close to the 80/20 mark of a good communicator.

3. To practice your skills, **role play** with your friends. Pick real situations that you need help with. Ask for feedback.

4. Mid-way through the timeline you have set, **assess how you are doing**....e-mail me your progress at Janet@HandTales.com.

5. At the end, if something has shifted can you describe it? What kind of results are you getting? What else do you need to practice?

This isn't easy but you will reap the rewards many fold!