

PLEASE LISTEN

When I ask you to **listen** to me
and you start giving advice
You really have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way,
my feelings feel trampled upon.

When I ask you to listen to me
and you seem intent on solving my problems,
you are failing me. Just listen.

All I ask is that you **listen**, please!
Don't **talk** or **do**,
just hear me.

Advice is cheap.
A quarter gets me both Dear Abbey and Billy Graham
in the same newspaper, and I can do that for myself.
I'm not helpless.
Maybe discouraged and faltering,
but not helpless.

Please try to understand.
When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself,
rather than helping, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.

When you accept as a simple fact that I really do feel the way I say I feel,
no matter how irrational, then I can conserve my precious energy.
I then have the energy to get about this business
of understanding what's behind my irrational feelings.

And when that's clear, the answers become obvious
and the advice becomes unnecessary.
I can make sense of my irrational feelings
when I begin to understand what's behind them.
So please listen and just hear me.

And if you want to or need to talk,
wait for your turn, and I'll **listen** to you.