

## Listening

Since 1980, EveryStep's Amanda the Panda program has delivered love and caring through innovative services such as weekend grief camps, support groups, fun days, school visits and holiday support to inspire hope and healing after the death of a loved one. For more information, visit everystep.org

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Robert Roughton, M.D.

When I ask you to listen to me And you start giving advice, you 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, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me
And you feel you have to do something to solve my problem you have failed me, strange
as that may seem

Listen! All I asked was that you listen-Not to talk or do. Just hear me.

Advice is cheap. A quarter will get you both, Dear Abby And Bill Graham in the same newspaper.

And I can do for myself. I'm not helpless. Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me

That I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.

But when you accept as a simple fact
That I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and can get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling.

And when that's clear,
The answers are obvious, and I don't need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense When we understand what's behind them.

Perhaps that's why prayer works, sometimes, for people-Because God is mute and He/She doesn't give advice or try to fix things.

So please listen and just hear me.
And if you want to talk,
Wait a minute for your turn,
And I'll listen to you.