

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.*

