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ON LISTENING

(by Ralph Roughton)

WHEN I ask you to listen to me and you start by 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 it seems.

LISTEN! All I ask is that you listen, not talk or do... just hear me.

WHEN you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.

AND I CAN DO FOR MYSELF, I'm not helpless; maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

But when you accept as simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and 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 some people...because God is mute, and He or She doesn't give advice or try to fix things. God just listens and lets you work it out yourself.

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.

Chapter Nine – 12 Step for Couples in Recovery
Bedford Village – Presbyterian Church on the Green
Sunday evenings 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.