



Silence is sometimes the best answer

Trying to protect our children is a natural instinct for parents but knowing when to just be there and listen to them, without judgement, is a skill.



The first duty of love is to listen

*When I ask you to listen to me and you give me advice,
You have not heard what I asked of you.*

*When I ask you to listen and you tell me why I shouldn't feel as I do,
You are trampling on my feelings.*

*When I ask you to listen and you feel you have to find solutions to my problems,
I feel let down, strange as it may seem.*

Please listen.

All I ask is that you listen not talk or do or advise.

Just LISTEN.

Advice is cheap. I can get that anywhere.

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 reinforce my weaknesses.*

When you accept as a simple fact that I feel what I feel however irrational it may sound to you

Then I can quit trying to convince you and I can explore this irrational feeling.

When that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.

My irrational fears make sense when I can discover what's behind them.

If you listen and understand, I can work things out for myself.

So I ask again.

Just listen.

And if you too have something to say, be patient,

Then I'll listen to you.

Source unknown

When children are courageous and want to share their problems:

- as the poem says – listen to your child
- acknowledge the feelings they are experiencing
- ask your child how they are going to manage the problem – don't solve it for them
- ask your child if they want help from you or someone else, and how that help can be given
- tell your child that you believe in their ability to work through this problem and you are there if they need you
- keep checking in with your child to see if they have solved their problem or want to talk about it again
- when things have been resolved, encourage your child to look back and identify what they have learnt from managing their problems – what worked, what didn't work, what they can keep in their 'tool kit' and use in the future.