

## LEARNING TO LISTEN

Story by Andrew Friddle

Jen was horribly stubborn and set in her ways. She liked to do things her way and refused to even listen to other ideas. Her way was the way to do it, and any suggestions about other ways of doing things were just talk that slowed her down.

The problem was, Jen wasn't always right. This way of thinking she had would have been great if she was always doing things the best way, but she was often making things harder on herself. Even so, she didn't want to listen to anyone around her.

When her father saw her doing her algebra homework the hard and slow way, he cleared his throat and pointed out a step she could change to make things easier. "I don't want advice, Dad." He shook his head and walked off, leaving her to her devices. It took her an extra hour to do her homework, though.

When her best friend Cindy saw her talking to the wrong kind of people at the mall, she walked over to say something. Very carefully, her friend gave her a few secret signals to let her know not to trust these people, but Jen pointedly ignored her, saying, "I don't want advice." When they ran off with her purse ten minutes later, Cindy didn't feel too badly about it.

Her track coach saw something in her running style that was making her slower and making it harder on her knees. When she mentioned it to Jen – or tried to at least – Jen wound her off irritatedly. "I don't want advice, coach." That night she had to ice her knees, because they ached.

Jen was a headstrong person. Her mother understood her very well. She knew she wouldn't listen, but knew she might read. She left a note on Jen's pillow that night. "It's not bad to do your own thing, but sometimes it's good to listen to those who might know better."

After that, Jen started to at least try to listen to others' advice, but it was very hard to let herself change her mind once she'd started something. So, she always asked for

