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I Used to Dwell

by Miriam Silver

I used to dwell on my customer's faith in me, although I've never pretended to set people right I do see they are often wrong. Of course my living does depend on them, I never offer advice or criticism.

This business has filled my life since the children left home, given me a purpose which in spite of having to do everything myself, wash, blow dry, colourings, eyebrows and even nails sometimes, I do enjoy seeing the end result and my customers' satisfaction. Finding another assistant would solve some of my problems. Must try asking around.

A great deal of my work involves being used as a listening service, almost a confessional for my ladies. They open up the moment they're in that chair assured of privacy in my perspex covered cubicles, knowing I'm good at keeping secrets.

Mrs. B. is hard of hearing, refuses to wear a hearing aid does rather shout. Her weekly visit is very important now she's on her own. A little bit of a gossip about the goings-on in our village, harmless really but gives her something to do.

Mrs. C. is one of my youngest customers, loves to go on about her generous husband, doesn't realise jewellery is a cover up for all his shenanigans, even made a suggestive move towards me one day when he came to collect her.

Miss E. is a quiet one, devoted to her late mother, about whom she used to talk endlessly. She's just had me give her a new style and colour, which makes her look so much younger. According to Mrs. B. she's found a fella, wonder where from? I'm really glad for her.

Mrs. F. my local councillor comes when she wants to impress at special meetings. She's good for the inside stuff about our council tax, the latest in schools, apparently they are to make their toilets unisex at great expense and opposition especially from the mothers' of the girls.

Mrs. G. who is on her own now, seems to have lost interest in baking, used to bring us homemade cakes, I think she's lost interest in life since her husband died. Her family want her to move near them, but she doesn't want to leave this place, making herself quite ill with worry.

They are all so much part of my life, each in their way lovely people. Just hope the tests don't show anything positive, I'd miss them so much if I had to close up.