

What to do in the doctor's waiting room

By Charlene Wexler

No phone, no book, no iPad. What was I going to do for the next hour while my husband saw the eye doctor?

The office was empty, except for the young girl at the front desk who had her head buried in the computer. The room was small, the chair was hard, and no other patients were around with whom to make conversation. Raindrops pounded against the window panes, so a walk outside was out of the question.

While I was contemplating what to do, the door to the office opened and in walked a tall, thin, gray-haired gentleman with a twinkle in his steel blue eyes. He turned towards me and said, "Mind if I sit next to you, pretty lady? I'm early for my appointment."

I looked up and smiled. "I would welcome the company," I said.

He barely made it into the chair when the desk girl woke up.

"Richard, what are you doing here?" she asked. "Yes, you are early. Your appointment is for next week."

He looked at her, threw his arms out, nodded, and said, "It is tough getting old. This happens to me all the time."

I laughed, and said, "You are so right."

"You don't know the half of it," he replied. "You're still a youngster."

"I'm seventy-three," I answered.

"I told you, you are a youngster," Richard said. "I'm eighty-four."

The desk girl came over and said to Richard, "We can't see you today because your insurance won't pay until next week."

"My ride won't be back for an hour," he sighed. With a nod and a smile towards me he said, "Well pretty lady, either you can take me for a beer or hear my story."

"I'm waiting for my husband, so I'd better hear your story," I responded.

Richard had quite a story. He grew up on a farm, joined the service, and ended up as a Green Beret, and ultimately a spy for the CIA, traveling all over the world. In between all that he found time to raise ten children, bury one wife, and marry another.

Had I been engrossed in technical devices, I would have missed this very special human contact adventure.

And in a younger day I would have been flattered by this special man's attention. Today it just felt good to find another senior citizen who could still laugh at the pitfalls of getting old.