

## Feature

# Breakdown at Delilah's Day Spa | WT Online

By Carol G. Stratton

It was a perfect June afternoon and I sat contentedly waiting for my talented hairdresser to turn my mousy brown hair to bombshell blonde. Backed up in her schedule, San put me in a chair to bleach and then started in with the client next to me.

“How are you doing?” she asked Linda.

“I can’t say,” Linda replied loudly. “There are too many people here I don’t know.”

Having stated her need for privacy, she proceeded to contradict herself as the truth spilled out. Maybe the makeup-less faces around her offered a captive audience? I don’t know the reason, but I saw her wind up for a no-holds-barred monologue.

“I got laid off from my job,” she announced in a stage voice that would make Shakespeare proud. One moment she was a traveling executive in charge of her company’s European subsidiaries. The next moment she was cleaning out her desk and applying for unemployment.

The more she talked, the more distressed she sounded. She’d put on 20 pounds and got drunk on a bottle of wine some guy she hardly knew brought over. The guy she did like never called.

“There are no good guys around,” she wailed. “I’m 36 years old and I’m running out of time to have a baby. Maybe I’ll become a nun.” Open-jawed, we all watched the unfolding drama. I didn’t know whether to laugh or be quiet.

Finally I motioned for her to sit by me while she had a pause in her beauty procedure. I listened to her continuing litany, periodically pushing up my dryer helmet to hear.

“Sounds like you need a supportive church. You ought to try mine. It’s really friendly.”

“I can’t. I’m Catholic,” she said.

“We take Catholics,” I shouted over the roar of the dryer.

“Church is OK, but what I really want is a man.”

“There are still good men out there but you’ll have to trust God to bring him to you.” *Boy*, I thought, *that sounds old-fashioned*. I checked my lap to see if I was wearing an apron. Who did I think I was? Everyone’s mother? I sensed several pairs of eyes scrutinizing me. Why didn’t I just get a microphone and ask for an altar call. *Oh well, up to my knees in counseling; might as well dive all the way in.*

“What you need is a relationship with God.” I decided to go the blunt route.

Suddenly, the atmosphere in the spa changed. Linda’s face softened and I could sense God’s peace upon us.

“I’ll pray for you,” I told her. Relief filled her eyes as we exchanged hugs and phone numbers. I admired Linda’s directness. She advertised a loud and public “help wanted” and God read her ad. He got my attention and said, “Get talking.” I didn’t expect to become a hair-salon counselor but the Lord set the appointment that day.

I called Linda a week or two later. Things had calmed down and she told me she had been praying. She had also applied for a couple of jobs that week. I rejoiced. Although I didn’t lead her to the Lord, I pointed her in the right direction. I’m probably one link in a long chain of events.

People don’t plan their breakdowns. Sometimes they just happen in the most unusual places when the emotional pain becomes unbearable. As believers, we need to stay alert for those chances to tell others about our loving God. I know I have missed many opportunities. I wish I could say I have always been faithful. In past times, my embarrassment shushed my testimony. But that day in Delilah’s, I forged out of my comfort zone. Way out of it. I learned something. Showing up when I least expect it, that still small voice is louder than ten cranked-up hair dryers on a summer’s day.

## Here are six tips to develop your people-helping style.

- Be aware of those around you who may be hurting.
- Open the door for conversation with open-ended remarks. (“You sound like you’re having a tough day.”)
- Listen without interrupting.
- Ask if you can pray with them. Most people in a desperate state are glad for the prayer.
- Invite them to church, or just out for coffee.
- Follow up with a phone call. It doesn’t have to be long but it’s important to let your new friend know you are thinking of her.