

# Being Positive

by

Tim Kenny

I don't know why I bother. I really don't. I get here for the appointed times and I always have to wait. Now - when I'm late, that's a different story. Last week I was held up in Farnham Street. Arrived here 15 minutes late. And what did they say at reception? 'Mr. Swanson will be unable to see you today as you've missed your appointment'. Not even a 'sorry'. The meeting was important. The results of my test. And no, I couldn't have them over the phone. Mr. Swanson wanted to discuss them personally. So I'm on time today. 1030. I double checked. It's now 1043. He'll call me soon, smiling and gushing in that overweening manner he has. "Hello Jen," he'll say. No one ever called me Jen except my late husbands. I like to be called Jenny or Mrs. Jennifer Watson. I don't reply to him by saying, 'Good Morning George or Godfrey or whatever 'G' stands for in Mr. G. Swanson. I want to say something to him about this informality. I know it's designed to make me feel comfortable. But it doesn't. I like distance with people I do not know. Then again I have more pressing things on my mind so I bite my lip and settle for what is.

My friend Angela, who used to be a theatre sister, told me the only difference between God and a hospital consultant is that God doesn't think he's a hospital consultant. Angela cheers me up no end but she can't be here to hold my hand. Her husband's not well. She hugged me and said she was sure that everything would be alright. Why do people say that? How can they be? Sure, I mean. Not even Angela. They say it to make themselves feel better. But you can't share worry. Let no one tell you otherwise. In the end you're alone - like now - unable to distract your thoughts by reading the magazines that litter the table. One is already publishing next season's recipes. I press my fingers into my palm. My anxiety is building up like silt on an ocean shelf. I stare at the clock. The second hand trembles then jumps. It's 1045 and 50 seconds, 51, 52...tremble, jump, tremble, jump, tremble, jump.