

A young boy was playing with the toys in the waiting room of his father's optometry office. Since the death of his mother, he found himself spending much of his spare time there. The patrons who were waiting to be fitted for glasses enjoyed watching the boy impersonate his father.

One day, a partially blind man came into the office. He made his way over to one of the chairs using a cane and his memory. He had made this trip several times before. The little boy went over to him and asked him if he could help (something he had seen his father say). The blind man said, "I don't know. Can you make me see again?" The boy, full of confidence, said "Sure, I will go get you a pair of glasses." Before the man could even think to explain, the boy ran over to one of the displays and returned with a pair of reading glasses. The boy said, "Try this one. I think this will help." The man took off his dark shades and put on the reading glasses the boy had given him. Then he said, "Well, I can't say that it got any worse." The man kept the glasses on even after his name was called.

Every year, the blind man returned to the office and was fitted for a new pair of glasses by the young boy. The boy gave him large framed women's glasses, bifocals, trifocals, and even a pair of prescription diver's goggles once. Each time, the blind man would comment to the other patrons, "I don't know why I even bother going in to the father. The son does a everything I need." Even though the man had gone totally blind, he kept coming back to the optometrist year after year. About the time the boy entered middle school, he began to find other things to do than play in his father's office. Time marched on at such a steady pace that the boy found himself about to enter college. The day before he left, he went back to his father's office to get his eyes checked before going. In passing by the display rack, he remembered the moments he shared with the blind man when he was young. He asked his father what ever happened to the old blind man. His father told him that he ended up in the nursing home downtown.

The young man decided to go and visit the old man before he had to go to college. When he arrived and let the front desk know who he was visiting, he began to feel nervous. Would the old man remember who he was? When he knocked, a familiar voice came from within. When he entered, he noticed a book shelf on which the old man stored every pair of glasses he had ever given him. The young man could feel tears welling up inside him. He had not realized the old man had purchased every pair of glasses that were prescribed to him. He knew how expensive all of those glasses were, and yet the old man bought them. The young man asked, "I can't believe you bought all the glasses I handed you when I was a boy. You had to have known they would do nothing to restore your sight."

The old man explained that he had kept wearing the first pair the boy ever gave him because he forgot he even had them on. To him, they felt just like his shaded glasses. He first realized the mistake when a stranger complimented him on his nice new glasses. He got many similar compliments and sometimes laughter about his new glasses. This was not common, since most folks don't want to draw attention to a man's blindness and so most didn't say anything at all. The old man had begun to anticipate going back and getting a new pair from the boy.

"Each year, I came back to see what new pair of glasses your innocence would hand me next", the old man explained. "It was not until you stopped being at the office that I realized what you had been giving me all those years. When you asked me how you could help me, I asked you to help me see. If a grown man would have handed me a pair of glasses, I would have kicked him in the teeth. But at that moment and with all sincerity, you were trying to help me see. Over time, I did. I began to see that there really was hope and purpose in this world. That was something I had greatly struggled with throughout the years I was going blind."

The two men spent the rest of that afternoon talking and swapping funny stories until it was time to go home. The young man went off to college the next day. He did not really think about the blind man much until he got a phone call from his father telling him of the news. The young man was unable to attend the funeral service for the man, but his father sent him the article in the newspaper. The young man both laughed and wept when he read the headline:

*Attendants Find Blind Man Wearing Trifocals.*