

THE FACE VALUE OF A SMILE

BY MICHAEL I. BARR, D.D.S.



A SMILE costs nothing but gives much. It enriches those who receive without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he cannot get along without it and none is so poor that he cannot be made rich by it. Yet a smile cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away. Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile so much as he who has no more to give.—*based on the writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*

According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, cosmetic surgical and non-surgical procedures have increased 304 percent in the last five years. The greatest increases were among non-surgical procedures, with the most popular being Botox® injections.

Advertisements for “Botox Parties” have been appearing in a variety of media. Recently, there was an hour-long prime time TV show about cosmetic surgery. It featured a woman who had spent \$100,000 on cosmetic surgeries because she was told Wall Street wouldn’t hire a woman older than 40. She got the job.

What does this have to do with dentistry? Certainly it’s an indicator of the value placed on appearance by our American culture. While our looks are obviously important, I believe a person’s smile is the most prominent physical feature. Many social surveys have indicated that “bad teeth” is a top turn-off for those seeking a mate. The act of smiling may be the single most communicative expression humans possess. Try this: When you approach a stranger in a public area and make eye contact, simply smile. Nothing more. Almost invariably, the stranger will smile back. A few might think you’re crazy! A genuine, relaxed smile makes anyone instantly more attractive. A smile can even disarm the most irritated individual. A smile is powerful.

Today’s dentistry enables highly trained and progressive dentists to transform smiles challenged with unattractive teeth. In many cases it can take as little as two visits. The most significant developments in Cosmetic Dentistry are porcelain veneers and all-ceramic crowns (no metal). The advent of these technologies has enabled dentists to create stunning smiles with more conservative procedures. Furthermore, they can create smiles that look natural. I have often heard patients exclaim their objections to “caps” because they’ve seen some on their friends and they “look terrible!” They assume that these “caps” are the standard. And they know they don’t want

that look. I don’t blame them. The benchmark of excellent cosmetic dentistry is results that look as if the patient was born with a gorgeous smile. A cosmetically restored smile should be undetectable. Often, after a smile makeover, patients comment that their friends, coworkers, and family suspect weight loss, a new hairstyle, a tan, and even a face-lift! They simply can’t figure out why these patients look so good!

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A smile makeover is the ultimate self-indulgence. At Palm Beach Smiles, our greatest joy is providing dentistry people want. We have just moved into an incredible new office designed specifically to create a relaxing atmosphere and cater to our patients’ needs. ❖

—*Michael I. Barr, D.D.S. is a graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry and has been in practice in South Florida since 1994. Palm Beach Smiles is located at Boynton Beach Blvd. and I-95. You can contact us at 561-736-2377 To learn more about us, visit our Web site www.palmbeach-smiles.com. Check out the “Before & After” photos and imagine having your own “Palm Beach Smile!”*