

YOUR SMILE

Often times, a smile is the first feature you will notice about someone. It is a very important part of one's physical appearance. When I think of people such as George Clooney or Christie Brinkley, I have a vivid picture of their smiles in my mind. I also think about how healthy and youthful they look, even though one of them is well into his forties and the other into her fifties.

Whether we realize it or not, we are also in the public eye, whether we are in a social situation or seeking a better position with an employer. A pleasing smile will give us more self-confidence. Studies on appearances have shown that you can have wonderful skills and abilities, but a poor smile with crooked or perhaps discolored teeth will detract from your efforts. Conversely, those same studies have shown that with only fair skills, a good appearance will greatly improve your chances for that sale or promotion.

If you were to ask people what makes a beautiful smile, most would respond that it would be straight, white teeth. However, to a highly trained and skilled dentist, much more is involved. The length and width of teeth, the way they are angled, the subtle characterizations of the teeth as well as the contours of the gums are all critical factors that must be taken into consideration.

A good example of this was when a patient came to my office after recently having another dentist place crowns and veneers on his four front teeth. The patient was not happy with the appearance of the restorations. The patient's dentist said that nothing more could be done, so he came to me for a consultation.

There was one tooth in particular on that patient that was not properly contoured and looked too full from a face-on view. Just by replacing that one restoration with the proper contours and alignment made the difference in his smile and a happy patient walked out of my office. To avoid the problems this patient had, it is important that you choose a skilled dentist, as well as one who will take the time to listen to his or her patient's concerns.

If you are not satisfied with your smile, there are a variety of procedures for you to consider to restore and improve the appearance of your teeth. Heavily filled, severely broken or worn teeth, as well as older, unsightly crowns can be brought back to life utilizing the most current technology with metal-free porcelain crowns. Missing teeth can be filled in with non-removable porcelain bridges or single tooth implant restorations. Whether your teeth are misshaped, discolored, misaligned, or your teeth have spaces, they can be vastly improved with porcelain veneers. Lastly, teeth that are darker than what you would prefer can be whitened.

Restoring your smile is one of the best investments in yourself that you can make. It will not only change how you feel about yourself, but it will make you feel and look younger. I have personally had many patients tell me that others see them as being more youthful and energetic even if they haven't made other lifestyle changes. A smile makeover is an

investment that you “wear” and “use” 24 hours a day, every day. How many investments can you say that about?