



How Could I Have Known?

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When I became a dentist, I didn't know my profession would allow me the privilege of changing so many lives. Today, the connection between dental health and overall health and wellbeing has become clearer than ever.

On the physical side, one of the earliest signs of diabetes is periodontal (gum & bone) disease. A strong connection is suggested between heart disease, stroke, preterm, low weight babies and gum disease. Poor oral care may also contribute to oral cancer, which kills more people annually than cervical or skin cancer. Helping a patient with proper treatment has on several occasions allowed me to save or enhance the quality of his or her life.

In addition to the physical aspects, the connection between a person's smile and his or her emotional wellbeing has also been well documented. Yes, mental health and dental health are truly connected. It has been said, "The smile is the most recognizable signal in the world. Smiles are such an important part of communication that we see them far more clearly than any other expression. We can pick up a smile at 300 feet, the length of a football field." Plato said "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" (SYMPOSIUM, Plato) and studies show that attractive individuals are more likely to be seen as intelligent, friendly, and successful.

Ask yourself, "What do others see and think when they meet you? What do you see when you look in a mirror?" How you are perceived in business and in social situations depends on the image you project. That image can be related to your smile. A poor appearance or lack of confidence in one's dental equipment can mean the difference between failure and success in business and in one's personal life.

When people enter a dental practice, it is because they desire to improve their health and their life with the best that dentistry has to offer them. In addition to providing routine dental care, patients are shown what is possible for smile improvement. Why? Because, in so many instances, the person did not know what could be done.

I am often invited to teach dentists throughout the world. Being able to carry the message of the relationship between dental health and overall health and well-being to dentists internationally has allowed me to impact on the health of people whom I never meet. As a dental educator, I always discuss the psychological importance of the mouth in the total health of a person.

From the moment of birth, the mouth is that special part of the body through which we are nourished with food, speech, and emotions. As we move through life, the mouth is our means of speaking, of expressing love, happiness and joy, anger, or sorrow. What

other part of the body carries such importance in the total health of a human being?

As a dentist, I have been privileged to build trust and change lives, one smile at a time. I have given many men and women the smile they always dreamed about or re-created the smile they once had. I have had the opportunity to help them live a longer and healthier life through improved oral health and early diagnosis of serious medical situations.

I compliment all of these men and women for taking the steps that allowed them to be healthier, look and feel younger, have a greater sense of well-being, and radiate confidence.