

The Road to a Better Smile

By: Richard Price, DMD

First impressions count.

That is true no matter what. You could be a business owner meeting a prospective client, a parent addressing the PTA or an alumnus seeing your friends at a high school reunion.

What you say in those situations is, of course, very important. So is the way you say it. But people judge us by more than merely words and message. People also look for the image and impression that we convey. Part of this is having a memorable smile that will win over your audience.

Many times, I've had patients say, "What I really want is to have a beautiful smile." It reminds me of the saying, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Nowhere is that more true than in the dental profession.

How exactly does one define a "beautiful smile?" Is there complete agreement on what the term means and the best way to achieve it? No, there isn't. Ask five people to define a "beautiful smile" and you'll get five slightly different answers.

Patients requesting a "beautiful smile" may be met with a recommendation for a procedure based on what's popular - or what the dentist is the most comfortable performing. Sometimes this leads to a patient leaving an office without achieving her goal.

Because there's no "textbook definition" of a beautiful smile, it's up to the dentist and patient to communicate and work together carefully to be sure that the anticipated end result is a shared vision. At our practice, we take extra measures to determine a patient's needs and expectations. By implementing our multi-step process, we can confidently guarantee that our patients will leave with a beautiful smile.

The road to that smile begins with asking questions, and developing a genuine, honest doctor-patient relationship. This is essential in creating

and maintaining a healthy, aesthetically pleasing smile. The first step of this process is to learn about you as a patient and a person. What's important to you? What's going on in your life? What are your dental expectations? Only after answering these questions can we gain an understanding of your goals and create an enduring, functional and beautiful smile.

The process then continues with a comprehensive oral evaluation. Our team takes the time to listen and learn from you. We want to know as much about what you don't like as what you do like, in terms of your dental experience. It's key for us to ask the right questions and listen carefully to your answers. This is the only way to truly help guide you toward the procedure that will ultimately result in your definition of a beautiful smile.

Sometimes advertisements promise a "quick fix" in creating that sought-after beautiful smile. In general, be wary of these kinds of misleading and general promises. Each patient is an individual, with individual needs. There is no "cookie cutter" approach to creating a great smile. Many individual factors must be taken into consideration.

We consider it a privilege to get to know our patients, discuss their dental needs and wants and then customize a treatment plan to meet those goals.

There are a number of dental options that will contribute to a better smile. These may include porcelain veneers, dental implants, Invisalign, whitening or merely a simple cleaning. The prescribed program of treatment is very important; and, just as importantly, you should find the right team to provide the best solution for your individual needs. Our team works together with our patients to determine the best treatment plan.

The options to achieving a beautiful smile are many. Together, we can determine the best way to guarantee that the smile you will leave our office with is the one of your dreams. Happiness can literally be just a smile away.

