

# Changing Faces by Closing Spaces

**T**he legendary model and actress Lauren Hutton graced a total of 28 Vogue covers and during one 10-year period was the highest paid model on earth. Although she was advised to fill the space between her front teeth by agency owner Eileen Ford and others, she declined. Ford recalled: “There has always been a way Lauren walks into a room. When she enters, you know you’re looking at a star. I immediately knew she wasn’t ever going to miss. Tooth or no tooth.”

Although that space – known as a diastema when it refers to the front teeth – became her trademark, dental gaps do little to enhance beauty for most of us, and usually detract from it. According to Dr. Ronald Goldstein, founding partner of Atlanta’s Goldstein, Garber, Salama & Beaudreau, more people are dissatisfied with the spacing of their teeth than with any other aspect of their smile, apart from tooth color. Lauren Hutton notwithstanding, “gaps in the teeth may not be appealing to everyone.” The good news is that they are usually repairable.

## MEET MÁRIA

Dr. Mária Hernandez had lived more than 20 years with significant spaces between her teeth before she decided to do something about it. Hernandez is a Colombian-born dentist who trained in Bogotá.

“My teeth were very small in size – that’s genetic,” she explains. “It wasn’t something that bothered me much in the past, but once I moved to the U.S. and became more esthetically aware, I began to focus more on it. When looking at myself in photographs, I

wasn’t happy because all I could see were the spaces.”

That’s typical, explains Dr. Goldstein. “What happens with any defect is that the eye is drawn to the defect, making it difficult to see the other redeeming features of the face.” It’s the same with a misshapen nose or a large wart on the forehead. “Once you eliminate the defects, in this case the spaces, we notice the underlying beauty,” he adds.

## FOUR CHOICES

As esthetic dental complications go, repairing tooth spacing can be relatively simple. That’s especially true at Team Atlanta, a multi-disciplinary practice with four dual-degree specialists under one roof. Partner Dr. David Garber explains that there are four means to eliminate unwanted spaces: orthodontics (braces), applying porcelain laminates to the teeth, creating full crowns and composite resin bonding.

Orthodontics is often the ideal solution because it creates lasting change while preserving one’s natural teeth. (Porcelain veneers usually require some enamel reduction while crowns are more invasive). Team Atlanta partner Dr. Maurice Salama is a world-renowned orthodontist who uses his skills to beautifully realign the teeth of not only children but also adults, including the use of the new “invisible braces.”

For Mária Hernandez, single-appointment composite resin bonding was the treatment of choice. “I talked with Dr. Ronald about the possibilities and decided on bonding, the most conservative option.” She estimates that the procedure took about

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a half-day and was completely painless. The dramatic result delighted Hernandez who reports that she no longer feels self-conscious and is now more than willing to flash her bright, beautiful smile for the camera!

## TRY THIS

“Bonding is really an ideal way to ‘try on’ an esthetic enhancement before moving on to a more permanent option,” explains Dr. Goldstein. There are two types of bonding. In short-term or mock bonding, the resin is applied and remains in place for between several hours and a couple of days. This gives the patient the opportunity to show family and friends and observe him or herself with a new, gapless smile. Taking photos preserves the image for future review.

A longer-lasting bonding process can last for years. In fact, Dr. Goldstein, a pioneer in the field, used the process on the actress and comedienne Phyllis Diller more than 25 years ago. The bonding can usually be removed at any time. This option is the type selected by Mária Hernandez.

Easing into the change with either mock bonding or longer lasting bonding, has a number of advantages. Patients get a chance to not only see, but feel what the change will be like. “When you change the shape and position of teeth, speech and tooth-functioning can be affected. Also, many patients have oral habits, such as sticking their tongue through a gap. Trial bonding helps them know if they will be bothered by no longer being able to do this, or if it is difficult to live with for any other reason.”

## THE PROCESS

Team Atlanta patients, who come from around town and around the world for treatment, find the bonding process to be quite straightforward. It involves a minimal amount of advance preparation. The surface of the tooth is roughened and a conditioning liquid applied to help the bonding material adhere. Resin is then applied and molded to the desired shape before being hardened with a high intensity light.

The process can be used to repair chipped or cracked teeth, to improve the appearance of discolored teeth and to change the shape and size of teeth. In the case of Mária Hernandez, Dr. Goldstein’s aim was to redesign her smile, replacing the look of her congenitally thin,



BEFORE



AFTER

MARIA HERNANDEZ CREDITS HER PARENTS FOR HER CONGENITALLY SMALL TEETH AND UNATTRACTIVE SPACES, BUT SHE’S GRATEFUL TO DR. RONALD GOLDSTEIN FOR CLOSING THE SPACES AND ENLARGING HER TEETH TO GIVE HER THE SMILE SHE ENJOYS TODAY. ONLY ONE AFTERNOON (AND NO ANESTHESIA!) WAS NEEDED TO CHANGE MARIA’S SMILE. A NEW HAIRSTYLE AND MAKEUP GAVE HER A WHOLE NEW COUNTENANCE!

“peg-shaped” teeth to better fit her face. “One of my chief goals was to blend the bonding to avoid the appearance of a junction between it and Mária’s tooth, giving her a very natural-looking smile.” In fact, Dr. Goldstein recently returned from Japan where he taught a seminar on the process to many of that country’s leading cosmetic dentists.

## OTHER CHALLENGES, OTHER SOLUTIONS

Team Atlanta is uniquely prepared to tackle virtually any esthetic dental challenge. They are known not only for their chair-side skills and diagnostic acumen, but are also widely sought-after teachers and lecturers. Several hold university professorships and collectively have authored a shelf of books, including Dr. Goldstein’s classic text, *Change Your Smile* (Quintessence Publishing Co.).

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BONDING AND OTHER SMILE DESIGN STRATEGIES, CONTACT THE TEAM ATLANTA PATIENT COORDINATOR AT (404) 261-4941. YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PRACTICE AT: [WWW.GOLDSTEINGARBER.COM](http://WWW.GOLDSTEINGARBER.COM).**

TEAM ATLANTA  
ESTHETIC DENTISTRY

Goldstein Garber  
Salama & Beaudreau, LLC

600 GALLERIA PARKWAY, SUITE 800  
ATLANTA, GA 30339 • 404/261-4941

RONALD E. GOLDSTEIN, DDS  
DAVID A. GARBER, DMD  
MAURICE A. SALAMA, DMD  
BRIAN BEAUDREAU, DMD  
ANGELA GRIBBLE HEDLUND, DMD  
HENRY SALAMA, DMD  
MAHA EL-SAYED, DMD  
CATHY GOLDSTEIN SCHWARTZ, DDS  
ANITA L. TATE, DMD