

The Danger Of Treating One Tooth

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The problem associated with treating one tooth is that the patient tends to focus on the tooth itself, and when this happens it becomes difficult, if not impossible at times, to satisfy the patient. This article will deal with the problems in treating the single tooth from an esthetic standpoint and suggestions for improving the chances for success.

Patients invariably have some idea about what they think is an esthetic problem for them, as well as a potential solution. Such is the case for the patient who does not like one specific tooth.

When this object of their concentration is the one tooth that makes the difference between their smile looking bad or good, it can become a very difficult problem to solve for the dentist who does not understand all the factors associated with the psychology involved in treating one tooth. When a patient focuses on a specific tooth, then all treatment results will equally focus on how that tooth compares to the rest of the dentition. In other words, it will compare one tooth to an adjacent tooth. This may not be a problem if the tooth is a bicuspid, posterior tooth, or even a cuspid; however, when it is a lateral it can begin to become a problem. And when the situation involves a central incisor it almost universally is a problem.

One of esthetic dentistry's finest clinicians, Dr. Lloyd Miller, has lectured for many years on "the matched pair" and has dealt with many of these problems. He has pointed out that there is no such thing as perfection in matching one tooth to the other. However, when two teeth are done, it becomes an easier situation. And what Dr. Miller has pointed out is that it takes the patient's focus away from the single tooth to two teeth, which makes it easier to make a "matched pair."

The basic philosophy involves trying to get the patient's focus away from the single tooth to the entire smile. If that can be accomplished, then the chance for esthetic success are considerably greater. Therefore, look at the smile to see if it can be enhanced by other procedures, such as:

1. bleaching of adjacent teeth
2. cosmetic contouring of adjacent and opposing teeth
3. improving any defect in adjacent teeth

Whatever it takes to improve the entire smile will also manage to improve your chances for esthetic success.