

How Real are Reality Housewives

Just back from lecturing in Munich, Germany, and one of the questions I got from dentists was “are the Real Housewives of Beverly Hills becoming the role models for beauty in America?” Hard to believe such a question came up, but then I got to thinking about it on the flight back to Atlanta. Answer? Only to a select minority of American women.

First, many of the reality housewives on Beverly Hills, Atlanta, New York, and other cities have pretty large budgets to spend on their looks. Second, their concept of facial beauty probably differs greatly from America’s average housewife. But America’s housewife does have interest in looking her best – and doing so today probably implies doing it on a more limited budget.

First and foremost, looking better should definitely start with your smile. We know from considerable research that the better looking your smile is, the better your chance to get a good job, a better promotion, a life partner or a significant other.

For starters, take a close-up look in your mirror and what do you see? Are your teeth as light or straight as you

would like? If not, you may be in luck because there are economical solutions that can fit your needs.

COSMETIC CONTOURING

Cosmetic contouring is a painless procedure where the dentist contours your teeth to make them look straighter. It is no substitute for orthodontic repositioning but considerably less expensive and can be done in one appointment. The procedure can not only give you a better looking smile but can also contour and polish any

microscopic chips or enamel fractures you may not be aware of. Done correctly, the result can last indefinitely.

Crowded lower teeth are the most common problem I have seen in my professional career. And most patients have not been aware of just how much the lower front teeth show when speaking. The good news is that in most every patient, cosmetic contouring can make a real difference in making these teeth appear straighter.

BLEACHING

So many consumers have tried or certainly heard about whitening their teeth through bleaching. The best news is that the technique is almost entirely predictable depending on your tooth color. And that is why it is best to know before you spend the time and money on bleaching. However, many patients have been disappointed in their result. In most instances I have observed that there are almost always reasons for a patient’s failure to achieve the result he or she envisioned.

The main reason is lack of an initial diagnosis by a competent dentist. Here is where you can and should be told if it is worth your while to bleach your teeth. This dental office appointment



A GUMMY SMILE CAN BE EASILY IMPROVED WITH COSMETIC GUM RECONTOURING OR OTHER METHODS.

© JOAN VICENT CANTÓ ROIG | ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

should first consist of examining the teeth, gum tissue and beginning shade color. Second, your X-rays need to be evaluated, which can also reveal what type of bleaching treatments will be best for you and how to safely bleach to get the best results. The end result is getting the best advice including, in many cases, not to bleach at all.

A fairly large percent of the new patients who consult with me about tooth color are not really good candidates for tooth bleaching. Their expectation and visualization of what they want their teeth to look like would not be accomplished with bleaching. Much better to put the expense they would pay for bleaching teeth to one of the masking choices such as bonding with direct composite resin, or porcelain which can be veneered to the fronts of teeth to obtain the chosen shade.



YELLOW STAINS ARE THE EASIEST TO BLEACH AND THE MOST LONG LASTING

Then there are patients whose pulps are so large that limitation on the strength of the bleaching agent would definitely be warranted. Also, the technique would have to be considerably altered to obtain the best result.

The bottom line is that if you are one of the patients who will have a good chance of getting the color you anticipate, bleaching remains as one of the most economical cosmetic dental procedures possible.



MOST PEOPLE NEVER SEE WHAT OTHERS SEE...THIS LADY COULD EASILY HAVE HER POSTERIOR TEETH ON HER RIGHT SIDE BONDED TO ROUND OUT HER SMILE

TOOTH REPOSITIONING

Few people realize the true value of repositioning their teeth to get the straightening they desire. Obviously, if just a minor amount of cosmetic contouring will suffice then so be it. But for the great majority of patients, tooth repositioning or even minor orthodontics can be the best long-term solution. This is especially true if the compromised treatment would consist of correcting your crowded teeth by bonding, porcelain veneers or even full crowns. Most consumers do not realize the “quick fix” may not be the best fix. Reason? Virtually all cosmetic restorative treatments will need to be replaced eventually. I even give an average range of life expectancy for bonding, veneers and crowns in almost every chapter of my book *Change Your Smile* (Amazon.com). Almost every time, future replacements become a much greater expense than by correcting your problem with orthodontic treatment.

BONDING

Of all the restorative choices for changing a smile, bonding is usually the least expensive. It involves a single appointment to roughen the tooth surfaces, etch the enamel surface, and apply a series of tooth colored resins to the teeth to gain better color, shape, width or length to the teeth.

As one of the pioneers in the bonding technique, I can safely say it has been so successful not only in being able to repair broken teeth but also in transforming a smile. And the best news is that the newer materials are stronger, wear better, and will hopefully provide a longer esthetic life.

The sum total is that cosmetic dentistry is the first place to start your campaign to looking younger and friendlier. By the way, you don't have to live in Beverly Hills to “change your smile.”



WITH A LIFELONG INTEREST IN BEAUTY, DR. RONALD GOLDSTEIN CONDUCTS ONGOING RESEARCH ON THE PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS PHENOMENON AND ITS ROLE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PERSONAL SUCCESS. HIS DENTAL PRACTICE WAS THE FIRST TO MOVE BEYOND THE SMILE AND FOCUS ON OVERALL FACIAL HARMONY. HE WRITES EXTENSIVELY FOR BOTH CONSUMERS AND THE DENTAL PROFESSION ON BEAUTY, ESTHETIC DENTISTRY AND RELATED TOPICS. DR. GOLDSTEIN IS THE AUTHOR OF THE 2-VOLUME TEXTBOOK, *ESTHETICS IN DENTISTRY* AND *CHANGE YOUR SMILE* (10 FOREIGN TRANSLATIONS), WHICH NOW IN ITS 4TH EDITION IS THE TOP-SELLING CONSUMER GUIDE TO DENTISTRY FOUND IN THOUSANDS OF DENTISTS' RECEPTION ROOMS AROUND THE WORLD. HE IS ON THE ADVISORY BOARD OF *NEW BEAUTY* MAGAZINE AND WRITES FOR IT AS WELL. HE IS THE FOUNDER OF TOMORROW'S SMILES, A NATIONAL NON-PROFIT FUND THAT HELPS DESERVING ADOLESCENTS RECEIVE LIFE-CHANGING SMILES THROUGH COSMETIC DENTISTRY. HIS MULTIDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE IS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA.