Five Reasons To Smile

January 21, 2013 By Karen Hoyt

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” - Leo F. Buscaglia

Here are my fave 5 reasons to smile. When dealing with hep c, or anything that threatens to bring you down, it’s easy to lose your smile. The virus, and hep c treatment, is hard on your teeth and gums. While there are a few things we can do about that, it’s still important to smile in spite of less than beautiful teeth. Two of my favorite smiles are the Mona Lisa smile (she doesn’t even show her teeth), and Mother Teresa’s open hearted smile.

Now for my Top Fave Five reasons to smile.

1. A smile attracts others to you. You seem more approachable and open. It puts people at ease. In addition, encounters with others become more intimate and meaningful.
2. A smile is healthy for you. The act of moving your facial muscles into a smile actually releases endorphins that can give you a sense of well being. When I have been in the worst physical condition over the last few years, I formed a smile. Soon my heart and mind followed it with a strength and confidence that permeated my entire body.
3. Smiles are contagious! Remember hearing that if someone needs a smile, you can lend them one of yours? It’s true. My daughter and I always play a game when we’re out. We try and make eye contact with as many people as we can, and aim a smile beam right at them. We then count the ones who smile back. We’ve smiled all over the United States, into other countries, and in every imaginable place. You know what? We have a 99% return rate. That in itself is reason to smile!
4. Smiling builds confidence. When facing a tough circumstance, say a doctor visit, a difficult talk with a family member, or a tough day at work - smile. You will find yourself feeling stronger and more capable of handling any situation. Your words will come across with more warmth as well as power.
5. You’re never fully dressed without a smile. No matter what your teeth look like, how many wrinkles you have, or what you are wearing, a smile completes the look. I have seen attractive, well dressed sour pusses that are not fun to look at. I have also been captivated by an average person with a big smile. Their very essence seems to have a magnetic quality that comes out in their - you guessed it - SMILE! You may not even notice what they’re wearing or how their teeth or hair look because you want to engage in conversation with this happy smiling person. Be that person!

My teeth and gums were in horrible shape while treating for hep c making it painful to brush. Here are tips on how to endure - and smile - while sick with the hepatitis c virus.

1. Use a soft child’s toothbrush or a Waterpic if you have one. Soft dental tape is gentler than waxed floss. Brush frequently.

2. Use a gentle tooth paste. I used Biotene products for dry mouth. Tom's makes great natural products. I used the mouthwash several times daily also.
3. Get a cleaning before and after treatment. My dentist would not clean during the 43 week treatment due to blood labs being awry with bleeding and platelet problems.
4. Eat well. Malnourishment can cause gums to be in bad shape. Eat a variety of healthy foods and take whatever vitamins and supplements that your doctor will allow. I'll say it again: Protein is vital!
5. Don't be afraid of having excessive dental work before or after treatment. I know it's a tough price to pay for attempting to get rid of the Hepatitis C Virus. Treatment in general attacks your whole body and your mouth is not excluded. If you cannot afford it, ask for a payment plan or go to a local health clinic. Do not live with a painful swollen toothache.

Smiling is a wonderful gift we give to ourselves and to others. Never be ashamed of your smile. American's are so caught up with movie star teeth. That is unrealistic. In most countries it is not even important. Hiding your smile behind your hand can create feelings of shame or embarrassment. Imperfect teeth are normal. Let that smile out! Start practicing today. Remember the 5 reasons to smile and let it shine!!! Karen:)

Mother Teresa said: "I will never understand all the good that a simple smile can accomplish."

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