

In Search of the Fountain of Youth

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If you are doing a lot of cosmetic dentistry, you must enjoy it. That's because the work you do is appreciated. It's not just a job, but a calling. You are the dental artist. You are surrounded by happy patients. And because appreciative patients like to spread the word, you are always given more opportunities to practice your art. Smiles are contagious.

Like everything in life, the more we do something, the better we get. That's why we call it a dental practice. I have always wanted to do more cosmetic dentistry because I enjoy it. I would like to illustrate how the powerful combination of cosmetic dentistry and imaging technology can build a practice.

Ten years ago, I had used direct bonding to correct a young lady's malaligned and misshaped teeth. Shortly after the bonding, she met a young man, who was also one of my cosmetic patients. They got married and moved out of state.

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Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.

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Soon after that, her almost 70-year-old mother sought my help. She was recently widowed and wanted to make some changes in her life. She had considered plastic surgery, but decided to start with her smile (Figs 1 through 3). She brought a picture of herself to the consultation (Fig 4). We did a full examination including radiographs, models, and generated before-and-after computer images (Smile-Vision).

Her upper left cuspid was originally spindly and stuck out. She had it removed as a cosmetic procedure in her 20s and still remembers the experience vividly. Tooth No. 10 had very little periodontal support and was quite mobile. The maxillary anterior teeth had periodontal pockets in the 3- to 5-mm range. Surprisingly, the rest of her mouth was periodontally sound.

A week later we discussed our cosmetic dental treatment. She brought her Smile-Vision folder and the 45-year-old photo (Figs 5 and 6).

We agreed that whitening the teeth was the best way to begin treatment. She wanted to minimize the number of teeth involved, so we could reevaluate her smile and decide how many teeth needed porcelain following whitening.¹ We began with splint therapy 2 hours per day using Nite White Excel NSF with 0.17% neutral sodium fluoride, 16% carbamide peroxide. Remineralizing toothpaste (Enamelon) was used to reduce any negative demineralization through bleaching. In 2 weeks her teeth whitened from A4 to A2. While she was under local anesthetic, we performed stabilident and nitrous oxide sedation, and scaling and root planing in the maxillary anterior teeth.

During the same appointment, teeth Nos. 9 and 12 were prepared with NITI diamonds for full coverage Empress crowns (Fig 7). Tooth No. 10 was extracted

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Fig 7.



Fig 8.



Fig 9.



Fig 10.



Fig 11.



Fig 12.



Fig 13.

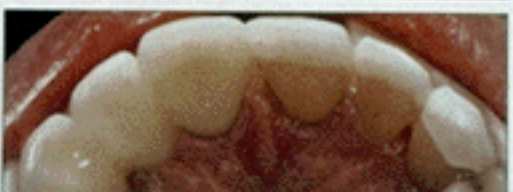


Fig 14.



Fig 15.