

Nurturing nature can go a long way

The recent crowning of South African beauty Rolene Strauss as Miss World has opened up the age-old debate about the importance and impact of physical appearance again. Several scientific studies have proven that we possess a natural disposition to like, trust and reward those with more pleasing looks.



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"Irrespective of your genes, there is a lot you can do to align your physical appearance with areas that are said to contribute to facial beauty, and thereby influencing the impact others have on your success," says Dr Ronel Podde, a cosmetic dentist based in Pretoria. "While we firmly support the principle that beauty shouldn't be skin-deep, there are certain areas where nurture can go a long way in supporting the beauty of nature."

Symmetry

Symmetrical faces are perceived as more attractive, and people that are more attractive are perceived as more successful. Orthodontic treatment however not intended solely for making smiles more symmetrical, but also to make it easier to keep teeth clean. Crooked teeth prevent toothbrushes and floss from reaching the essential nooks and crannies.

Age

Teeth whitening is a quick solution to habits that are detrimental to dental health, but not many are aware that adult teeth often become darker with age, as dentine that is naturally yellow in colour, thickens.

Scent

The power of smell on the scale of attractiveness is another contributor that has been the subject of many a paper and poll. "Halitosis is a subject that many patients are embarrassed to discuss when they visit the dentist, but it is the perfect place to determine and treat the cause of bad breath," advises Dr Podde.

Hygiene

Plaque causes build-up and discolouration on teeth over the short term, and leads to unsightly tooth decay in the end. While everyone knows that teeth need to be cleaned at least twice a day, many have never been taught how to clean their teeth correctly. Holding a toothbrush at a 45-degree angle, and brushing for at least two minutes to reach all exposed surfaces is a good starting point.

Dental intervention

The saying, "Don't floss all your teeth, only the ones you want to keep" is one of the truest sayings of all times. Teeth are the only part of the human body that cannot repair. Once a tooth is decayed, an intervention from a dentist is the only way to repair the damaged part in order to restore health and prevent future problems.

Regular check-ups with a dentist are often placed at the bottom of ever-increasing to do lists, as is having a scale and polish procedure to remove the stubborn build-up that simply can't be removed by dental care at home.

"What patients don't realise is that repairing teeth and diseased gum tissue turns out to be significantly more expensive than the fee charged for preventative care such as scale, polish and fissure sealants. Poor dental health can also lead to numerous diseases affecting rest of the body, such as heart disease, which can lead to even greater medical expenses."

Although both scientific and informal studies on the topic of the importance of beauty supports the notion that attractive people are more successful, there is one common denominator that keeps the conversation alive; the influence of personality on the perception of beauty.

"Regardless of genetics, regimens or interventions, the only everlasting fact is that beauty, irrespective of popularity or preference, lies firmly in the eye of the beholder," concludes Dr Podde.

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