

EDITOR'S LETTER

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A SMILE MAKES!

It's been said that a picture is worth a thousand words – but a smile can make you feel like a million bucks. Clichés aside, the power of a smile is truly serious science.

Using MRI imaging technology, university researchers in Munich, Germany, report that our brain's "happiness circuitry" automatically activates when we smile. Similarly, studies commissioned by Hewlett Packard in Britain found that the brain's reward center is stimulated far more by a simple smile than by 2,000 chocolate bars or being given \$16,000 in cash!

I can tell you personally, however, that a nice smile is not something to take for granted. In past editor's letter photos, I show a happy grin, but not a toothy smile. There's a reason for that. As an infant, I was born three months premature and was given antibiotics that turned my teeth intrinsically gray. I never let that get in my way, but – more often than not – it did lead me to smile with closed lips.

As a young adult, I tried everything to whiten my teeth – professional bleaching and laser treatments – but nothing worked. Dentists told me there was nothing more they could do. So, I accepted the fact and went on with life.

And then one day in January 2012, something serendipitous happened. While shopping in Bal Harbour, I stopped by to say hello to the owner of the Santa Maria Novella boutique who had flown in to attend a *South Florida Opulence* event. He introduced me to a friend of his, Dean Maragos, who was visiting from Minnesota. I learned that Dean's father, Chuck Maragos, was a pioneer in the cosmetic ceramic dental industry and the founder of Valley



Dental Arts in Stillwater. He invited me to explore the idea of having a smile makeover. Little did I know that I was about to embark on a smile travel adventure that would change my life. (You can meet the "smile dream team" on page 126.)

Today, a year later, I am smiling from ear to ear. And I've never been happier or more grateful for a great group of dental professionals.

Robin Jay, Editor in Chief



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