

Does anyone actually look *forward* to dental appointments? Neither did I. Like many of you, I have very sensitive teeth, so I was afraid of the pain involved with every visit, even routine cleanings. I used to feel like a faceless number, not a real person whose concerns were taken seriously. In addition, I saw the results of crowns, caps, bridgework and dentures that didn't look natural or blend seamlessly with natural teeth. And I had grown so accustomed to my teeth looking bad that I seldom smiled a big unselfconscious grin for photographs, because I didn't feel confident about my smile. I thought it wasn't worth it to invest the time or money it would take to correct my smile and so I procrastinated.

But, several years ago I was forced to begin that process because my dental problems began to affect my general health. My bite was not right. I was grinding my teeth, wearing them down and weakening my gums which invited periodontal disease in two small areas of my mouth. Two of my teeth needed root canals. And ultimately I needed two implants on molars that had been permanently damaged by my improper bite and the periodontal disease.

My orthodontist-periodontist corrected my gum disease surgically. Over the next year he corrected my bite with braces. And finally, he performed two dental implants on teeth that were unsalvageable.

To my amazement (and relief), everything went so well and I had complete confidence in my orthodontist. But there was one more step. I needed crowns on the implants, all of my upper teeth and the molars in my lower jaw. I asked my orthodontist to recommend a dentist *he would go to* for this work. He recommended Dr. David Schaefer, who specializes in cosmetic dentistry.

My experience with Dr. Schaefer has been wonderful. We began with two hour-long consultations about the crowns. He wanted to make sure that they would "look like me"...in other words natural & appropriate for my face, age, and the size of my mouth. He showed me many diagrams of possibilities, invited my input, and even made a wax mock-up of what my teeth would look like when complete. He wanted the color to be natural and blend genuinely with my own teeth. We've all seen people my age, 57, with crowns, caps or dentures that are so shockingly white that we know instantly that they aren't natural. My finished crowns are a pleasant, healthy color and size. They look like what someone my age would have naturally...and best of all, *they are much more attractive than what my own teeth looked like before...but no one guesses they aren't mine!*

The *appearance* of dental work is significant. You want to be *delighted* with the outcome! But even more important to me was the consideration Dr. Schaefer gave to my comfort (*lack of pain*) during the procedures. I had no pain whatsoever. He also wanted my bite to be structurally correct so that I wouldn't have jaw problems or headaches in the future.

When the work was complete, he made a comfortable bite plate/night guard for me to wear when I'm sleeping to ensure that my teeth stay in place.

As a result of Dr. Schaefer's meticulous attention to detail, my bite is correct, my crowns are comfortable and my bite plate/night guard is comfortable (and therefore I *USE* it).

Believe it or not, I look forward to periodic dental cleanings because *nothing hurts anymore*. Even my tooth sensitivity has greatly diminished.

Dr. Schaefer has assembled a friendly, capable and sympathetic staff. They inform you of everything you need to do to maintain your teeth and gums. They are mindful of your time (I don't ever recall being in the waiting room for more than a few minutes). Dr. Schaefer even called my home after two procedures to make sure I was feeling alright. Now, that's a dentist who really cares about his patients! I have one or two food restrictions because I now have crowns...but nowadays - I *smile* for the camera with confidence! I would recommend Dr. Schaefer and his staff to anyone!