

In pursuit of essential beauty

Dr. Deanna Geddo is well recognized for her holistic approach to dentistry, one that takes into account the biological aspects of a person, along with their values and spiritual, emotional, and psychological facets. She has helped many patients overcome their fears around dental work.

But some may not be aware of her aesthetic dental practice. Here too she brings a holistic approach. Indeed, she sees the pursuit of beauty as a devotional or spiritual practice. Aesthetic dentistry, in her hands, is a healing art, allowing each of us to discover and express our inner or essential beauty.

Too often, our images or attitudes towards beauty are influenced by all images of celebrities in the media. But, says Dr. Geddo, "It is dangerous to apply such outward standards to ourselves. Besides, the standards are always changing."

Instead Dr. Geddo works to help people pursue their inner beauty. She sees it as a completion of the journey we begin when we are born, a time when our mouth is accepted as central to our being: we explore with it and experience the world



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through it. Over time, this authenticity is dampened. We become embarrassed by our smile, or uncomfortable—clenching our jaws, wearing down our teeth. We can no longer simply relax and enjoy smiling freely.

To complete our personal healing journey, we need to do what many call spiritual or psychological work. But it has a physical expression as well, notes Dr. Geddo, who has studied yoga and meditation for decades. She points to those with highly developed spiritual practices like monks whose ablutions—rituals around bathing, grooming and purification—help them live a life aligned with spirit.

"This is the wider context that inspires me in my dental practice," says Dr. Geddo. "It is not vanity to become the beauty one feels inside." By taking care of our teeth, cleaning and repairing and beautifying them, we are in a sense cleaning the temple, or adorning the altar and thereby creating an environment for our prayers. "True beauty," feels Dr. Geddo, "is one of the paths to enlightenment or God. Just as a beautiful painting or musical composition can give us a glimpse of absolute truth and harmony, carrying our soul to a place of grace where we can experience the divinity of our being, so too can developing our own essential beauty."

Born in Europe to cosmopolitan parents, her family resettled in Argentina when Deanna was seven years old. From an early age the young Deanna was meditating and involved in the arts. In fact, for many years even after becoming a dentist, Dr. Geddo was a concert violinist as well as a yoga teacher. It is this blend of spiritual, artistic and practical wisdom that has led to her unique dentistry practice.

One of her favourite techniques she uses in her aesthetic dental practice is chair-side veneers, bonded restorations attached to the front surface of the teeth, that enable her to help bring out the personal beauty of a patient in as little as one hour. Some come to her to get this work done towards a special event—a wedding, graduation or anniversary party. "It is my best offering," she says, noting it can take up to 15 years off a person's face. The thin layer of porcelain can add just enough thickness to plump up lips and support cheeks. Sometimes back molars, which tend to get worn down over the years, need to be built up a bit too, to gently reshape the face. And her expertise in relaxation techniques also helps patients improve the position of the jaw.

In her work with veneers, she hand sculpts the material and can skilfully adjust it to achieve different, subtle effects. She advocates against following fashion



Photo: Tony Bounsall

Dr. Deanna Geddo

or the false-looking Hollywood-style smiles, and instead focus on expressing one's personal, inner beauty.

Dr. Geddo encourages her patients to participate in the creation of their smile. She can educate clients to understand the different shapes, textures and colours of natural teeth so they have tools to work with in their decision-making. Some clients bring in a photo of themselves as a younger person to help guide her work. "I search for the size, shape and structure of the teeth that best expresses their personality," says Dr. Geddo. She has had some rather shy, self-effacing people purposely choose slightly bigger, bolder teeth to affirm their presence; while others opt for smaller, softer forms. Even slight changes transform the character of the smile and person.

Chairside veneers are quite long lasting, and actually strengthen the underlying teeth. They are a fraction of the cost of the more permanent type and can be modified as desired. Dr. Geddo works with an excellent lab which uses metal-free, bio-compatible materials and techniques in keeping with her own holistic practice. (Besides her aesthetic services, she offers a full range of holistic dentistry services including amalgam removal and metal-free crowns, bridges and dentures.)

Dr. Geddo feels honoured to have helped transform many patients' lives through helping them enjoy their smile—the expression of their essential beauty. "It can be a very healing experience," she explains. "Many of us travel through life yearning for a freer, more fabulous version of ourselves: our mouth may hold the golden key which opens all the other doors!"

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