

REGAINING CONFIDENCE

DR JEAN PAUL DEMAJO TALKS ABOUT GETTING YOUR TEETH BACK TO SPARKLING FORM

Do you ever wonder what it would have been like if your teeth were in pristine shape? What went wrong? Have they reached this state due to lack of care or do those genes you inherited have a part to play? Where has that left you? Besides the obvious poor aesthetic smile you carry around with you on a daily basis, what has all this done to your confidence?

Take this scenario; a middle-aged patient in a long-term relationship, with a history of bad dental care and an even worse relationship with previous dentists, toying with the idea of correcting his teeth. Where does he start? The first and most important thing is the will power to make that call and fix an appointment for a consultation.

The consultation is broken down into the following main fields:

1. Past Dental/Medical history: listening to the patient's past experiences puts into perspective why his/her teeth are in this state. What went wrong along the years gives a dentist insight on what must be done to radically improve the patient's oral and mental well-being.
2. Patient's complaints: listing all of the patient's wishes helps the dentist formulate a dental treatment plan and present it to them. The patient's requests should be realistic, well-addressed and convincing enough to the dentist that once all the work is done, what would have been poor dental attendance would be converted to good patient compliance.
3. Treatment options: treatments may vary in time, expense and endurance. Different lines of treatment can achieve

different goals. This brings us back to the patient's list of complaints and wishes. Will that particular treatment plan tick all the boxes on the patient's list?

4. Advantages and disadvantages: Listen to what the pros and cons are. Weigh everything out and choose what is best for you.

A CASE SCENARIO:

Starting off with no lower back teeth and very broken down upper remaining teeth commands a CBCT scan. The scan will show:

1. Bone levels: is there enough bone to place dental implants?
2. Periodontal status of remaining teeth: are remaining teeth in good health or do they require removal? Can the patient maintain good hygiene post-treatment?


3. Endodontic or root canal status of remaining teeth: do any teeth require root canal therapy? Is it worth trying to redo a root canal or does the tooth need to be pulled out?

4. Potential presence of pathology
5. Anatomy of jaws: sinuses, nerves, buried teeth etc

PLAN:

1. Remove all upper remaining teeth
2. Bilateral bone grafting in sinuses with simultaneous placement of eight implants
3. Restoration of remaining lower teeth with all-ceramic zirconium crowns and bridges.
4. Planning of upper fixed implant-retained prosthesis six to eight months post-implant insertion.



The dental work involved is anything but simple. It is enduring and requires dedication from both parties. Patients need to be patient and reassured at all times. This nature of dental work also carries a hefty cost in time and money but the confidence achieved is priceless! Take action now and ask your dentist for advice! 

Dr Jean Paul Demajo is a Dental and Implant Surgeon trained in London working in private practice in Malta

