

# TOOTHFULLY. *speaking*



Dr. Preeti Desai

## “Love the Gums You’re With!”

Author Malcolm Gladwell says teeth are fast becoming the new benchmark of inequality. The noted journalist and societal commentator says that “those with bad or missing teeth are given a lower chance of success - because they are ‘denied’ certain entry level jobs”. He was quoted by the Times of London, “that’s kind of the way we’re moving as the gap between the fit and the unfit grows. Studies have shown that those with healthy gums and teeth rise the corporate ladder faster and are more successful.”

Even popular TV series host, Chris Harrison of the “The Bachelor and “the Bachelorette” fame has vocalized that first impressions are crucial for relationship success - and isn’t that what life is all about? Relationships with spouses, family, colleagues, neighbors and strangers! You know when gums have become sexy - when reality TV talks about them on air! The TV host has actually partnered with the American Academy of Periodontology campaign: “Love the Gums You’re With”, bringing awareness to the crucial role of gum health and its association with the rest of your health.

Harrison is quoted, “it’s something that nobody talks about and the fact that one in two adults over the age of 30 are affected by gum disease is staggering. I’m trying to shine a little light on that. You can go to [perio.org](http://perio.org) and learn a lot more about it, but it’s really just the simple things like brushing twice a day and flossing, going to see a dentist twice a year and if you need, a periodontist. It’s a pretty serious issue that you will realize, the baby steps of bad breath, gum irritation, and bleeding, but it can go to much more serious topics like diabetes and heart disease. It’s preventive and you can even reverse the effects of this, so it’s important to get on it.”

A poll conducted last year by UK’s VisionCritical also found that people see whiter teeth as an indication of wealth. The survey showed that people with whiter teeth were thought to earn \$16,000 more on average than they actually did. Sparkling teeth also made them look up to five years younger and improved their employment potential by 10 per cent, results showed.

Hand in hand with bad teeth and gums is the other offensive fact of “bad breath”. We all know someone with bad breath, but we don’t know if we’ve got it. It’s the bad breath paradox. Bad breath is particularly common amongst those who talk a lot (politicians, judges, teachers, doctors) because their mouths dry out. They are in positions of authority, so no one dares tell them they’ve got it. Men are more likely to have it than women and it is a genuine problem. The main cause of bad breath is of course ... gum disease.

Imagine - now that gums have made it to main stream media - my specialty of periodontics is finally sexy! Just call us periodontists Dr Glamour Gums! (member of the American Academy of Periodontology since 1993).



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