



Dear Dental Family:

December 2019

This year we had the opportunity of meeting many new clients at our practice. The reason that I like to call our new visitors clients, rather than patients, is that we want to work together to co-create, rather than have a one sided “Doctor heal me” scenario. At the end of one particular appointment, our client told me that her own philosophy is to treat your family as friends, and your friends as family. How wise. At our office we are always so touched and pleased to have known so many of our clients for such a long period of time. You’ve become like family to me and my team. And for those that are newer to our office, we warmly welcome you into our dental home, where we want to create a safe environment. Excellent dental health plays a large role in our overall health.

The purpose of this holiday message is to wish everybody the very best of the season, and to reflect upon what has been occurring in our world.

I created this newsletter 27 years ago, when my father had open heart surgery, and was not expected to live. He was blessed with a miracle that allowed him to have another 26 years of life.

The following events have contributed to my learning this past year. When I was in my 30’s, and was away from home for a significant period of time, I always thought that my parents stayed the same, and that I was the one who was growing and changing. It was interesting when I talked to them about a significant situation in my life, and how their perspective was different than I had imagined. I realized that at every age we get to reframe, rethink and continue to grow, regardless of our chronological age.

This past year, both of my parents at the age of 94 and 98, passed within 9 weeks of each other. They had been married for 73 years. They both had full lives. I had the gift of having my parents live with me for three years, prior to my mother getting a small infection in her leg that within 48 hours overtook her body, and almost caused her to die. However, she did survive for the next year in palliative care. For the first four months, the only way the nurses could attend to her oral health was with a green swab. After she partially recovered, her care providers tried to use a toothbrush, and only had limited access. It was not an easy task, and she wasn’t able to be fully cooperative, as my mother’s lower teeth were very crowded. Throughout her life she was conscientious, and had excellent oral hygiene. I had no idea this was going to be a problem later in her life, and that a small infection in her mouth could be a contributor to her decline, and possibly be the reason for her death. I never thought that my mother would get dementia, which limited her ability to keep her mouth clean. I was able to save both of my parents’ teeth for a lifetime, which made me very proud. However, I realized that if I’d had today’s technology 20 years ago, I would have been able to create a more stable foundation, to enable them and their caretakers the ability to clean their teeth more effectively.

My father, in his last few years, also developed dementia. He was a grinder, and one day I looked at his lower front teeth and saw that they had almost dissolved before my eyes. I never thought this was possible. It humbled me. As with my mother, I worried how it would affect his body if his teeth would abscess. I could no longer bring either of them to my practice, and with dementia, they did not have the ability to express themselves if they had any major discomfort in their mouths.

Infection can occur around implants, as well as natural teeth. There is no easy answer. For my parents, it was definitely better having teeth, than not having teeth, as they were able to enjoy their food, to digest better, and nourish their bodies. If I’d had the scanning and aligning technology 20 years ago, I would have unravelled my mother’s crowded teeth and aligned my father’s upper and lower teeth to help eliminate the daily heavy pressures, of which he was unaware. I wish I could have created stable foundations for both of them, so that their balanced bite force, and the alignment of their teeth, would have decreased the consequences that could have been life-threatening for them in their 90’s. Research now shows that mouth bacteria is present in 96% of the biopsies of lesions in Alzheimer patients (which includes dementia).

We now have the ability to reach this age with modern medicine. The challenge is to have our healthiest mouth for a lifetime. The 90's are fragile years. It has been my experience that dentistry in our 90's is minimal, and not easy. I believe it is our responsibility to practise Wellness-Based Dentistry at 1950 Yonge St., to optimize our patient's best foundation for longevity. We must prepare ahead of time, and the benefit and by-product is a beautiful smile, a more youthful face, and a healthy foundation! It is an "always" within our practice that we create a digital scan to help our clients have their very best future.

Our office is constantly questing for better ways of creating kinder and less invasive methods of dentistry. Technology has definitely helped us to do this. Most of you have been scanned with one of our 3 iTero machines. This new technology that I was referring to above, is important for each of you. It allows us to update your records and bring you into the visual world of digitization so that we can diagnose and track the changes (by time lapse) that occur physically over several years. My team is loving the opportunity to share this information that we see in your mouth. With the aid of these scans, we can better understand and evaluate the health of your teeth and supporting soft tissues.

Our practice continues to grow and our team is consistent and cohesive. Jelena has a baby girl Chloe. Jasmina delivered a baby girl, Una four weeks early! We also celebrated 2 weddings, for Behnaz and Catalina. We welcome Sheva and Neslihan into the practice. Ljiljana is now teaching Internationally about the iTero scanning device, in her spare time! Our team is diverse! We speak **19** languages and have collectively worked at 1950 Yonge St. for **455** years. A lot of shared dental knowledge and wisdom!

In May, Drs. Leyla Emami, Naz Abbassi and I attended a seminar in Baltimore with Dr. Anthony Sims. We learned about a method that assesses the impact of changing the position of one's lower jaw, and whether that could help people with a variety of neurological impairments, including Tourette's, stuttering and dystonia. We were fascinated, and humbled about the significance and impact of how the 5th cranial nerve in the lower jaw integrates with 8 other cranial nerves! In November, nine of our team members went to Las Vegas for an Invisalign seminar to share and learn. We are excited with the focus of health first, when we track the changes in one's airway, and expand and align with Invisalign technology, which now includes children! It allows us to use minimally invasive dentistry, and is a true win opportunity. And the bonus is that a beautiful and easily manageable smile emerges. The change immediately shows in the face as being more relaxed, youthful and joyful!

Drs. Bernie and Naz continue their studies in implants and new techniques! We are excited to now offer Zirconia implants with Dr. Naz in our practice!

We are entering a new decade where technology is part of our daily life, and we can explore and create better health and communication.

This past year I published the second edition of my book 'Your Mouth: The Gateway to a Healthier You. A yoga-based approach to exploring the connections between oral health, whole body wellness and longevity.' I continue to lecture to the public, and also dental professionals.

I also participated in two-week meditation retreats in both Rishikesh, India and Ubud, Bali. I believe that with all of our technology, we must find our own quiet time to resource our inner selves, and connect our head and heart as one. Science is finding increased evidence that our heart and gut have innate intelligence that connects to our brain. There are many ways that we can access mindfulness. It allows us to have a peaceful, healthier and more joyful life.

"In the past jobs were about muscles, now they are about brains but in the future, they will be about the heart"
- Minouche Shafik, Director of London School of Economics

Many Blessings from our team to you and yours.

Dana.