

Apnea, Beauty and Gorgeous Smiles

By

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Please note that the title is “apnea”, rather than “sleep apnea” or “obstructive sleep apnea” (OSA). Although the medical/dental professions recognize OSA as a structural and stability problem of the jaw-tongue-throat relationship in how the tongue can obstruct the throat, thus the airway, it is critical not to ignore this same structure the rest of the time, i.e. when one is awake.

The absence of restful sleep, associated with OSA, affects our physical, mental/emotional and even spiritual well-being. It also influences our appearance from frown lines to bags under our eyes to tension in various facial muscles.

There is also a "round the clock" impact of this anatomy on the human body through its compensation mechanisms to prevent us from choking from destabilization of the position of the tongue as it controls airflow through our throat.

These compensations are common among people with “apnea”

- Initiation of the “stress response” or what is scientifically referred to as “stress”
- Forward head posture and other alterations of body posture
- Clenching and grinding of teeth

Compensations impact all body systems and cause aging from their wear-and-tear (even at minuscule levels) on us.

First, consider how peaceful and happy we feel. This relates to physical and emotional stress. The stress response, even at a semi or subconscious level, impacts our total facial smile in tension of muscles and “twinkle” in our eyes.

Then, imagine how a “compensated” body, including jaw, posture and movement places a musculo-skeletal load on and damage to all of the joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons from head to toe. This includes the teeth and jaws from clenching and grinding.

Pain, associated with our other systems associated with hormonal imbalances generated by constant mini-stress responses, forces the body to make and secrete stress hormones that impact the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, excretory, reproductive, nervous, musculoskeletal, immune, endocrine, and integumentary systems.

Our inner peace is compromised by anxiety associated with our acceptance of our appearance including our smile.

A cosmetic surgeon might say that our outside appearance influences our inner emotional state. In a similar way, apnea or ease of breathing has its impact both inside and out, affecting us anatomically, as it initiates the stress response effect upon our appearance, comfort, and emotions.