

Importance of Smiling



"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." –Thich Nhat Hanh

Twice a week I take an hour long Pilates class at [Maximum Pilates](#). Not only is Pilates physically good for me, but there is a sense of community with my classmates. During Monday's class, I realized how often we all laugh, mostly at ourselves. And between crunches we started talking about the benefits of smiling. Which of course prompted me to do some research and write this blog post.



My children-always laughing

I believe that you wear your life on your face after 40. Those with happy dispositions have happy wrinkles. And we all know people who are perpetually grumpy. It shows on their face. Granted, life can be difficult, and some people have more angst than others. But often we have choices on how we respond to those life's challenges.



Research shows that there are physical and psychological benefits to smiling. You know the song...Smile and the whole world smiles with you. There is truth to that.

None of us want the RBF (resting bitch face), do we? I had never heard of RBF until my last Pilates class. Cracks me up that RBF is a thing.

How Smiling Affects Your Brain



According to behavior psychologist Sarah Stevenson, “Each time you smile you throw a little feel-good party in your brain.” Dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin increase when you smile. Those endorphins serve as natural pain relievers and act as the body’s own opiates. Hence, reducing blood pressure, increasing endurance and reducing pain. Sounds good to me!



According to Ron Gutman, the author of *Smile: The Astonishing Powers of a Simple Act*, “British researchers found that one smile can generate the same level of brain stimulation as up to 2,000 bars of chocolate.” Think of all the calories you can

save by just smiling!

Even a forced smile can boost your mood. Usually we think that a positive experience is what makes us smile. While this is true, it's also true that merely deciding to smile can provide a positive experience.

Smiling Can Make You Look Younger



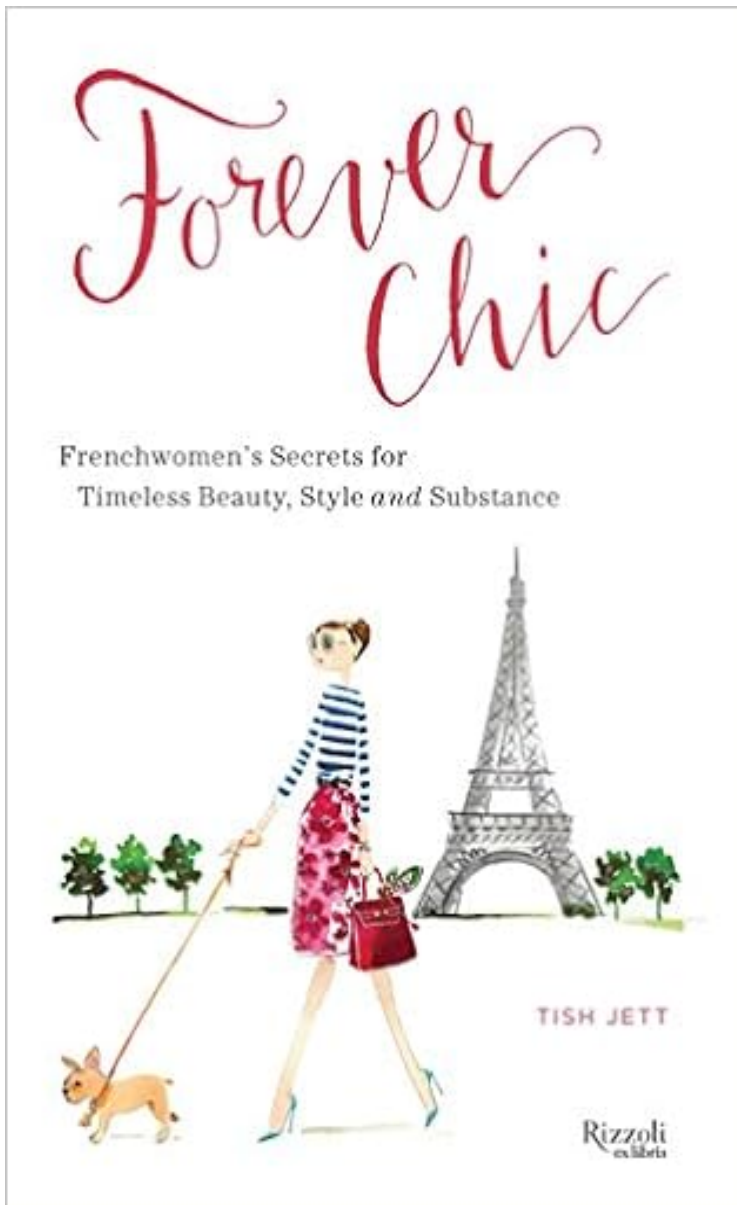
In a small study, college students perceived older people who had happy smiles on their faces as looking younger than their age. The people with frowns on their faces were categorized as looking older.



A smile provides you with a mini-facelift. Turning up the corners of your mouth raises your entire face, including cheeks, jowls, and neck. Try it now! Instead of spending \$15,000 or more on a facelift, just smile.



Smiling can make you look thinner. In a recent study by a young psychology student at University of Missouri, sad faces randomized and flashed on a computer screen were judged to be heftier. A mouth turned down in a frown might give the impression that a person is weighed down by unhappiness.



In her book, [Forever Chic](#), the author, Tish Jett compares the differences in aging between American and French women. A famous French model recommends that the world's most important ageless beauty secret is a smile.

Smiling could add years to your life, according to researchers. The wider you grin and the deeper your laughter lines, the more likely you are to have a long existence.

The impact of smiling on others



Smiles can predict fulfillment in marriage . In a study cited by Gutman, the *Smile* author, the smiles of students were measured, and these ultimately predicted how long-lasting and satisfying the person's marriage would be. Right! Who wants to live with a grouch?

Smiling makes you seem courteous, likable, and competent. If you look sad or anxious, perhaps others wonder if you know what you are doing. So perhaps a simple smile might be a shortcut to business success. When you smile, people treat you differently. You're viewed as attractive, reliable, relaxed, and sincere.



Pure joy in the rain!

Smiling is contagious. If you like to help others and lift the spirits of everyone you see, just smile.



One of my favorite pictures of my Dad and sister. Dad was always laughing

So what can we do to smile more? Are you ready to up your smiling game for a week? Don't you think we need less fear and more smiles in this world right now?

Remind yourself to smile throughout your day and even force a smile onto your face periodically. That set of muscles is closely connected to your happiness and joy emotions. By smiling, you are signaling the emotional centers of your brain to tell them that everything is good. So even if it's not, it will be soon.

I am boarding a plane today so I will need lots of sanitizer and smiles. Not sure if I will be posting on the blog while traveling this next week. But I will check in with you to see if you are smiling!

Have a fabulous Saturday!

Mary