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Picture Perfect

When a much longed-for first child arrives you can expect to see numerous smiling photographs of mother and baby. But there are none of Katherine Morris and son Alex. “If I saw any pictures where I was smiling, I hit the delete button straightaway,” she says. “You won’t find any in the house.”

Alex was born in 2004 after Katherine spent eight years trying to conceive, suffered an ectopic pregnancy and resorted finally to IVF. Those happy with their smile may struggle to imagine how - at such a moment of celebration - she could be so painfully concerned about the way she appeared on camera.

“I was just so down about the way my teeth looked,” says Katherine. “Every time I glanced in the mirror I thought they looked horrendous and it had got to the stage where I covered my mouth with my hand when I spoke. I hated pictures of myself smiling and had become incredibly self-conscious. You get paranoid, imagining all the time what people are thinking when you speak or smile.”

She decided it was time to take action and began researching options on the internet, where she came across the Windsor Centre for Advanced Dentistry. “I looked at the case studies on their website and could really relate to them. When I saw the before and after shots of patients they’d treated I just thought ‘wow’ - if they could do that for me it would be fantastic.”

Katherine had first begun experiencing dental problems 10 years earlier at the age of 26, when she sensed one of her teeth was shifting. After wearing a brace for two years, she noticed gaps were appearing between her teeth and a few felt slightly loose. Before long, ulcers and infection became an increasing problem. As Dr Tidu Mankoo confirmed at her initial consultation, in the past few years there had been a drastic deterioration in the health and stability of Katherine’s gums and teeth as a result of undetected periodontal disease and bone loss.

“I was told the prognosis for most of my teeth was very poor, and that the best long term solution would be to replace the majority with dental implants and restore others with fixed crowns and bridges,” explains Katherine. “I knew that if left untreated the condition would get progressively worse, and felt it was a ‘now or never’ decision. To know there was an answer and that I could walk away with a perfect smile was amazing, but it was still a significant step financially.”

With the full support of husband William, who she met 18 years ago, she went ahead. “Although William always assured me that I was more aware of the problem than other people, he was completely



behind me. It may seem like vanity to some, and I know there are many far more serious conditions. One of my sisters, who had spina bifida, had died just four years earlier and for a long time I couldn't think about anything else. But the way you look can massively affect your self-confidence and how you wake up feeling each day."

The treatment spanned two years but once on the road she never looked back. "The most memorable moment was relatively early on, when I had the first temporary bridge fitted," recalls Katherine. "Even then my teeth looked a hundred times better than before and I could already see what a dramatic transformation there was going to be. I was able to start smiling again."

The journey was made easy by the total faith she had in Dr Tidu Mankoo and his team. "What especially impressed me was their professionalism and friendliness. Everyone made me feel so at ease and the atmosphere was totally relaxed and calm. It sounds odd, but it was actually a lovely place to be! And Tidu's skill is quite exceptional. I'd rung around other dental specialists before choosing his practice but none were willing or had the expertise to take on my case."

Her teeth, of course, look perfect, but equally importantly her family and friends have noticed she's now happier and far more confident. "I felt quite desperate before and I worried about the future," says Katherine. "Having the work done has been so liberating and it's enabled me to get on with my life. But the biggest bonus is that I never think twice about having my photograph taken with Alex."

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Names have been changed for reasons of privacy



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