



# Picture Perfect

*A sparkling smile gave Kathleen Ladelpha the confidence she needed to conquer a new life phase in dazzling style.* BY MARISSA STAPLEY-PONIKOWSKI

**K**athleen Ladelpha has a motto: do what gives you life. She coined the saying while running the Sensational Fitness Group in Ottawa – a studio for women offering everything from fitness classes to pole dancing instruction – and it stuck. Since revamping her life by closing the business and moving from her hometown to Toronto, the vibrant Ladelpha is still determined to live large every single day. And she recently decided having a perfect smile was an important piece of the puzzle.

“I realized my children had grown into young adults,” says the single mom of a son and a daughter, both now in university. “And that meant I had an opportunity to rearrange my ‘to do’ list in life. I could do some of the things that used to be on the bottom of the list: the things that were for me.”

So after settling into a new job as a sales and business development manager with a medical device company, Ladelpha set about finding a cosmetic dentist who could give her the smile she’d always dreamed of. When she met Dr. Sol Weiss, DMD, co-owner of The Art of Dentistry in Toronto, she knew he was the one.

“He had a good sense of what I was telling him immediately, and his demeanor was very personable. He’s a perfectionist, and has a great staff, so I knew right away. I told him to go ahead immediately.”

Ladelpha says she’d never been happy with her smile because she felt her teeth were too small and her bottom teeth were crooked. According to Dr. Weiss, that made her a good candidate for veneers and crowns. “We see the lips as a sort of frame for the teeth, and the frame in this case was nice, but the entire picture wasn’t quite visible – meaning when Kathleen’s lips were at rest, her teeth could not be

seen.” Dr. Weiss says Ladelpha also complained that even when she smiled, her teeth didn’t show. She was looking for a more dramatic smile.

Dr. Weiss and Ladelpha poured over photos and discussed tooth size and colour – every person is unique, and their teeth should be, too, says Dr. Weiss – before choosing Ladelpha’s new dental look. To address the issues she had with her bottom teeth, as well as an overbite, Dr. Weiss suggested Invisalign: a series of invisible aligning devices that gradually shift teeth into place. The process for Ladelpha would take about six months. “We try to be more conservative with bottom teeth since they aren’t front and centre,” says Dr. Weiss.

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“The whole process was quite simple,” says Ladelpha, who had temporary veneers and crowns put on her teeth when she returned to Dr. Weiss’ office after the initial consultation. “My challenge was being patient, because I had to wait three or four weeks for the permanent teeth to be ready. I was so excited!”

Ladelpha’s own teeth were shaved down to make room for the veneers and crowns. “It wasn’t very painful – I was given a local anesthetic and was able to relax the whole time. It was actually fun, if you can think of any kind of dental work being fun.”

Dr. Weiss then instructed Ladelpha to stick to a fairly soft diet until she returned. “But her temporary veneers and crowns were on quite tightly, so I

wasn’t too concerned.”

“It was amazing,” says Ladelpha. “By the time I left that first appointment, I had a very good sense of how I was going to look with the permanents on, and I was incredibly pleased.”

The best was yet to come. Less than a month later, it was time for Ladelpha to welcome her gorgeous new smile, along with the Invisaligns. “It’s a life-altering experience when you have something you’re extremely self-conscious about fixed. Now I have complete strangers telling me how wonderful a smile I have and how beautiful my teeth are. It’s very odd to hear that.”

Dr. Weiss says Ladelpha’s new smile should last about 10 or 15 years. “There’s a lifespan with any restoration, but it will last longer if it’s done well. I also tell my patients this lifespan can be increased by how well they take care of their crowns and veneers.” He recommends checkups every three to six months and scrupulous cleaning and flossing. “Most people don’t floss, but it’s important to do it a minimum of once a day. It’s a good habit to get into, especially when you’re younger, because when you get into your 40s and 50s there may be bone loss, spaces opening up, and the gums shrinking a little. If you’ve taken good care of your teeth before, you won’t have to worry quite as much.”

Ladelpha has definitely worked flossing into her daily routine. “I smile a lot more, too – especially when my children come to visit. I feel great. I love putting my lipstick on because I get to look at how white my teeth are and the great shape they have. Now I’ve got the sparkling smile to go with my dazzling new life!”

Crowns and veneers start at \$1,500 each, and Invisalign costs between \$3,000 and 6,000. Ladelpha’s procedure, including crowns, veneers and Invisalign, cost about \$12,000. **e**