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Your smile is a messenger of good will. It can brighten the lives of all who see it. To someone else who is dealing with people’s frowns, scowls, or even others who simply look away, your smile can be like the sun breaking through the clouds. Especially when that someone is under pressure from their bosses, customers, teachers, parents, spouses, or children, a smile can help them realize that all is not hopeless--that there is joy in the world.

When someone smiles at you, it is almost impossible to not smile back, and when two people exchange smiles, their worlds instantly change. Smiling and the feelings associated with it are contagious, much in the same manner as laughter. Once, when I took my two-year-old grandson to Dairy Queen for lunch and ice cream, I (jokingly) in a serious voice and stern look told him it was “time to eat--no laughing and no smiling.” He tried to keep a straight face while chewing his food. Me, trying not to smile at the sight of his effort to be serious, let out a smile, which in turn ignited a huge smile from him. Then we both laughed.

Another time I was sitting in the waiting area at my dentist’s office and

## The value of a smile

noticed another man waiting with a bitter look on his face. He told me he hoped I didn’t have anything else to do that day because I’ll be waiting all day before they call me in for my appointment. I smiled and said “I hope not,” but he didn’t look at me so he didn’t notice my smile. A few minutes later, two women with a baby came in and sat down next to him. The baby kept staring at the man until finally, the grumpy man looked at the baby. The baby gave a big smile, turning the man’s sour face into a pleasant one. The man began talking to the baby, then to the women as well. He told them all about his grandchildren. At that point, the long wait no longer seemed to bother the man--all because of a baby’s smile.

The effect of a smile is powerful, even when it is unseen. Customer service agents are trained to smile when talking on the phone. Why? Because a person’s smile comes through in their voice. I know this to be true. Whenever I speak to my Uncle Johnny on the phone, I know when he is smiling because I can hear it in his voice. This is true for others I talk with as well. And when I can hear a smile in someone’s voice, our conversation is more comforting and my mood changes. I’m happier for having heard their smiles.

A smile is valuable in the business world too. Salespeople who smile more are more profitable than those who smile less. Charles Schwab, a successful businessman, said his smile was worth a million dollars. It was the bedrock of his personality and charm, and it attracted loyal customers and clients. And I’ve known some people to gain employment as clerks over others more qualified simply because they smiled more during their job interview.

Lastly, I leave you with this wall message posted in a New York City department store:

### *The Value of a Smile*

*It costs nothing, but creates much.*

*It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give.*

*It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.*

*None are so rich they can get along without it, and none so poor but are richer for its benefits.*

*It creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in a business, and is the countersign of friends.*

*It is rest to the weary, daylight to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and nature’s best antidote for trouble.*

*For nobody needs a smile so much as those who have none left to give.*

~ The End ~