

TOOTH IN ADVERTISING

Breathes there a baby boomer so edentulous who has not heard (since the College Of Toothsayers began issuing such edicts) a different story every half-decade or so on the toothbrushing rules of order?

Every five years, new rules. The variations, however, are only twofold, and have never changed:

Up & down.

Or, side to side.

These are alternated to keep us off balance, and to insure that our rate of tooth decay and dental expenditures remains constant, because we all really know, deep down in our gums, that neither way is correct. The only surefire way to keep the sentinels in our buccal caves from disintegrating is to chip out the plaque with those tiny eyeglass screwdrivers.

That's the beauty of a perfect conspiracy.

Think about how we've always seen toothpaste commercially placed on a brush: Slowly, elegantly, riding atop the bristles in a thick, rippling conduit, then fancily twisting over and across, finally dipping up to a tantalizing, whipped-topping peak like a vanilla smoothee. The texture, design and application nothing less than a celebrated laying-on of (not only intending, but exploiting the pun) transcen-dental goo.

Makes one feel shameful, to squeeze out such a plushy sculpture of fluoride frosting, only to jam it into a mouthful of clinging spinach flakes.

Speaking off the cuspid, I say such a weaving, sloping, creamy artifice should be returned to the second shelf from the bottom and left to cure as a centerpiece for your other toiletries, so that all who come to your water closet seeking respite and relief may sit in awe, awash in the splendor of your bristling new art form.

Some goo-makers over the years, in an effort to enhance this experience beyond a mere aesthetic detour, added stripes or sparkling gels to the mix, even pushing the edge of the

envelope (thinking INSIDE the box) by winding the oozing contour back upon itself, beckoning the brush's centripetal quills below.

Then, standing before the vanity, raising the glimmering, high-riding sludge to our mouths, lips parted, teeth clenched, cheeks drawn back in anticipation --- we didn't brush.

We watched.

As it plopped into the sink.

I think we can all agree there've been forty billion brushings in the last forty years, and that's being liberally conservative. Averaging it out, let's say that one per cent of those brushings resulted in the aforementioned sinkplop, roughly 27,000 per day.

That's 1,500 TONS of toothpaste down the drain since I first stepped up on the footstool to refreshen my baby whites in an up and down circular motion. In my childhood alone, I'm personally responsible for 14.6 pounds.

Next time you load up, squeeze a dab deep into the brush, mashing it hard into the bristles. This eliminates the plop factor.

Brush your teeth obliquely. We've never been told by anyone in the tooth and brush alliance to do it this way. There must be a reason.

Pick out the remaining spinach with your teeny flathead screwdriver.

Do this deliberately and slowly.

Haste makes paste.

Smile.

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