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## Lasting impressions

- **Competition shows how orthodontic treatment can help straighten people's lives ... not just their teeth**

*"A comment on someone's appearance can create a lasting negative impact on how young people feel about themselves, which not only affects their self-esteem but also how they interact with others for years to come".* So says Tim Newton, Professor of Psychology as Applied to Dentistry and Head of Oral Health Services Research at the King's College London Dental Institute.

This was certainly the case for Linsay Graham. Growing up, this young woman from West Lothian in Scotland found very little to smile about. Her shy nature and unease about her crooked teeth emerged at an early age, and was exacerbated by the tragic loss of her brother at only 15 years old. This trauma led to the teenager suffering from extreme anxiety, to the extent that she attended a special unit designed to help young people. Fearful every time she was separated from her family, Linsay's sense of unrest was intensified by her feeling that everyone she met was talking about her and judging her because of the appearance of her overcrowded and uneven teeth.

An especially insensitive comment about her teeth by a friend, gave Linsay the impetus to embark on orthodontic treatment, hopeful that this would be the catalyst she needed to straighten out her life, as well as her teeth. However just walking into the orthodontic practice meant overcoming considerable anxiety, but as she built up trust in her Orthodontic Specialist Dr Mustafa Abdel Ellah Mustafa at Sayegh & Partners Orthodontics in Musselburgh, Scotland she slowly gained in confidence. More importantly, as soon as she began to see the incredible results he was achieving in her mouth, she has never looked back.

As Linsay points out, her crooked teeth were never just an aesthetic issue. *"Getting braces changed more than just my appearance. My whole outlook on life changed"*. The positivity her new look has given her has changed every aspect of her life. She is now going to university to study Psychology; something the girl once too fearful to leave the house could never have imagined doing. For a girl who never used to smile, Linsay now can't stop beaming.

Linsay's inspiring story has now won her more than admiration for the way she faced up to her demons. It has also won her first prize and a chance to broaden her horizons thanks to a £750 travel grant from orthodontic company Ormco. The Against the Odds competition is the brainchild of the British Orthodontic Society (BOS), which represents the dental specialty of orthodontics; the science and art of correcting irregularities of the teeth, bite and jaws. The entries to the competition were judged by Professor Tim Newton, along with Sara Wallis, feature writer of the Daily Mirror, Specialist Orthodontist Harneet Mangat and Consultant Orthodontist Alison Williams.

Professor Tim Newton, commented further on the psychological impact of her treatment: *“Linsay has faced many difficulties in her young life, which led to her losing confidence in herself. A beautiful smile played a large part in her recovery, allowing her to face the world with greater self-assurance.”* Whilst Journalist Sara Wallis admired her story: *“Linsay battled depression and anxiety in her teens and always felt insecure about the way her mouth looked. Since her orthodontic treatment her life has changed dramatically and she now has a brighter future ahead of her.”*

For more information about orthodontics visit The British Orthodontic Society’s website [www.bos.org.uk](http://www.bos.org.uk)