

Keynote

The hidden power of smiling, Ron Gutman

B1–C2

Discussion

1 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

- 1 How much do you smile? Do you think other people think you smile a lot?
- 2 What (or who) makes you smile? Why?
- 3 In what professions is someone's facial expression – including their smile – particularly important?
- 4 Is it possible to smile too much? Why / Why not?

Key words

2 Work in pairs. Follow the instructions.

- 1 Student A, try to make B smile. Student B, try to **suppress** your smile. Swap roles.
- 2 Student B, try smiling in different ways. Student A, try to **mimic** your partner's smiles. Swap roles.

3 Work in pairs. Choose the best motivational message(s) for the staffroom of a hospital. Discuss the reasons for your choice.

- a A smile is **contagious** – pass it along!
- b Healthcare is an attitude. Patients can tell a **fake** smile from a real one.
- c Every human culture **expresses** joy by using the same language – the language of smiling.
- d Given a choice between a smiling nurse and one who is **frowning**, who would you approach?
- e Your level of patient care is measured in the **span** of your smile.

4 Match the words in bold in Exercises 2 and 3 with these definitions.

- 1 false _____
- 2 spreading quickly from one person to another, like a disease _____
- 3 copy someone's behaviour, voice or facial expression _____
- 4 length _____
- 5 shows _____
- 6 showing unhappiness, anger or concentration by bringing your eyebrows down and closer together _____
- 7 stop yourself feeling or showing an emotion _____

Comprehension

5 Watch Ron Gutman's TED Talk, *The hidden power of smiling*, on TED.com. Then decide if these statements are true or false.

- 1 When he was a child, Ron Gutman wanted superpowers. _____
- 2 A study in California looked at the relationship between people's smiles in their old college yearbooks and their future success. _____
- 3 Baseball players who didn't smile in their pictures lived longer than players who had big, beaming smiles. _____
- 4 According to Gutman, we learn to smile from our parents. _____
- 5 Different cultures use smiles to express different emotions. _____
- 6 Children smile on average more than adults. _____
- 7 If you put a pencil in your mouth it is harder to judge whether another person's smile is real or fake. _____

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- 8 Smiling shows happiness, but Darwin suggested that smiling can make you happy, too. _____
- 9 According to Gutman, studies have found that one smile stimulates the brain almost as much as a bar of chocolate. _____

The big idea

6 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

- Ron Gutman claims that smiling is a superpower. In what ways is it a superpower?
- Look at the following pieces of evidence that Gutman uses to support his point. Which are the most convincing, in your opinion?
 - the research comparing people's smiles and their later lives
 - the information about babies smiling
 - the information about smiling in different cultures
 - the information about how often people smile
 - the research about how smiling affects other people
 - the evidence that smiling stimulates the brain
- Overall, are you convinced by his argument that smiling is so 'super'?

Language focus – describing health benefits

7 Work in pairs. What information is missing in these facts about smiling? Watch the TED Talk again from 3.22 to the end to check your answers.

- It's very difficult to _____ when you look at someone who is smiling.
- Seeing other people smile suppresses the control we usually have on our _____.
- Charles Darwin said that smiling makes us feel _____.
- Smiling stimulates the brain's reward mechanism even more than _____ or being given _____.
- Smiling can help reduce the level of stress-enhancing _____, like cortisol, adrenaline and dopamine.
- It _____ blood pressure.
- Smiling can help you and everyone around you live a longer, _____, _____ life!

8 Complete the text with words from the box.

benefits	help	improve	keep	likely	lower	stimulates	suppresses
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Smiling is just one of many surprisingly simple steps we can take to ¹_____ our health and quality of life. For example, a growing number of studies* suggest that having a pet such as a dog or cat in the home can ²_____ you live a healthier life. Children from homes with dogs are more than a third less ³_____ to have allergies – it is thought that the presence of dogs and cats, which bring dirt into the house, ⁴_____ a stronger immune system and generates higher levels of some chemicals involved in the immune system in babies and young children. Another study found that having an animal in the home ⁵_____ anxiety and panic attacks in elderly patients with Alzheimer's, by helping to reduce the level of stress-enhancing hormones. Petting a dog can ⁶_____ blood pressure more than chatting to a friend. And let's not forget the health ⁷_____ of all that dog walking; doing exercise for just thirty minutes per day could ⁸_____ you happier for as long as twelve hours.

* See Vormbrock and Grossberg, (1988) Cardiovascular effects of human-pet dog interactions, *Journal of Behavioural Medicine*. 11(5), 509–17.

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Speaking

9 Work in groups. Decide which five of these simple lifestyle habits would be most effective in improving the health of the general population.

- Walk for thirty minutes every day.
- Turn off screens and mobile devices at least an hour before you go to bed.
- Take up yoga or a similar activity.
- Take the stairs (not the lift).
- Smile more.
- Slow down – take five minutes each day to do nothing at all.
- Get a pet.
- Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Drink water instead of caffeinated or alcoholic drinks.
- Cut out sugar from your diet.

10 In your groups, choose one of the lifestyle habits and plan a promotional advertising campaign to promote the idea.