



April 2011 – Smile

I write this since returning to London from a trip to Switzerland. It was my first visit back since moving away almost a year ago.

The theme for the trip started on my second day when I joined a group of friends for coffee. Three people in particular were surprised to see me. Grins were plastered on their faces signaling they were happy to see me, they welcomed me back and I felt welcomed. I talked to one of them afterwards about what that SMILE meant – she had no idea she had really smiled, she hadn't even thought about it, she was just happy to see me. She didn't intentionally set out to lift my spirits, it wasn't a calculated plan and it had impacted me greatly.

I started noticing wonderful smiles on various friends and acquaintances I met during my trip - A fantastic smile across a restaurant table; a warm smile before the Swiss three-kiss greeting; a giggling smile over a shared joke.

Then there is my own smile – I spent an afternoon with a friend in London, laughing about silly things as girls sometimes do and she took my picture. I didn't think much about it until I put it on Facebook. Friends commented on the picture and a one said "I like it best when you smile that ear to ear grin". I had never really thought of that before and on reflection, I know I'm feeling pretty good when that grin comes out! So a smile is not just for the receiver, it can reflect and warm the heart of the "owner".

Then last night I heard about a project from 1995 called *A Smile to Remember*. It was a MBA project to put smiles on the faces of kids in refugee camps in Croatia through theatre. It is still remembered years later by those involved, the witnesses to smiles on the kids' faces – that's the impact of a 2 week program with SMILES as the goal.

A smile is best when you give it away. It costs nothing and can multiply. It is enjoyed by both the giver and receiver. It's contagious in a good way. It can brighten your own day and unknowingly, someone else could be touched by it. It can be fleeting and the impact forever.

SMILE.

Live your potential

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