**Turning decay into art**

A trip outside becomes a good reminder not to lose sight of what we do on a daily basis

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Editor in Chief

Earth Day this year coincided with some of the best walking weather New York City has seen in a very long time. I was lucky enough to have been out of the office and up on an elevated park called The High Line. Once a stretch of railway designed to bring produce and other goods into the city, it is now a diverse landscape of natural beauty. Even on the hottest day, soft breezes flow up from the nearby Hudson River. It took about 10 years from conception to completion.

The dream of turning an abandoned railway into a park goes back to 1999. The idea was to transform the 1.45-mile-long stretch of New York City’s original elevated railway into a field of yellow wildflowers? What was that about? It’s called The High Line, a popular revitalized area that is now a vibrant revitalized area.

My favorite place to pick up a picnic lunch is the Chelsea Market. The site of the old Nabisco factory, it is a cornerstone of this park. The elevated railway was originally designed to keep people safe from the massive traffic jam of delivery trucks dodging a street level train. So many pedestrians were killed over the years that a street below is called Death Avenue for good reason. On this particular April morning, delicate narcissus flowers elighted elevated walkers and the varied scents of duty-free perfumes replaced acrid locomotive fumes.

Grassroots community effort has turned decay into beauty. Unless you know the history of the park, you might not see the big picture. We as dental professionals can lose sight of the fact that we are the ones working on that small scale.

Day to day we turn decay into miniatures works of art. Sometimes in a half-hour restoration, sometimes over a six-month implant case. Creating tiny miracles on a weekly basis, are we so much in the “now” or the “present” that we forget why we are here? Most of us are here to start our own “beautification project” and to help the patients who restore one area of their bodies. Sometimes in life.

How many times have we heard of patients who restore one area of their mouth with an implant and then become motivated to continue with more treatment? You develop the patients’ trust, and they make up their own mind to do the right thing. They become motivated to start their own “beautification project” and come in for regular recare appointments.

Today was a day to pause and reflect on the interdependence, interconnectedness on a global scale. I couldn’t help but think of how it applies to my own worklife on a day-to-day basis.

The diversity of the languages you hear among New York tourists is always entertaining. We pretty much all dress alike these days, so it’s the cacophony of foreign words that adds a bit of zest to one’s walk. The food carts, the artists, the street singers — they’re all up on the High Line too, along with monks in flowing orange robes. The monks seemed to fit in perfectly with the simple bamboo garden.

With an atmosphere designed to bring peace and self-awareness to a bustling city, the park is perfect for an easy two-mile walk or a seat for quiet contemplation. Just as I was about to leave, a Buddhist monk thanked me for my small donation. He handed me a simple wooden-bead bracelet and a card that reads, “Work smoothly, lifetime peace.”

Can’t say I need to wish for much more in life.