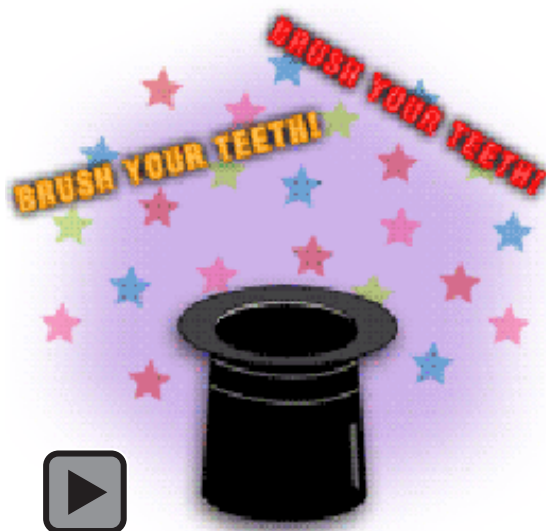


## It's Magic: A Unique Practice Management Strategy

Steven Schwartz, DDS



### Abstract

For thousands of years prior to the advent of modern dentistry, magic has been used to entertain, impress, and motivate individuals. Today's dental professionals are using the concept of The Magic of a Healthy Smile through their use of modern clinical techniques and as a means for practice marketing, patient education, and the reduction of patient stress and fear. This article describes how dentists/magicians have incorporated magic into their practices and the benefits of this useful patient management strategy. A script of the "Happy Tooth Magic Show" and resources for dentists to create their own dental magic show are provided.

**Keywords:** Dental magic show, patient education, practice marketing, dental fear reduction

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## Introduction

During a recent literature search the phrase, "The Magic of a Healthy Smile," yielded more than 80,000 references containing this phrase. The majority of the references related in some manner to dentistry and the profession's goal to create healthy smiles. For thousands of years, prior to the advent of modern dentistry, magic has been used to entertain, impress, and motivate individuals. Today's dental professionals promote the concept of "The Magic of a Healthy Smile" through their use of modern clinical techniques and as a means for practice marketing, patient education, and the reduction of patient stress and fear.



The incorporation of magic into dental practice is well established and growing. Louis Melamed, President of Dentallusions, Inc., a company specializing in dental marketing services, produces easy to learn and perform magic tricks customized for the dental industry. He has sold more than 10,000 magic kits to over 4,000 dentists worldwide over a 25 year period and the number continues to grow. The magic tricks are designed primarily for chair side use and focus on educating patients about various dental procedures, i.e., taking radiographs, extractions, oral hygiene techniques, and fluoride treatments, etc. Melamed states the feedback he receives from his clients indicates the benefits of incorporating magic into the dental practice are not limited to patient education but also enhance practice marketing.

This is confirmed by Dr. Mark Kaschube, an Illinois dental practitioner and professional magi-

cian who performs magic acts in Las Vegas featuring exotic animals and high tech pyrotechnics and illusions. Kaschube regularly invites school children to his office for magic shows and lessons about dentistry. He reports a class of 25 school children experiencing the magic show typically results in 2-3 patients joining the practice. An additional benefit of incorporating magic into his practice is children and adults relax with magic. He says, "People come here fearing and expecting the worst and leave laughing."

Dr. Bruce Lish, a New York dental practitioner, expresses similar sentiments. Dr. Lish performs magic, chair side, as a reward for patients exhibiting good behavior (children and adults). In addition, his "Dr. Molar Magic Show" is the foundation of his practice marketing program. Visiting schools throughout the year, Dr. Lish educates his audiences on the benefits of practicing good oral hygiene and familiarization with the dental office. The children are directed to his "Dr. Molar Magic" website where they can register for a bimonthly newsletter, receive dental health related prizes, and report lost baby teeth to the Tooth Fairy.



Dr. Kit Weathers, a Georgia dental practitioner and professional speaker, uses magic to spice up his endodontic seminars. Dr. Weathers explains, "Spending two days learning endodontics can become boring even when listening to an exciting speaker. Besides helping me keep the audience's attention it helps me drive home important concepts." One of his favorite illu-

sions is opening a very small briefcase onstage and removing a variety of large tools to emphasize the point that just as in heavy construction, when rendering endodontic treatment the right equipment and tools are necessary to do the job correctly. During his seminar participants are taught three chair side magic tricks they can use to entertain and educate patients.

For more than 15 years, the author has used magic to educate and relax pediatric dental patients and market the practice. "The Happy Tooth Magic Show" reaches over 2,000 school children annually and is responsible for the referral of 20% of new patients to the practice. The illusions presented in the show can be performed by anyone that has the dexterity to perform dentistry. Readers are invited to incorporate the "Happy Tooth Magic Show" into their practice. The show's material is **NOT** copyrighted and may be used in its entirety or altered as desired. The only restrictions are both the magician and audience must have fun during the performance and the magician must not reveal the illusion's secrets to the audience.

#### Useful Resources

The illusions presented in the "Happy Tooth Magic Show" script, except for the tooth silks, may be purchased in any magic shop or website devoted to magic supplies and then adapted for dental use. The tooth silks and specifically designed dental illusions for chair side use and small

audiences may be ordered from Dentallusions (phone: (800) 568-3464; e-mail: [www.dentallusions.com](http://www.dentallusions.com)). Since many of the magic tricks may go under different names depending on the manufacturer, the author suggests readers bring a copy of the script to their local magic shop to provide a proper description of the illusion.

Information on other illusions, props, and programs may be found at the following websites (sites visited, November 1, 2003):

[www.dentallusions.com](http://www.dentallusions.com) Louis Melamed, President

[www.magicdentist.com](http://www.magicdentist.com) Dr. Mark Kaschube

[www.drmlarmagic.com](http://www.drmlarmagic.com) Dr. Bruce Lish

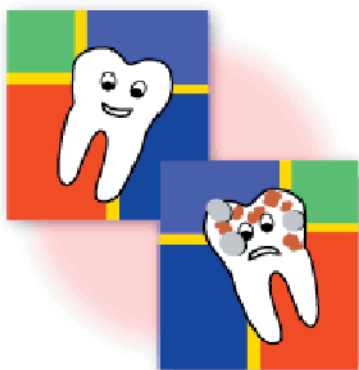
[www.ce-magic.com](http://www.ce-magic.com) Dr. Kit Weathers

[www.magicsam.com](http://www.magicsam.com) Society of American Magicians

[www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org) International Brotherhood of Magicians

[www.teachingaid.com](http://www.teachingaid.com) Zoo Animal Teaching Aids

[www.kumquats.de](http://www.kumquats.de) Kumquats Demonstration Puppets



## About the Author

**Steven Schwartz, DDS**



Dr. Schwartz has maintained a private pediatric dentistry practice for over 25 years. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and Director of Pediatric Dentistry at Staten Island University Hospital. He received his training in personal and business coaching from the Coaches Certification Institute in New York and is an executive coach with Right Management Consultants. As president of WOW! Enterprises, his seminars and coaching have inspired countless people to achieve their goals, be the best in their chosen profession, and fulfill their wildest dreams. Excerpts from his highly acclaimed book *"It's Your Choice! – Creating a Blueprint for Total Professional and Personal Success"* may be found at [www.wowseminars.com](http://www.wowseminars.com).

## The Happy Tooth Magic Show

Steven Schwartz, DDS



Note: ( ) indicates action by the magician. Text in *Italics* indicate audience responses.  
The length of the magic show is approximately 30 minutes.

“Good morning!”  
*Good morning.*

“Are you wide awake or are some of you still asleep sleeping? I gave you a great big good morning.  
Good morning!!!”  
*GOOD MORNING!!!.*

“Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Dr. (Name) and I’m a special type of doctor. I’m a dentist. Who knows what a dentist does?”  
*Takes care of Teeth.*

“Takes care of teeth, that’s right. And I know everything there is to know about teeth. For example, teeth are the things on top of your head (Point to hair). Is that right?”  
*No!*

“Okay, okay, I know I saw some teeth yesterday. Are these teeth?” (Point to ears).  
*No!*

“Is this a tooth?” (Point to nose).  
*No!*

“Then where are your teeth?”  
*In your mouth!*

"That's right. How could I forget? Do all of you have teeth?"

*Yes!*

"Well if everyone has teeth then teeth must be real important. Why do we need teeth?"

*To chew. To talk. To smile.*

"That's right. We need our teeth to chew our food, to make sounds when we talk, and to have a pretty smile. Teeth are pretty important. So today I'm going to teach you how to take care of your teeth and do some magic. Now to do magic we need some magic words. Who knows some magic words?"

*Abracadabra; Hocus pocus; Alakazam, etc.*

"Those are pretty good words, but since we'll be talking about teeth, the magic words we're going to use are "Brush Your Teeth." Let me hear you say that."

*Brush Your Teeth.*

Good. What are the words again?

*Brush Your Teeth.*

"Terrific. Now that we know the magic words I need a helper. Who wants to be my helper?"

(Pick the first child who raises their hand. If possible, ask the teacher beforehand whom they feel will be the most responsive child.)

"Come on up. What's your name?"

*Child responds.*

"I like what you're wearing but I have to make you look more like a magician. Let's see what I have here. Oh look I have a magician's hat." (Put magician's hat on helper's head) The next thing we need is a magic wand. (Turn to helper) Did you bring a magic wand to school today?"

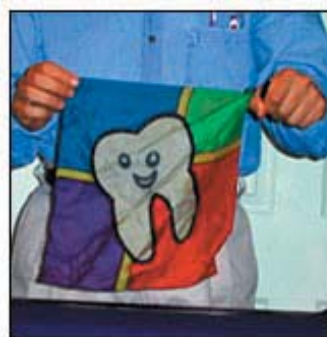
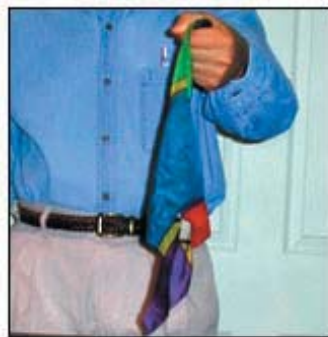
*No.*

"Well I guess we'll have to find one because we can't do magic without a magic wand. We need some help to find a magic wand. Now the name of this magic show is the "Happy Tooth Magic Show." There's a picture of Happy Tooth on my box (point to magician's carrying case). There is a picture of Happy Tooth on my shirt (Point to shirt) and a picture of Happy Tooth on the magician's hat (Previously prepared with a Happy Tooth).

But I have a real live Happy Tooth sleeping in my box and I bet if you shout out the magic words Happy Tooth will wake up and help us find a magic wand. At the count of three, say the magic words, "Brush Your Teeth." One, two, three."

*Brush Your Teeth!*

(Remove from the box the Appearing Cane illusion with an attached Happy Tooth silk).



“Here we have a real live Happy Tooth, and if I wave him up and down while you say the magic words again he’ll find us a magic wand. One, two, three.”

*Brush Your Teeth!*

(A large magic wand appears.) You hold this wand. (Hand the wand to your helper.)

“Hmm. That wand seems a bit large for you. Let me find a smaller wand.”

(Take the wand from your helper and give him a smaller collapsing wand.)

“That wand won’t work. Let me find another wand for you.”

(Take collapsed wand from the volunteer and give him/her the multiplying wand. The child should be unable to hold all the wands produced.)

“That’s not going to work. We need something else to wave. Wait a minute what were the magic words.”

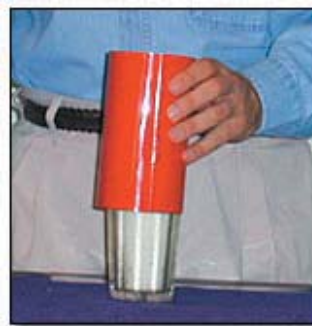
*Brush Your Teeth*

“Then instead of needing a magic wand, we need a magic toothbrush.”

(Retrieve an oversized toothbrush and give it to your assistant.)

“We’ll do some more magic in a moment, but let’s first talk about taking care of our teeth. There are certain foods that are good for our teeth and certain foods that are bad for our teeth. Fruits and vegetables, cheese, etc. are good for our teeth. Foods that are bad for our teeth are foods that contain a lot of sugar, like candy, especially the sticky kind, like taffy and caramels. I’d like to show you what happens when you eat lots of candy and you don’t brush your teeth.

The first thing we’re going to do is make candy. Candy is made out of two things: sugar and color. What I have here is a glass of sugar (Sugar to Candy illusion.) and a magic can. I’m going to place the can over the glass of sugar (Show the audience there is nothing in the can.), you’re going to wave the magic wand (Look at your helper.), and everyone is going to say the magic words after I count to three. One, two, three.”



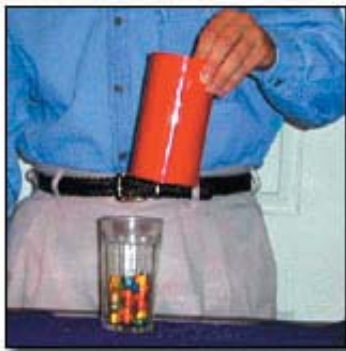
*Brush Your Teeth! (Helper waves toothbrush).*

(Lift can from glass of sugar.)

“Uh-oh. The sugar didn’t turn into candy. Hmm. I know what went wrong. Remember I told you candy is made out of sugar and colors. We didn’t have colors. That’s the problem. We need colors. Now all of you are wearing colorful shirts, pants, and sweaters.” (Hopefully they’re not wearing school uniforms. If they are, ask the audience to think of colors.)

Let's do this again. One, two, three."  
*Brush Your Teeth (assistant waves toothbrush).*

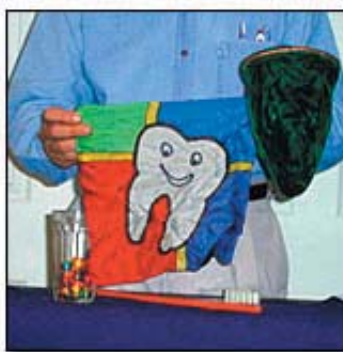
"Now yell some colors at me: red, green, blue, yellow, orange." (The can is removed and candy appears in the glass.)



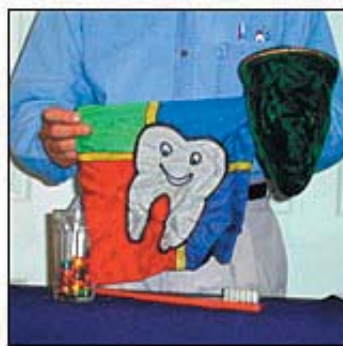
"Great! That was terrific. Now that we have candy we need a magic mouth to put it in."  
(Take out a production bag, upon which lips have been painted.)

"This is my magic mouth and guess who lives in it. It's Happy Tooth!"  
(Remove a Happy Tooth silk from the bag.)

"You can see why Happy Tooth is so happy. He's clean, smooth, and bright."



"Let's put Happy Tooth back in the mouth and (turn to helper) you take this glass and pour some candy into the mouth. Put down the glass and put your toothbrush in the mouth and brush Happy Tooth. (Your helper brushes Happy Tooth.) Let's reach into the mouth and see what comes out. It's Happy Tooth! Why is Happy Tooth happy? Because he is very clean and shiny. He is clean and shiny because we brushed away the candy." (Turn the bag inside out to show the candy disappeared.)





“Now let’s do something different. Let’s put Happy Tooth back and pour some more candy into the mouth. But this time we’re not going to brush Happy Tooth. We’re going to let the candy stay in the mouth. Let’s see what happens.” (A dirty Sad Tooth with holes is removed from the bag.)



“Uh oh. It seems we have a Sad Tooth. Can you see why the tooth is sad? It has holes and is dirty. What do dentists call a hole in a tooth?”

*A cavity!*

“That’s right. And if you get cavities in your tooth it becomes sad and begins to hurt. Let me explain how the cavity formed in the tooth. In your mouth are little germs (bacteria) that love to eat sugar that’s in candy. When the germs eat the sugar, they make acid that dissolves the tooth and makes a hole. As you eat more candy, the germs make a bigger and bigger hole. That’s why it’s important not to eat too much candy and to brush your teeth after eating candy. I have a question for you. Who takes care of cavities?”

*Dentists!*

“That’s right, dentists. Who’s visited the dentist?”

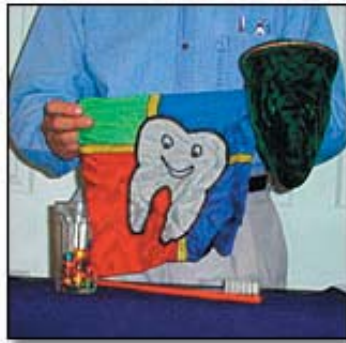
*Audience responds.*

“When you go to the dentist, you get to sit in a great big chair that goes up and down and back and forth. The dentist gives you a mirror to watch and uses a small mirror and a tooth counter to count and examine your teeth. (Put the Sad Tooth back in the bag).”



If the dentist finds a cavity, he or she will use a toothwasher (Show a handpiece) to wash all the food and germs out of your tooth. Then the dentist will fill the clean holes left in the tooth with either a tooth colored paste or a silver paste.”

Now guess what happens to your sad tooth when all the germs are washed away and the holes are filled. It becomes a Happy Tooth again.” (Remove a Happy Tooth from the bag.)



“What did we learn from that? You shouldn’t eat candy, especially sticky candy, because it sticks to your teeth for a long time and causes a lot of cavities. Avoid drinking soda or other drinks with lots of sugar because they also cause cavities. If you do eat candy, brush your teeth right after you eat the candy. When you brush your teeth, you brush away the candy and the germs that form cavities. You should also brush your teeth after every meal because germs can form acid after eating all foods. If you don’t have a toothbrush with you, then try to rinse with water after you eat. You should also brush your teeth before you go to bed and when you wake up in the morning. If you’re too tired to brush your teeth, ask a grownup to help.”

“How many of you brush your teeth?

*Raised hands.*

I’m glad so many of you brush your teeth. Lots of people brush their teeth but they don’t do it correctly, so I’d like to show you how to brush your teeth with the help of a friend.”

(Demonstrate toothbrushing and flossing technique using an oral health education aid. A list of manufacturers is provided under resources at the conclusion of the article.)

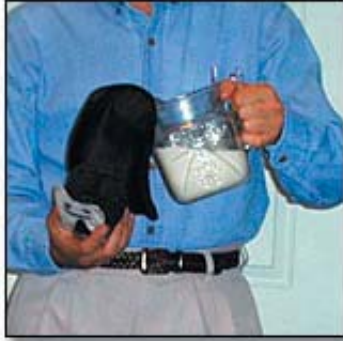


“We’ve talked about foods that are good for our teeth and foods that are bad for our teeth. We spoke about drinks that are bad for our teeth like soda. But there are drinks that are good for our teeth. One of them is water and for the other, I’ll give you a hint. It’s white and comes from a cow. That’s right ... milk. I’m going to show you how drinking milk gives you strong teeth.”

“What I have here is a full pitcher of milk. (Show pitcher of milk.) I’d like to pour the milk on a Happy Tooth. I can pour the milk on the Happy Tooth that’s painted on my case but then I’ll make a mess on the floor. I can pour the milk on the Happy Tooth on my shirt but then I’ll get wet. Or I can pour the milk on the

Happy Tooth on the magician's hat because I don't care if my assistant gets wet." (Take the hat of your assistant's head and assure them they won't get wet.)

"I'm going to pour the milk into the Happy Tooth hat. If anyone gets wet, let me know."



(Pour half the pitcher.)

"Is anyone getting wet?"

*No!*

"Then I'll keep going." (Pour another quarter pitcher.)

"Did anyone get wet?"

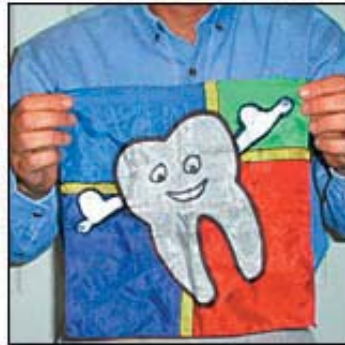
*No!*

"Nobody is getting wet. That's terrific. Wait I'm going to sneeze. Ah, Ah, Choo!"

(Turn the hat upside down to show the milk has disappeared.)

"The milk disappeared. But it had to go somewhere. Let me see if I can find the milk.

(Look in the hat.) I don't see the milk, but I do see a Happy Tooth and something happened to it. Happy Tooth has muscles!"



(Reach into the hat and produce a Happy Tooth silk. Muscles have been added to Happy Tooth's arms.)

"Milk contains calcium which makes for strong bones and teeth. That's why you should drink lots of milk."

"I mentioned before that water is good for your teeth. The reason water is good for your teeth is because it doesn't cause cavities. If it contains something called fluoride, it makes your teeth super strong. You find fluoride in water and in toothpaste. You use toothpaste when brushing your teeth for three reasons. The toothpaste helps clean your teeth. It makes your breath smell good. But most important it puts fluoride on your teeth to make your teeth super strong. Let's see how fluoride works."

"What I have here is a Happy Tooth balloon."

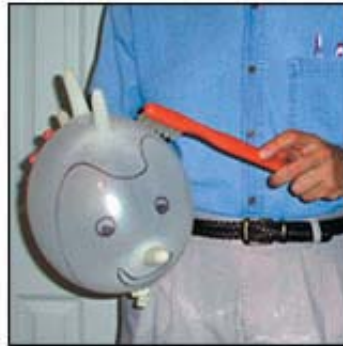
(Either specially manufactured "magic" balloons can be purchased or a latex glove may be used. A Happy Tooth face is drawn on the balloon or glove before presentation).

"I also have a great big pin. (Show giant pin to audience.) If I put the pin into the balloon, what will happen?"

*The balloon will pop!*

"That's right the balloon will pop. But we're going to make the Happy Tooth balloon super strong by brushing fluoride on it. (Show a pail with the word FLUORIDE written on it. Point to the word FLUORIDE and spell it.) F-L-U-O-R-I-D-E spells FLUORIDE. There's fluoride in toothpaste and in water but it's invisible. You can't see it. The fluoride in this pail is invisible too, but it's there. Let's brush invisible fluoride on the Happy Tooth balloon with our magic toothbrush."

(Have your assistant place the magic toothbrush in the pail and scoop up the invisible fluoride).



"Brush the front of the tooth, the top of the tooth, the back of the tooth, the side of the tooth, and the bottom of the tooth. Oops you missed a spot." (Point to a spot on the balloon).

"Let's see if the fluoride made the Happy Tooth super strong. (Take the pin and insert it into the balloon. If placed correctly, the balloon doesn't pop.) Look. We brushed that Happy Tooth so well, it became so super strong it didn't pop!"

(Remove the pin from the balloon).



"But you can't brush the fluoride on your tooth once and not keep doing it, because it will wash away. And if the fluoride washes away, guess what happens?" (Some children are frightened by the noise of popping balloons. Ask the children to cover their ears with their hands. Pop the balloon with the pin.)

“The Happy Tooth weakens and breaks.”

“What did we learn? For strong teeth, drinks lots of water and brush your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste. If you go to the dentist, he or she can paint fluoride on your teeth too.”

“I’ve been teaching you lots of things today and want to make sure you remember what I taught you. So I wrote the four most important rules I taught you today on this giant handkerchief.” (Write on a 24” by 24” inch silk the following four items).



“The first rule is BRUSH YOUR TEETH. Brush your teeth in the morning, brush your teeth before you go to bed, brush your teeth after you eat, especially candy. If you’re too tired to brush your teeth, ask a grown up to help you.

“The second rule is EAT GOOD FOODS. Eat good foods like fruits and vegetables and drink lots of water and milk.”

“The third rule is AVOID SWEETS. Avoid candy, especially the sticky kind, and don’t drink too much soda. If you do eat candy, brush your teeth immediately after or rinse with water.”

“The fourth rule is VISIT THE DENTIST.” Ask a grownup to take you to the dentist every six months to see if you have any “Sad Teeth” with cavities. When the cavities are small, it’s easy for the dentist to change your “Sad Tooth” into a “Happy Tooth.” I bet if we take the four rules on this handkerchief, place them in this empty magic can, say the magic words and wave the magic toothbrush, we can change the rules into a Happy Tooth.”

(Show the audience the empty production can and place the silk into it).



“Let’s say the magic words “BRUSH YOUR TEETH.”

***BRUSH YOUR TEETH!***

“Wave the magic toothbrush!” (Instruct your assistant to wave the toothbrush.)



“Something is coming out of the can. Is it a Happy Tooth? Oh no, it’s flowers!” (Remove the flowers from the can. Depending on the size of the can anything can be produced, even a rubber chicken.)

“Did someone say “Brush your flowers instead of brush your teeth?” I know what went wrong. This is a very old can and it doesn’t hear very well. I’m the only one who said the four rules and it didn’t hear me. This is what I think we should do. I’ll say the rule and you repeat it.

“Rule #1 – BRUSH YOUR TEETH!”  
*BRUSH YOUR TEETH!*

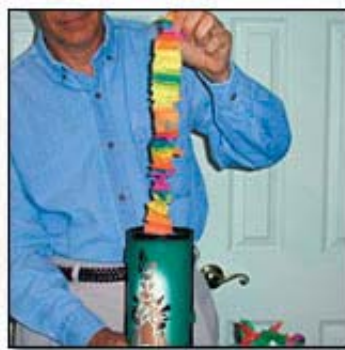
“Rule #2 – EAT GOOD FOODS!”  
*EAT GOOD FOODS!*

“Rule #3 – AVOID SWEETS!”  
*AVOID SWEETS!*

“Rule #4 – VISIT THE DENTIST!”  
*VISIT THE DENTIST!*

“I’ll put the four rules back into the can and count to three. You say the magic words and (turn to helper) you wave the magic toothbrush. One, two, three, BRUSH YOUR TEETH!”  
*BRUSH YOUR TEETH and assistant waves toothbrush.*

“Something is coming out of the can. Is it a Happy Tooth? Oh no, it’s a rainbow.  
(Produce rainbow from can.)



Did someone say “Brush your rainbow instead of brush your teeth?” I know what went wrong. You didn’t say the rules loud enough. You have to say the rules again but real loud.”

(Teachers hate this part but the kids love it.)

“Rule #1 – BRUSH YOUR TEETH!”

*BRUSH YOUR TEETH!*

“Rule #2 – EAT GOOD FOODS!”

*EAT GOOD FOODS!*

“Rule #3 – AVOID SWEETS!”

*AVOID SWEETS!*

“Rule #4 – VISIT THE DENTIST!”

*VISIT THE DENTIST!*

(Look into the tube.) “I think it worked.” (Remove a balled up silk and look at it closely.)

“Who thinks I have a Happy Tooth in my hand?” *Audience responds*

“Who thinks I don’t have a Happy Tooth in my hand?” *Audience responds.*

“Guess what? Everyone is right. I don’t have one Happy Tooth, I have a bunch of Happy Teeth.

(Produce a silk with numerous Happy Teeth.) “And that’s what you’ll have if you do everything I taught you today. Lots and lots of Happy Teeth.”



“Let’s have a round of applause for my helper. And since all of you were great helpers, I have some special gifts for you that will be a lot of fun and will help you remember what I taught you today. (Distribute marketing materials such as coloring books, toothbrushes, information for parents, etc. with your imprinted name.)

“Thanks for inviting me to your class and I hope to see you again. Bye.”