

## One Tube

In the beginning there was just one tube... just the one tube. Perfectly filled from top to bottom with the toothpaste. Just right.

It worked. It kept people's teeth clean. It did the job.

Not long after it became apparent that people approached the tube differently. Some were quite tentative, nervously squeezing the tube from the top so that just a little of the precious paste eased its way on to the brush. Not too much just enough to do the job. Nothing wasted.

Others handled matters differently. Firmly grasping the tube from the bottom and confidently squeezing a maximum amount of paste on to the brush-enough to ensure no tooth would be missed.

There were these two ways of approaching the matter. Briefly summarised we could term them top squeezers and bottom pinchers. And they co-existed for a while. Not that one way was better than another-that couldn't be said. And wasn't. It was just that it was a matter of preference-some liked to squeeze from the bottom some from the top.

No one knows how it started really... from which side the initial discontent came. It just seems now that it's always been there-which it hasn't. The split happened long before anyone can remember. The two groups were drawn up-not that they were any different in their appreciation of the paste. Nor did they think it ineffective. It was all to do with how the tube should be squeezed. And pretty soon what had started as a personal preference became a law, a dogma, a splitting into camps. There were, as there are

today bottom pinchers and top squeezers. Both of them right in their own way and both of them believing they had the only way. Indeed there were even some top squeezers who denied that bottom pinchers even had the paste in their tubes and some bottom pinchers thought it unlikely that top squeezers ever brushed their teeth properly.

And that's how it's gone on.

Until the horrendous happenings of the time when some of the bottom pinchers ventured into a new area completely. Some say that even some disenchanted bottom pinchers were bold enough to join them in their bizarre practice. Whatever the history of it we are now landed in the situation we have today where many people have become middle grabbers. Yes, it seems almost too horrendous to say even now. But we must call a spade a spade-or more properly a tube a tube. Some of us believe that the practice of the middle grabbers does not even amount to teeth cleaning in the proper sense of the word and that whilst teeth might appear to have received some temporary cleansing there remains a hidden dirt which is never touched by the antics of the middle tube grabbers.

I have been interested in recent times to see the efforts of some highly qualified dental practitioners to bring the various top, bottom and middle camps together. Indeed, I believe that there have even been conferences at which some agreement has been sought although it is hard to see how such diametrically opposed groupings can ever come to an agreement. But I applaud their efforts. It is important that we seek to come together and seek some consensus. We should direct all our energies into reconciling the various groups.

So much better than wasting time applying the paste to our

teeth.