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I still remember my first scientific contact with ART, in 2004, as a just graduated dentist, in the occasion of the 4th ART symposium in Bauru (Brazil). There I realized two important things: 1) ART was a real possibility to help many underprivileged children, 2) this is what I wanted to do and 3) if I wanted to go further, I needed to improve my English. After that symposium I had the opportunity to write a chapter about ART in the first book of my dear professor J.C. Imparato on the subject. After some years he invited me to be a co-editor of his second book about ART, together with my "scientific mother" Daniela Raggio. Daniela was at ACTA in 2004 and, together with Prof. Marcelo Bönecker, she introduced me to dr. W. Evert van Amerongen. After I finished my specialization course in Pediatric Dentistry I wanted to take a step further on my academic career and took the opportunity offered by Evert to be a local supervisor of ACTA Dutch students in an ART project in Brazil, which later became the subject of one of the papers of this thesis. I accepted this offer and willing to live abroad but, at the same time, afraid of it, I had the great opportunity to be at ACTA in 2007 for a one-month research internship. This month changed my life completely. I got to know dr. W. Evert van Amerongen better and I had the great opportunity to work together with dr. Cees Kleverlaan, my co-supervisor and my third and forth pair of hands in the lab! To force my "integration" I was biking three times a week from the old ACTA building to the VU. There I had the pleasure to work with dr. Hans de Soet, who was always extremely patient with my lack of knowledge in microbiology and with my "precarious English". Alongside to all these experiences I was sharing an apartment with a dental student, Diana Draaijer. Diana went some months later, together with Nicoline van der Kaaij, to do an internship in Brazil. We taught each other many things, I probably owe my Dutch accent in English to them, and the nice part is that I was still their "chefe" (boss). We learned that real 'vriendschap' and 'amizade' are exactly the same and forever! To complete this network in a lovely way and go against all odds, after this month at ACTA, I went back to Brazil in love with Luiz Felix, a Brazilian who was living in Amsterdam and with whom I am still in love! When I decided to move to Amsterdam, I left my clinical research in Brazil in the golden hands of Daniela Hesse, the "gold standard" for the clinical evaluations.

After doing a lot of ART treatments, research with ART and glass ionomers, I must say that I was not completely satisfied. Of course I learned a lot and I am sure the clinical studies indeed helped a lot of people but I wanted to make it better. When I was already a bit disillusioned with ART, I met my promoter, Prof. Cor van Loveren. In a very gentle way he challenged me to make my disappointing results look insightful. Research is made from disagreements and even though he didn't always agree with me, he accepted and respected my point of view and my soulful way of being, in all circumstances. It was a pity to have met Cor only in the last year of my PhD but I am glad we will keep working together. To all these people that were an essential part of this journey, my sincere gratitude, respect and love. Thank you for making it possible!

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Muito obrigada!
Clarissa