

## Real Beauty

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"Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it". - *Confucius*



I find myself once again discussing the complex topic of beauty. It is inherently a perception, a feeling; almost instantly recognizable but incredibly difficult to define. Everyone assumes that true beauty is associated with youth and yet some things do get better with age. Angelina Jolie demonstrates that you can improve with age. Although Angelina is very attractive as a teenager, she blossoms with age.

Everyone ages. It is a natural part of life. I tell my patients, "You want to get older, you just don't want to look older. The alternative to getting older is not very appealing". Although you cannot control the aging process, you do have input as to its effects on your appearance. This starts with conscious decisions you make about how you take care of yourself. Do you smoke? Do you spend too much time in the sun unprotected? Do you eat properly? Notice, I am not asking about which diet are you on. Do you exercise? All these choices have a distinct and profound effect on your health and appearance.

Everyone is unique and no one is perfect. Each of us has attributes that are admirable and even desirable, but no one has it all. Asking to have the physical attributes of others is unrealistic and unhealthy. When a patient asks for Jessica Simpson's nose, I will often tell them that "I don't believe she is ready to give it up". Although that feature is obviously attractive, it may not work with your physical makeup. Any changes need to take into account the nature of you and make sense for you. The change must be in harmony with the rest of you otherwise your appearance becomes distorted and unnatural.

Each individual must accept their body type. "Apples" will never be "Pears". "Columns" can not be made into "Hourglasses". An individual presenting for body contour surgery whether "Tummy Tuck" or "Liposuction" can not be made into someone they never were in the past. The results of these procedures can be very dramatic, however the basic nature of the individual has not been changed. Enhancements can be made but they must be made in the context of who you are and ultimately what will make you look better; to create better balance.

Your beauty changes as you change. You are not the person you were 1 year ago, 5 years ago, 10 years ago, etc. Your beauty is changing and evolving every day. This evolution may not be headed in the direction you want, but some of these things you do control. The changes possible with cosmetic procedures should be "natural". They should enhance who you are, not try to make you someone you are not, someone else.

Enhancements done well are just that; well done! As a Plastic Surgeon I am constantly seeking the balance of improvement and rejuvenation. People should not be saying "did you have work done?" A true compliment is "You look good". This is the goal of all beauty enhancement, whether it be make up, facials, exercise, dietary change, cosmetic treatments or surgery. It should be to make you look and feel better about yourself. The path to finding this is as individual as you are but it starts and ends with you.

*"A thing of beauty is a joy forever: its loveliness increases; it never fades into nothingness" - John Keats*