

*She got her looks from her father. He was a plastic surgeon.*  
– Groucho Marx

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# 1

## SNAPSHOT of the BIG PICTURE

### Considering Cosmetic Surgery?

- Wondering what to expect?
- What you would look like?
- Think you want it but a bit frightened by the prospect?
- Not sure if it is for you because you have not yet researched it?
- Need some help?
- Some concise, to-the-point information?
- Would you like to have an expert, an advisor at your side to coach you and demystify the process of deciding, “go” or “no go”?

If yes is your answer to all or most of these seven questions, you hold the the guiding light in your hands. *Let this book be your coach, your personal consultant.* It can ease the way for you. It will make the decision-making process much easier.



#### INSIDER'S INSIGHT

We can't keep you from getting old, but we can keep you from looking old.

-RK

*You do not even have to buy this book to get an overview of the book's content. It is right here, up front, in this first chapter. An easy way to help you decide whether or not to buy the book. No charge; Chapter 1 is on me.*

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It will take only ten minutes. If you are at your favorite bookstore, pull up a comfortable chair, grab a cup of coffee, sit and relax a bit. Thumb through this chapter. I am going to give you a

sneak preview, a glimpse of what the rest of the chapters will expand upon.

I shall let *you* decide if the book is important for you, if its advice is meaningful, and if you think there is value here. *I'll even share my 16 biggest secrets with you, right now:*

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### THE 16 MOST IMPORTANT COSMETIC SURGERY SECRETS

- Secret #1.** Many satisfied cosmetic surgery patients “don’t talk.” Some of your relations and friends have had something done, but they won’t necessarily tell you.
- Secret #2.** Doctors are flooding into cosmetic surgery. Many lack proper training. Some are incompetent.
- Secret #3.** Selecting a cosmetic surgeon can be a walk through a minefield. DO YOUR HOMEWORK.
- Secret #4.** The doctor you want is called a super-specialist—he practices cosmetic surgery *exclusively*.
- Secret #5.** Many consultations focus on selling, not teaching. When is a “free” consultation too expensive?
- Secret #6.** A surgeon’s “before” and “after” album is filled with clues. You should see lots of photos—and they must be “photographically honest.”
- Secret #7.** Know the 15 smartest questions to ask any cosmetic surgeon.
- Secret #8.** A consultation without computer imaging has limited value. You need to see, on a computer screen, what you will look like “after.”
- Secret #9.** Fees are negotiable. Know the ropes.
- Secret #10.** The facility in which you have your procedure done can be as important as who is doing it!
- Secret #11.** Combining a trip to an exotic location with cosmetic surgery may be a less-than-perfect mix.

**The good physician knows his patients through and through, and his knowledge is bought dearly. Time, sympathy and understanding must be lavishly dispensed, but the reward is to be found in that personal bond which forms the greatest satisfaction of the practice of medicine. One of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.**

**—Francis Weld Peabody, MD,  
Lecture to Harvard  
Medical Students, 1927**

**Secret #12.** Know the difference between an anesthesiologist and an anesthesiologist. Only one is a medical doctor.

**Secret #13.** High fees don't necessarily mean better results. Low fees are not always a bargain.

**Secret #14.** Your chances of post-surgical complications can be reduced by understanding your doctor's philosophy on "aftercare."

**Secret #15.** Aspirin, herbs, even vitamins can influence your risk during surgery. Be sure to know what to avoid.

**Secret #16.** There is a responsible answer or solution for every concern, worry and reservation.

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**Yes, I am "giving it away, free."** But that is not an issue for me. What is important is that you get a sense of how very unique and important my insider information is. I am offering to share this with you if you have any interest in improving your appearance.



**INSIDER'S INSIGHT**

**Asking For A Referral?**

**Here's A Shortcut To The Top Doctors**

When asking a friend, doctor or other source for a referral for cosmetic surgery, be specific. Don't say: "Can you give me the name of a great plastic surgeon?" or "Know a good, reputable cosmetic surgeon?"

That's not specific enough. In today's world of doctors, find a superspecialist—one who is an expert in the procedure you want.

If you are considering changing your nose, the wise "Insider's" question is: "Who's known for great noses?" For body liposuction: "Who has the most experience in liposuction?"

Go straight to a superspecialist.

**-RK**

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It may be that when you finish reading this chapter, you will have learned enough to conclude that cosmetic surgery is not for you. And that is fine; as good as cosmetic surgery is for those who have it, it is not for everyone. That will be your choice.

In our practice, it is not the right thing for about 20 percent of the patients who consult with me. One of five. I do not want to deflate a patient's dream and often they will describe my respectful decline as "a disappointment." Rather, I am acting professionally by giving them a responsible, realistic, and honest opinion. Doctor and patient must be on the same page and I will help you level the playing field so

you can make a decision with confidence. If you are considering cosmetic surgery, selecting your doctor will be one of the most important decisions of your life. And if it is inappropriate for a man or woman to have a procedure, I shall be best serving those who sit in front of me by giving them my best opinion, an answer based on my years of experience, not an answer they would prefer to hear.

I now tell you what I tell such patients: I enjoy doing surgery. It is my life's work and obviously, it is the only way I earn my living. But *my first obligation to you is to give my best; not self-serving, opinion. And sometimes, that boils down to one word: "Don't." Don't if your health is not satisfactory. Don't if even a slight risk of a poor outcome or complication is unacceptable. And don't if you are not certain you really want cosmetic surgery.*

That is how I have done it during 25 years of consulting with over ten thousand prospective patients. Skeptics may scoff at hearing of my telling patients—despite their pleadings—that I do not accept the fee and operate if my heart is not in it. But that is how this doctor practices. It is about integrity—not money—because one, or two, or ten more cases a year will not make a difference in my lifestyle. But, doing surgery without the comfort of knowing that I am doing the right thing would push me over an ethical line I choose not to cross. I prefer to sleep well.

**Most people don't come to a plastic surgeon wanting to look like someone else. Most people still want to look like themselves, but better.**

**-Garry Brody, MD,  
USC Professor of  
Clinical Surgery  
in USC Health,  
Spring 2001**

#### ***The Perils of Cosmetic Surgery***

*A middle-aged woman is in a terrible accident and is rushed to the hospital. On the way there, her vital signs fail. The doctors are able to revive her, but while she is gone, she sees God and he tells her she has 40 more years to live.*

*Since she is in the hospital, and knowing she is going to be around for a while, she decides to use the stay for self-Improvement. She has a facelift, an eyelid lift, and a nose job. She gets released from the hospital and, as she crosses the street, she is run over by a truck and killed.*

*When she sees God again, she says to him, "I thought you said I had 40 years to live"!*

*To which God replies, "I'm sorry...I didn't recognize you."*

If you conclude that you want cosmetic surgery, I strongly encourage you to go into this with eyes wide open. *You want to do it right the first time.*

*When performed correctly, cosmetic surgery can transform your life.* However, if you are a deluded optimist, too-trusting, do not use

**Fast Face & Body Fact**  
**More than 6.3 million**  
**women chose to have**  
**cosmetic plastic surgery in**  
**2000.**

**-The 2001 Report  
of the 2000  
Procedural Statistics,  
American Society of  
Plastic Surgeons**

good judgment, or even if your expectations are unreasonable or incorrect, you will be disappointed.

I am going to tell it as it is; the good and the bad and the not-too-pleasant. I'll share some possibilities and potentials, but will also reveal some pitfalls that you never thought about. They are all important. And that is why you will be challenged to two things: look at yourself in the mirror, and look at the entire subject of cosmetic surgery, because many factors must be considered to give you the insight and result you want.

### **This Book Will Answer Your #1 Question: *What Can I Really Expect?***

*Secrets of a Beverly Hills Cosmetic Surgeon* is written for those of you who want straight talk. If you will come with me on the journey we are about to begin, I guarantee I will help you decide if cosmetic surgery is right—or not right—for *you*.

Should you decide that either the time is not right or, for whatever personal reason, you are not committed to undergoing surgery, you can learn about popular nonsurgical alternatives. They are not as powerful, but they work: skin care products and in-office medical treatments that are minimally invasive. You will have a taste of how today's cosmetic surgeons and their allies can help you improve your appearance and slow the clock.

This is a mini-encyclopedia of self-improvement. A menu of treatments from light to heavy, from simple office procedures to more elaborate surgical operations. This is the first behind-the-scenes peek at American cosmetic surgery from one of its own, a bona fide insider, not a professional writer on assignment. An authoritative exposé of this much-discussed—but poorly understood specialty a primer on how you can safely navigate through what is the best way for you to obtain the best possible result. By the last page of the book, you will know what you want—and what you do not want—and hopefully, will thank me for the advice.

### PATIENT COMMENTARY

*This procedure was something I had contemplated for quite a number of years, but I always found a good reason/excuse for not going ahead with it. It was a simple, painless procedure that I had built up in my mind until it became an intimidating prospect involving a huge expense and lots of pain and discomfort. I couldn't have been more wrong. I didn't even take so much as an aspirin while I was recuperating and I was really surprised at how little bruising and swelling was involved. My first thought when I saw my nose after the surgery was "I can't believe I waited all those years!" I still think that when I look in the mirror. I am lucky to have found you when I did, as I can't imagine still walking around with my old nose.*

*So thank you again, Dr. Kotler! You (and my new nose) have made such a positive impact in my life.*

*-Heidi, student*

### The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

For more than a quarter of a century I have been privileged to participate in one of man's more fascinating surgical advances—a gift to himself—the improvement of his appearance. It is an honor to have been chosen by over eight thousand patients to be the doctor who would make a profound and positive change in their lives. In a world where many discretionary purchases and indulgences have a limited lifespan and importance, cosmetic surgery outlasts most, carrying lifelong internal satisfaction.

*In less than one generation cosmetic surgery has become an accepted, mainstream undertaking for millions.* According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, "Surgical and nonsurgical cosmetic surgery procedures in the United States increased 31 percent from 1992 to 2000." Americans are expected to have 8 million cosmetic procedures this year. Its expanding popularity reflects these advances:

- **Expansion of capability**—new solutions for previously unimprovable conditions.
- **Better results** — natural appearing, not "fake" or artificial.

**Any good plastic surgeon is and must be a psychologist, whether he would have it so or not. When you change a man's face you almost invariably change his future. Change his physical image and nearly always you change the man—his personality, his behavior—and sometimes even his basic talents and abilities.**

**-Maxwell Maltz, MD, FICS,  
author *Psycho-Cybernetics***

- **Greater longevity of procedures**—today, there is no reason for a facelift to last only two or three years.
- **Reduction in surgical and anesthesia risks**—through the development of both new equipment and refinement of techniques, risks to patients continue to decrease.
- **Shortened operating times**—this translates to a safer procedure and significantly lower fees, opening the door of opportunity to prospective patients who thought they could not afford cosmetic surgery.
- **Minimized recovery time**—patients can return to work in seven to fourteen days; a decided savings in time and money.

Yet, despite these impressive improvements, poor quality cosmetic surgery still exists. While it is a challenge even for me to spot well-done (natural-appearing) cosmetic surgery, it is easy to spot the “unnatural” work. Whether I am walking down Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, Michigan Avenue in Chicago, or Fifth Avenue in New York or even Illinois Avenue in Green Lake, Wisconsin, I have noticed the overdone, too-scooped, too-short, nostrils-flaring nose job; or the overtightened, overpulled, walking-through-a-wind-tunnel facelift. Instinctively, I wince. I’m sorry an opportunity for success was missed. In the right hands, our specialty can do better—and does so every day.

#### A MOTHER’S COMMENTARY

*I feel so badly concerning the results of my daughter’s nose surgery. It was done by the Chairman of the Department at one of the local medical schools. Only afterward did I find out that most of his time was spent doing reconstructive surgery, not cosmetic surgery, and that particularly he had very little experience doing nasal surgery. My assumption that the Department Chairman at a university was the best person to do the procedure was very poor.*

*—Mother of teenage patient at consultation for correction of a poorly performed nasal surgery*

People are often frightened away from cosmetic surgery as a result of these botched jobs. Unfortunately, some prospective patients have deferred consulting about a cosmetic procedure because of rumors, or first-hand accounts shared by friends or family members of (avoidable) pain and suffering.

These negatives raise a question: *is there a common factor responsible for (a) poor results that some people sustain, (b) the inappropriate, unfounded fears and skepticism that prevent others from achieving their wish for an improvement in appearance? What is wrong? What is the problem?*

*The answer, the diagnosis, is lack of adequate, correct information.* More and better information is needed: ideally insider information—from an expert, from a source working daily in the trenches of the specialty. Sound advice, parallel to what I seek when choosing professionals for my family or myself. I do not know very much about the inner workings of the architectural, accounting or legal professions. But 35 years after receiving my medical degree, I do know about my profession. Some cosmetic surgery books chronicle individual patient experiences, and others delve deeply into the technical aspects and minutiae of every major and minor procedure. No book, however, has ever revealed the inner workings of this specialty. The culture, the politics, the interspecialty rivalries. And the biggest problem: *the wrong surgeons doing cosmetic surgery.*

This is the first behind-the-scenes peek at American cosmetic surgery from one of its own, a bona fide insider, not a professional writer on assignment. An authoritative exposé of this much-discussed—but poorly understood—specialty. A primer on how you can safely navigate through what is the best way for you to obtain the best possible results.

In cosmetic surgery, there should be only excellence. After all, this specialty is about results, and the results are seen by all. I believe the percentage of unhappy experiences is too high, despite the availability of enough sophisticated practitioners. The glitz, glamour, and inane celebrity-slanted TV and magazine stories, have displaced the meaningful, dispassionate advice needed to make a wise consumer decision. While cosmetic surgery is not a frequent undertaking, it cries out for the same thoughtful, objective analysis as any major purchase. You want to do it well; a poor result cannot necessarily be corrected.

**According to the licensing laws of most states, any licensed physician, regardless of training and experience, may declare himself a plastic surgeon. For that matter, any licensed physician may limit his practice and declare himself a practitioner of any specialty he may select.**

**-Kurt J. Wagner, MD  
and Gerald Imber, MD,  
authors,  
*Beauty by Design***

PATIENT COMMENTARY

*I consulted with the doctor who said he 'did not really like doing nasal surgery, but would do it for me.' Why would I ever want him to 'do it for me' if he was not happy doing it?*

*-Carole, businesswoman, California*

Since cosmetic surgery is always elective, you have the luxury of time. Time to do the research, the study, the investigation, so you do it right the first time. What I am telling you is that such a search is not quick, nor simple. You are going to have to dig a bit. You are going to

**The general stigma surrounding cosmetic plastic surgery as something done only by the vain and rich is vanishing.**

**-Walter Erhardt, MD  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons**

have to work. Once again, that old maxim that your parents told you applies: "You get out of something what you put into it." While it is quick and effortless to open your *Yellow Pages* and call the first doctor with the most eye-grabbing ad, I submit that you will not be doing yourself a favor, but rather a bit of dice-rolling. Are long shot odds acceptable to you? If so, I suggest the racetrack. Otherwise, read on.

Mine is a rather unique specialty and an uncommon business. Consider this: Cosmetic surgery is a distinct medical specialty, provided by physicians but, unlike all other specialties, cosmetic surgery does not treat illness. Cosmetic surgeons often have more professional interaction with hair stylists and makeup artists than they do with other physicians.

Cosmetic surgery is a learned profession, but operates more like a business, prospering through marketing, advertising, and price competition. But the fees are inconsistent. For the buyer trying to correlate price with the usual variables of quality and service, the search is perplexing, indeed. Further complicating

**81 percent of 680 workers surveyed by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery say they would tell co-workers they have had a nose job; only 71 percent would tell friends.**

**Wall Street Journal,  
December 5 2001**

doctor selection is that today's cosmetic surgeons—from varying educational and training backgrounds, and different specialties—purport to deliver the same services. This is "specialty overlap," and it is explained in **Chapter 3, Selecting the Right Surgeon**. This competition between specialties for the same work makes it harder to select a cosmetic surgeon than it is to choose an electrician. And, this confusion is worsening for you, the consumer. More and more doctors—disheartened and demoralized by the depersonalization of managed care served up by

uncaring, profit-driven insurance companies—are now moving into cosmetic surgery. This doctor flight is a big concern to those of us in medical education.

*Cosmetic surgery, wrapped in hope and packaged with excitement, is too often unwisely driven by emotion.* The prospective patient can be confused by media coverage that can be poorly researched and sensation-oriented. The checkout line at your grocery store is littered with the latest, enticing celebrity exposés. But there is no meaningful information for those eager to gather solid facts about the specialty.

Ironically, the people who can best help you understand this road less traveled are those who have had cosmetic surgery. However, many patients do not disclose their surgery. Your co-worker returning from vacation looking “rested” may give credit to a “sleepy little spot” she found rather than the surgeon she visited. How can you get an education when the voices of experience are silent?

**At one point, I was called the Queen of Plastic Surgery. I did bring it out of the closet. After I talked about all my tucks and jobs, people opened up about theirs. I would be sitting on the couch on the Tonight Show, and someone would lean over and say, “I just had my eyes done” or whatever. I became the clearinghouse for everyone, because I knew all the answers. The surgeons loved me. I loved demystifying.**

**-Phyllis Diller quoted in *Time*, June 2001**

The bottom line is that the consumer has nowhere to go. The media talks too much drivel, the veterans may not talk at all and specialty overlap is confusing. This realization inspired me to share the information I have gathered over 35 years as a physician about what some people still consider a “closet” subject. Who better to tell it to you like it is?

This insight is why this book is my personal mission. I see no reason to keep any of this information secret—cosmetic surgery is too good and too important, but only when done properly. *I want to help you avoid the unfortunate result—whether it be overdone, underdone, or burdened with complications.* Although you need not learn the surgical technicalities of taking a bump off the nose or sculpting the neck or removing a wrinkle, you can learn the formula for finding the most qualified professionals who will do the best possible job for you.



**INSIDER'S NSIGHT**

Too soon we grow old,  
too late we grow smart.

**-Adage**

This book is the  
antidote to both conten-  
tions.

**-RK**

With this book my objective are:

- **To present important information**—known within our specialty—and unknown to the public.
- **To outline a clear, rational methodology** by which you can research cosmetic surgery and choose the best doctor to serve you.
- **To provide you an easy-to-follow manual** and specific tools (smart questions) with which to conduct your search.

My experience as a surgeon began as a resident trainee in 1968. The length and depth of my personal history as a physician qualifies me to help you better understand the inner workings of today's cosmetic surgery because the world of medicine is different from what existed when I opened my practice. You need to learn—within the context of the rapid changes that have visited the medical profession—how this new health care climate has created a fresh set of challenges for physicians. **Managed Care has driven many doctors to retool and begin doing cosmetic surgery.** But that migration often translates to inconsistent patient results given the absence of formalized and adequate training—under expert supervision—heretofore the hallmark of medical education. Yes, it may say “Plastic Surgery” or “Cosmetic Surgery” on the office door, but you must find out more about the kind of plastic or cosmetic surgery the doctor performs, and his qualifications to do it.

**I don't know how things are in California today, but in Florida, they are awful. We have family practitioners and ophthalmologists doing full body liposuction, anesthesiologists doing breast augmentation and oral surgeons, dermatologists and ophthalmologists doing face lifts—all quite legally! It seems everyone wants to be a plastic surgeon. I can understand since it is a wonderful and very gratifying profession...and the “cash on the barrelhead” nature of cosmetic surgery is certainly attractive in this day of declining reimbursement from third-party insurers. What I cannot understand is the pell-mell rush to discard our long-established residency training system in order to allow a few individuals to circumvent the formal training process and call themselves plastic surgeons.**

**-Richard T. Bosshardt, MD, FACS  
Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons, May 2001**

Choosing an amateur or rookie without the right resume is a recipe for failure. Your road to a safe, comfortable experience and “great result” will take you on a specialist recognition course. You will learn how to pick the most appropriate and highly skilled doctor.

Of all your decisions, this is the most critical. Stumble here and you are down the wrong road. You will learn about superspecialists—the specialist’s specialist, if you will. Doctors at the pinnacle of training, experience, focus and performance. The superstars of the medical profession.

To find these superstars, you will have to do some sifting and winnowing. But I shall make it smoother and easier for you. In **Chapter 3, Selecting the Right Surgeon**, you will learn how to eliminate second-string players by one short call to an office or a quick peek at a professional biography. That way, you won’t waste precious time and your hard-earned dollars in a consultation with the wrong doctor.



**INSIDER’S INSIGHT**

***Superspecialist For Your Auto But not For Yourself?***

Consider the importance of focus and specialization, think about that certified car mechanic who works only on your imported car, for example. Given a choice between the corner gas station repairman who claims to “fix everything,” and the factory trained technician, who will be likely to fix your car the first time? Today’s automobiles have an average of 15,000 moving parts. Is it possible for any mechanic to become an expert in the inner workings of dozens of car models? Doesn’t **your** human body—the only one you’ll ever own—deserve the most specialized repairman?

-RK

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*You sort and select by knowing the smart questions to ask at each level of research*, up to and through the consultation. Treat the consultation as an interview. While the surgeon is evaluating you medically, you are evaluating him for an appropriate match. Study this book well, my friend, and you will earn an A+ in Cosmetic Surgery Consultation. And, you should fight for that A+ because this is so important to you. You want no regrets, no remorse, no whining that you did not do enough homework. You want the best possible result. Because when your cosmetic surgery result is good, a big, wide smile looks back at you from your mirror.

**Look Closely at That Before and After Album**

Once you are savvy enough to consult with superspecialists (the ones who perform cosmetic surgery exclusively), how do you then choose among this already select talent pool? You begin by critically examining before and after photos. You must look at them as analytically as an auction house examines a work of art. I will coach you and teach you visual analysis. You will know how to use the practice’s “before and

after” albums as a measurement of what you are buying: the doctor’s talent as displayed in his art form.

### Why Not See What You’ll Look Like?



Computer imaging, three views. (1) Left: “before.” (2) Middle: “computer imaged preview.” (3) Right: “final result: nasal surgery and chin augmentation.”\*

**If you’ve been tempted to try cosmetic surgery but have always held back, what I’ve described may have piqued your interest sufficiently so that you’re ready to cross the threshold. In that case, you’ll want to devote a good deal of time and energy to choosing the right surgeon. I’ve had some experience with all this, and I know how important it is to make that choice, yet how difficult it can sometimes be to choose wisely.**

**-Kathy Keeton, author  
*Longevity: the Science of Staying Young***

Top quality, informative, valuable consultations must include a computer-generated transformation of your “before” photo into a satisfactory “after.” Otherwise, it is all guesswork. Who buys something without seeing it? You don’t want to sign up for a nose job, facelift, or breast augmentation without knowing what you will look like after the surgery. Today’s remarkable computer technology can show you a preview, a realistic prediction of the new you. It answers that lurking question: “What will I look like...after?” And a conscientious cosmetic surgeon tries to obtain even better results.

### Some Operating Rooms Are Safer than Others

Would you like to know if the facility meets demanding safety standards? If it has a medical “*Good Housekeeping*® Seal of Approval”? Every day you enter buildings that require an occupancy-safety license to

\* The above patient after seeing the computer image of the predicted result, opted, just before surgery, to improve her profile by adding the chin augmentation.

keep the doors open. You then ride up and down in elevators that are regularly inspected and licensed. You cannot operate a potentially dangerous 4,000-pound machine—called an automobile—without an operator’s license.

Doesn’t it make sense that a facility where you are deliberately rendered unconscious—and therefore helpless—be credentialed and meet strict code standards for structural integrity, fire protection and even earthquake resistance? Big risks will be avoided by knowing the difference between an unlicensed, unaccredited, never-inspected facility, large or small, and a state-licensed, U.S. government-certified, independently accredited, specialized outpatient surgery center, or a fully accredited hospital. There are accepted guidelines for evaluating surgical facilities. You must know about them.

### **Don’t Forget to Ask About Anesthesia**

While most people focus on the cosmetic surgery itself, they fail to realize that the big risk is not the “cutting and sewing”—it is the anesthetic. That is why I shall teach you the difference between professionals who aid the surgeon by administering the anesthetic. *Do you know the difference between an anesthetist and an anesthesiologist?* The former are nurses, the latter are physician-specialists. Think about who will be at the controls during your surgery.

### **Insider Information Is Precious When You Discuss Dollars**

I shall level the playing field and arm you with negotiation strategies that will save you money. Here is a sample: understanding that it makes good business sense for a doctor to operate on two or more patients (not at the same time, of course), at a reduced “group rate” can translate into significant savings for you and a surgery partner. The efficiency of this practice converts to a discounted fee; more on this in **Chapter 6, “About Fees”** and **Chapter 10, “Erasing Mental Blocks.”**

Having your procedure on a “stand by” basis or opting for prepayment can also help lower your cost. Since the individual cash outlay can be \$5,000 to \$10,000, a saving of 15 to 20 percent equals hundreds or thousands of dollars. Good business for your doctor can be great savings for you. Do you wonder how cosmetic surgeons price their services? And, one of the secrets that may surprise you, is that the *most skilled superspecialists are not necessarily the most expensive*. **Chapter 6** reveals the explanation.



### **You Don't Want the Ball to Be Dropped Before or After Surgery**

The practice you want will give you old-fashioned, one-on-one, attentive care. Top practices prepare you for everything and anticipate your needs.

**The best cosmetic surgery practices provide for your total care from beginning to end:**

- *Make sure you are fit for surgery— healthy.*
- *Give you written instructions* telling you what to expect, before and after, and answer all questions.
- *Provide routine medications and supplies.* Your needs are anticipated.
- *Make house calls, if necessary.* (Yes, you read that correctly).

While cosmetic surgeons do not cure cancer, give you a new liver, or replace a worn-out hip, we are still medical doctors, not—as some

would paint us—highly-educated beauticians. Many of us still know how to give that now-elusive patient care. The best practices give it. These are the practices you should seek. I can show you the way.

If you have relatives or friends in the cosmetic surgery world, you are fortunate because you automatically have insider information. They will lead you down the right path. But if you do not have a brother, cousin or best friend who is a cosmetic surgeon, you are still in luck; I shall fill the pathfinder role for you. The knowledge you are about to gain is important; cosmetic surgery—despite the hype—is not trivial. It is not casual surgery. It is about your body. There is a bit more complexity to cosmetic surgery than you thought. You must be vigilant. Forewarned is forearmed.

The most important secret from this Beverly Hills cosmetic surgeon is that there are too many secrets about cosmetic surgery. Too much hype, too many silly, shallow celebrity stories, and too little practical, important, even life-saving information.

Appearance is a subjective and emotionally charged subject. However, changing your appearance surgically should never be based solely on emotion. Instead, there is a prescribed methodology to selecting a proper surgeon, opting for the appropriate procedure, and choosing a comfortable, safe location.

My hope is that this book will influence your approach by erasing myths, misconceptions, and misrepresentations, making your research process unintimidating, efficient, and satisfying. I want you to enjoy the best possible result reflected in your mirror.

## Dental panel targets cometic surgery

**HEALTH:** The illegal practice by oral surgeons has been ignored but now faces probable penalties.

By **KIMBERLY KINDY**  
The Orange County Register

Oral surgeons performing illegal facial cosmetic surgery in California will likely be punished with large fines, jail time, permanent marks on their records — even the loss

of their dental licenses.

The state Dental Board of Examiners is expected Friday to approve a list of proposed crackdowns.

"We are sending a very strong message," said Dr. Peter Hartman, a general dentist and dental board member. "I don't think anyone who is performing these procedures should be confused about where we stand on the issue and what might happen."

Oral and maxillofacial surgeons typically hold dental but not medical licenses. Some

also have medical degrees, meaning they can perform the procedures.

The procedures in question are those that venture too far from the jaw and mouth and aren't related to dentistry.

For years, the dental board has looked the other way as some oral surgeons performed eyelid surgery, neck liposuction, even face lifts. It has investigated only when something went wrong and someone complained.

The board went after the oral surgeons — who frequent-

ly advertise their illegal work — after a series of stories in The Orange County Register revealed that the practice is widespread.

"Until now, there was no real incentive for them to change their behavior," said state Sen. Liz Figueroa, D-Fremont, who chairs a committee that oversees the dental board. "This puts them on notice. People are watching now, and there are consequences."

► **BOARD:** Oral surgeons to be put on notice. **News 14**

Orange County, CA newspaper reveals crackdown on dental specialists performing facial cosmetic surgery. January 8, 2000.  
(Notice their typo in headline.)

The next chapter—which may be a bit of a shocker—is titled, “**The Terrible Truth About Some Cosmetic Surgeons.**” But, better to know sooner than later, before rather than after.

### **Why Do Some Celebrities Look So Bad After Cosmetic Surgery?**

That’s a question often asked by prospective patients. The common assumption is that money, power and access should automatically guarantee garnering top cosmetic surgery talent. Not always.

I see three reasons why some celebrities look so bad after cosmetic surgery. Bad luck is not one of them.

1. **Bad decision making.** Celebrities—like the rest of us—are not immune from making bad purchasing decisions. They are not anointed with special wisdom because of their fame. They may not do enough research to sort out the most talented practitioners for their particular needs. Or they rely on a manager or advisor to conduct the search. Off the screen, away from the studio, they own no magic, no divining rod to lead them to the right offices. They need to do their homework; just like you.
2. **Not knowing when to stop.** When you see obvious and overdone cosmetic surgery on the face of a celebrity, it usually announces that they did not know when to stop. They kept going beyond reason. Perhaps the celebs were unwisely shooting for perfection, for immortality. But they are on a hopeless chase. Regardless of who is famous or otherwise, the same rules of life govern us all.
3. **A cosmetic surgeon who falls into the celebrity trap.** He, too, drops common sense. He forgets that mantra his mentors hammered into his memory bank: “*The pursuit of perfection is the ultimate enemy of good.*” Overdoing is always worse than underdoing. That it is easier to add on later, but almost impossible to “put back that which you took off.” But why does an ordinarily objective and wise doctor temporarily discard the sound advice his teachers gave him? Because, he, too, has a chance to be a celebrity, however vicarious. An opportunity to bask in that special glow we Americans are so good at fostering is often too hard to pass up.

Media personalities are attractive, smart and charming; that is how they reached their level of success and fame. They can be very manipulative, very convincing in their arguments. Isn't that their craft? That is why, it is hard to say "no" to the lady or gentleman sitting in front of you whose face may be recognized by billions of people. And, perhaps subconsciously, the doctor wants to say yes, wants to satisfy this important person, to ingratiate himself, to join the club, to be part of that special world. It can be heady stuff.

Consulting with famous people is very difficult. I have been there many times. The doctor must harness his best instincts, his purest motives, his strongest common sense to do the right thing for every patient regardless of status. Not for himself, his ego, his office's "wall of fame" photo display, or his bank account.



**INSIDER'S INSIGHT**

**A Celebrity's Cosmetic Surgery Disaster**

Years ago comedian Totie Fields died because of a cosmetic misadventure. Knowing that Totie was obese and diabetic should have been a bright enough red flag for any conscientious cosmetic surgeon to decline to operate.

Totie developed a blocked artery which led to her complications, snowballing to her tragic premature death.

I share this to remind you that the first decision about cosmetic surgery is whether or not it is right to do it. In the "reasons not to do it" column, at the top, always stands: "Medical condition(s); too risky."

I urge you to consult with a doctor whose practice is not a cosmetic surgery conveyer belt. You want a doctor who thinks first and operates second.

**-RK**

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