

Gives You a Better Smile

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"Don't judge people by their appearance." Almost all of us have heard this phrase. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could see the inner beauty of others from the first moment we meet them? However, let's face reality. The world doesn't work that way. Ladies, would you rather have dinner with Brad Pitt or Mr. Bean? Gentlemen, would you rather date Hasegawa Kyoko or Yamada Hanako? I don't know about you, but I know what my answer is. We are judged by our appearance and we judge others by their appearance. Over time, we do look at people's characters, but first impressions are usually based on how they look.

Is there a solution to this problem? Yes, however, many people do not accept this solution. It is plastic or cosmetic surgery. In this speech, we shall examine how our appearance affects us and our lives, some of the pros and cons of plastic surgery, and, finally, how this surgery can make a difference.

People, especially women, are judged by their appearance. Let's look at newscasters. Almost all female reporters are attractive. Why do they have to be good looking? I understand why super models have to look good, but for the newscasters, their job is not to entertain people with their appearance or to wear clothes that no one else can wear; their job is to tell the news! We are definitely putting a major value on physical features.

The biggest problem with judging people by their physical appearance is that once we reject a person because of how he or she looks, we will never try to really know the person. To be friends, both parties have to step forward, but if one person steps backward, the two can never be close. Maybe this is not a problem for some people who are born attractive. It is a huge problem for people who are not good looking, homely or just plain ugly. Of course, our attractiveness does not only depend on our appearance, but first impressions are heavily dependent on it.

So, what keeps people from having cosmetic surgery? Money? Social mores? A belief that it isn't necessary? It is probably a combination of all of these, especially the Japanese belief that our bodies were given to us by our parents, so we should not dishonor them by trying to change them. However, aren't we constantly trying to change ourselves at some level? And just as the social mores towards getting tattoos are gradually changing, why can't our attitude towards cosmetic surgery change?

I am not advocating major surgery where you have to rebuild your entire face. Take Michael Jackson's example - please. His is a typical case of too much of a good thing. He has had so much surgery that he has become a caricature of himself.

But, a minor change can really affect a person's life. Let me relate my personal experience.

I had plastic surgery when I was fifteen. I had a slight problem in which my eyelashes were pushed inwards by my eyelids. My doctor put a slit in my eyelids, thereby adding a fold. It solved my problem, and also affected my appearance. Although the change in my features was slight, the attitude of others toward me actually changed after the surgery. More people talked to me and became friendlier. A girl who had never even looked at me started to talk to me at school. I made many more friends. It was clear that the plastic surgery had an effect.

It was only after the surgery that I realized I had been previously rejected because of my appearance. I was very happy with this serendipitous result. These reactions by others made me recognize how we judge others by appearance. This led me to the conclusion that it is natural to judge people by their appearance.

Because the techniques used in cosmetic surgery are rapidly advancing it is much easier to make those changes. Today you can get the same surgery that I got without using a knife and thread.

We know that society rewards beauty. Cosmetic surgery is one way to get that reward.

People who are against plastic surgery are underestimating how our appearance affects our lives. What I want to do through my speech is to change your attitude toward plastic surgery. It may not be a panacea, but because we are judged by how we look, at school, in the work place, on the street, it can make a difference. It is our nature to judge people by their appearance. Many people have tried to change this attitude, but it has never worked. It might be impossible to change everyone's attitude towards cosmetic surgery one-hundred-eighty degrees, but it should not be that difficult to accept plastic surgery as an excellent tool to live in our world, a world in which people are judged by how they look. Plastic surgery has helped to bring joy in people's lives. Plastic surgery has the power to change people's lives. It has the power to give a person a better smile. Maybe it can give you a better smile as well.

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