

Ethnic Considerations in Facial Plastic Surgery

Roxana Cobo



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Ethnic Considerations in Facial Plastic Surgery

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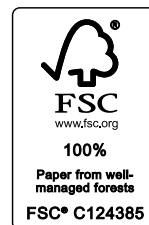
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Dedicated to the men in my life: to my dad for showing me the value of quality, perseverance, and persistence;
to Giuliano, for his patience and understanding after all these months of hard work;
and to my boys, Aulo and Carlo, who know that when things are done with determination,
dedication, and passion the sky is the limit to what can be achieved.

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Foreword

In spite of the many different textbooks on facial plastic surgery that are available today, there is not one as unique as Roxana Cobo's *Ethnic Considerations in Facial Plastic Surgery*. Only when you open the cover of this book will you realize how much you needed it and what a valuable resource it will be in your management of the ethnic patient. Although our specialty has always recognized the differences in anatomy, surgery, and management of the ethnic patient, it is only in the last decade that we have begun to seriously study these patients, learn from them, and share our experiences with each other. This is a corollary to our globalization and increasing understanding of the impact of race and culture on our perception of attractiveness and beauty. These ubiquitous forces, especially as propagated by the Internet, have made it imperative that every surgeon, no matter where he or she practices, be aware of the special needs of the ethnic patient. Further, in all cultures the traditional aesthetic goals are evolving due to these very same forces.

Ethnic Considerations in Facial Plastic Surgery begins with a section on general considerations. It reviews the essence of beauty, both physically and psychologically, and leads us to better comprehend the aesthetic goals we should aspire to for our patients. Chapters on racial anatomical differences, especially regarding the nose, are followed by an important chapter on the consultation process.

Dr. Cobo then has internationally renowned experts from their respective regions deliver comprehensive, yet succinct, information on surgery within their ethnic groups. This includes all of the world's major ethnicities: Latin American/Mestizo, African, Asian, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern. Each section begins with a chapter on aesthetic, ethnic, and cultural considerations. These chapters provide a fountain of fascinating and useful background information to enhance understanding of the treatment challenges ahead. In addition, current aesthetic trends are reviewed and put into perspective. Cultural, ethnic, and religious factors affecting the ethnic patient are explored in an insightful, reasoned, and wise manner. Even the philosophy of ancient Chinese-face reading is included! The reader not only learns but is left to reflect upon his or her own views and practices.

With this background, each section has subsequent chapters revealing in detail both surgical and nonsurgical aesthetic management of the ethnic face. It is appropriate

that rhinoplasty—being the most challenging procedure and arguably having the most differences ethnically—receives prime attention. Additionally, there are chapters covering ethnic blepharoplasty, face and neck lifting, and noninvasive procedures. The final section of the book covers important subjects, such as fat grafting, management of scars and keloids, and skin tightening devices for the ethnic patient.

This book benefits from a beautiful layout with subsections in each chapter. There are exceptional patient illustrations, intraoperative photographs, graphics, and tables to illustrate the concepts presented and to enhance learning. Each chapter has a reliable and extensive list of references for the reader seeking more explicit inquiry into the topic at hand. The layout is simple and attractive, and the font is comfortable to read.

In creating *Ethnic Considerations in Facial Plastic Surgery*, Dr. Cobo has drawn on her personal wealth of experience and knowledge as a renowned surgeon and respected teacher in the international community. Her carefully chosen and internationally esteemed contributing authors similarly reveal their mastery of their topics and their ability to impart their wisdom.

This book (with its accompanying videos) is a new and exciting literary addition to our specialty. It provides well-organized, comprehensive, and valuable information about the care of the ethnic patient. It is a highly desirable book for all practicing facial plastic surgeons and a mandatory book for all those planning to treat ethnic patients.

Read, learn, enjoy.

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Preface

The world has become globalized. Migration patterns have increased and changed dramatically over time, leading to vivid changes in all populations. The constant blending of races has resulted in more mixed cultures and ethnic groups. Nevertheless, human beings continue to cherish and pursue a feeling of attractiveness that defines social behavior regardless of ethnicity or race. Developments in communications, such as social networks and web searching, have increased the availability of information across populations. This data explosion brings with it a greater awareness of appearances, as well as a more globalized idea of beauty on the whole. In addition, cosmetic procedures cease to be a privilege of the wealthy and have become available to patients regardless of their economic status. This is why, in the last few decades, there has been an exponential increase in cosmetic procedures globally.

Facial plastic surgery is no exception. Advances in technology and surgical techniques have made this specialty a rapidly changing one. Patients that come to our offices are diverse. As a result, we need to have a broader understanding of the different cultural, ethnic, racial, and anatomic differences in the populations we are treating. It then becomes our responsibility to understand and deal with continuously changing global concepts of beauty.

When I started my practice of facial plastic surgery over 20 years ago, I soon realized that I was dealing with patients that did not fit the prototype within the literature. Over time and after teaching all around the world, I was amazed to find that my perception was shared by many friends and colleagues. It was interesting to see and learn new particular techniques and concepts. These have nurtured and formed my own unique approach to the multiethnic patients I face on a daily basis.

Most of today's publications focus on specific topics in facial plastic surgery. Some deal with the specialty as a whole, but to date, we do not have a comprehensive source focusing on the many considerations that should be taken into account when dealing with patients of multiethnic backgrounds. This book was written to address that dearth of information.

The contributors to this book are experts in the field from different regions of the world. There is a bank of information

deposited in these pages that reflects the different authors' views on how they approach different ethnic groups, and what different types of procedures can be offered. The distribution of the book is relatively straightforward. It starts with a section on general concepts where topics we have to deal with on a daily basis are presented: today's definition of beauty, knowledge of important anatomical differences, ethnic reflections with emphasis on the nose (rhinoplasty is the most frequently performed facial plastic procedure globally), and recommendations for a successful consultation with the facial plastic patient.

The book is then divided into four important ethnic sections: the Latin American/Mestizo patient, the African patient, the Asian patient, and the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern patient. Each section starts with a very important chapter where aesthetic, ethnic, and cultural considerations of each group are presented and discussed, as well as current cosmetic trends respective to each. It is fascinating to see how interests and requests vary depending on where the patient comes from. Each section also features special topics, depending on which are the most important surgical and nonsurgical procedures performed.

The final section of the book includes some special topics, which are either independent of any specific ethnic group, or have become very important procedures performed by all facial plastic surgeons. With this type of distribution my intention is to orient the reader to focus either on specific ethnic groups or in areas of interest. All chapters contain valuable illustrations and photographs of surgical techniques and of pre- and postoperative cases, offering readers a greater, more comprehensive educational experience.

Through the content of this book, it is my goal to provide a broader perspective when dealing with ethnic patients. Everything we do will have an impact on the patient's overall well-being. Needs and desires of patients can change but it is our duty to try to accomplish an end result that not only will be aesthetically pleasing but will also be safe and reliable, and accompanied by patient satisfaction.

Roxana Cobo, MD

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Thank you to all of the authors from all around the globe, who took time off their busy agendas to put in writing their

amazing knowledge in the field of facial plastic surgery. For many of them, English is not their first language, so the effort was even greater.

I would not be what I am today without the mentorship of Dr. Pedro Blanco, chief of the Department of Otolaryngology in Cali, Colombia, and without the ongoing support, guidance, and friendship of Ted Cook and Gilbert Nolst Trenité, amazing facial plastic surgeons, teachers, and teammates of incredible academic projects.

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Section I

General Considerations

1 The New Definition of Beauty

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1.1 Introduction

Throughout time, the meaning of beauty has been defined and redefined by everyone from ancient philosophers to today's fashion magazine editors. Scientists tend to appreciate a more Darwinian approach to beauty: beauty serves a utilitarian purpose, namely for survival of one's genes. Hence, beauty is a universal signal that one is healthy and viable, and, over time, certain physical characteristics have remained associated with beauty. Symmetry, averageness, and youthfulness are all associated with beauty.

From an evolutionary perspective, beauty exists as a form of subliminal communication facilitating the projection of our genes onto and into the next generation. But beauty is raw and primary, and humans rely on much more before deciding if someone or something is beautiful or attractive to them. The context within which that beauty is identified and perceived is as influential as the absolute beauty. Additionally, other factors, such as posture, adornments, fashion, and expression, all affect the perceived degree of beauty projected. We label the perceived beauty that takes into account all of these factors as attraction. Therefore, the value of beauty is best appreciated within the context of attraction. The same way that a karaoke version of a hit song may sound awful, a beautiful person has the ability to appear highly unattractive in certain contexts. While studies have shown that being beautiful may get one further in life, beauty is more advantageous if the person has the ability to communicate their beauty in an attractive way.¹ Conversely, consider a celebrity who is undeniably physically attractive, such as Mel Gibson. Regardless of his looks, when found in a compromised situation of being caught yelling vulgar profanities following a drunken driving incident, he appeared highly unattractive.

In contrast, beauty has the potential to be overlooked when not presented in an expected context. This was demonstrated in a social experiment conducted by *The Washington Post* on 12 January 2007. During morning rush hour, the famed violinist Joshua Bell played a set of classical music on a very rare violin at a Washington D.C. Metro stop. Almost no one stopped to listen: the hurrying pedestrians barely noticed that one of the world's most celebrated musicians was playing extraordinary music on a multimillion-dollar Stradivarius violin, when only two days earlier he had played a sold-out Boston amphitheater where seats cost \$100 apiece. The goal of the test was to see how his music would be perceived in a different environment. After 45 minutes of his performing at the Metro stop, his violin case had a mere \$27 in it.

The way in which the element of raw beauty is wrapped, delivered, and interpreted by an observer is what I refer to as the first impression. First impressions are judgments that are formed immediately from no preconceived associations. They are based on specific parameters that are rapidly evaluated and subconsciously processed. Factors that influence first impressions consist of the raw physical characteristics of beauty that we are innately prewired to recognize. Secondary factors also contribute, such as cosmetics, accessories, expression, posture, or clothing, but these also have the potential to overwhelm raw physical traits of beauty. The packaged impression that these factors portray results in a person's being considered attractive or unattractive based on their delivery. First impressions are meaningful and consequential. As a species evolving over 3.5 million years, *Homo sapiens* has developed an incredibly reliable system of first impressions. The appropriateness and accuracy of a first impression are critical for survival. But, of course, we have learned that, despite the relative accuracy of first impressions, they can be misleading. The context within which that first impression is created and perceived has significant influence on the judgment and elicited behaviors of both the subject projecting as well as the one receiving the impression.

Attractiveness is a fluid, conceptual construction formulated by the basic elements of beauty. However, being perceived as attractive is more than just encompassing individual components of beauty. Attractiveness is dynamic and exists within a framework of social and cultural norms. As an example, on the east coast of Africa among certain native tribes, a 14-cm plate placed within the lip of a young female may be seen as beautifying, increasing her attractiveness; however, those in a Western culture may find it unsightly. In contrast, the natives of the Mursi tribe of Ethiopia would probably not find over-inflated hyaluronic-plumped lips attractive. Beauty is more likely to be perceived as attractive when delivered and accepted in an expected manner. The state of mind of the observer is also fundamental to the interpretation.

Just as Joshua Bell's music may not be interpreted as attractive in a subway corridor, if a physically beautiful person passes you the day you lost your best friend, you may not recognize that person as attractive. However, at a later date, while enjoying a leisurely moment, that same person walking by in a form-fitting outfit may spark your attention. The take-home is that while one may possess the raw characteristics of what nature defines as physically beautiful, beauty is only as important as its strength of delivery and the ability for it to be received.

1.2 Female Beauty in the Raw

An evolutionary biologist would likely favor the notion that beauty has evolved as a reliable indicator of superior health and viable genes. Furthermore, it must be presumed that the ability to recognize such elements as beautiful is innate. Infants as young as three months old can recognize beautiful faces and will stare at them longer than at less beautiful faces.² Furthermore, research done by Jones and Hill with the Hiwi and Ache Indian tribes of Venezuela and Paraguay showed that, despite having little or no exposure to Western media, the tribal members were attracted to the same facial characteristics as observers from Brazil, the United States, and Russia.³

1.3 Less Is More

We have made the linear argument that the manner in which beauty is transmitted and received determines whether it is considered attractive. However, it is the authors' opinion that the transmission of this information is most successful if it remains subconsciously perceived. Once the receiver's conscious awareness is tipped off, the message loses its effectiveness as a positive indicator. This contradictory response occurs when we are required to evaluate whether something is beautiful because conscious evaluation is less pleasurable than assessing it without thinking.⁴ In other words, if you have to think about whether something is beautiful, you are no longer rewarded in the same way as you would have been if merely observing it inattentively.

Consider this scenario: we are dismayed by someone trying to defy their true age when signs of cosmetic surgery become overtly apparent. We experience equal aversion to someone using too much makeup as to someone wearing indecently revealing and unflattering clothing they do not fit into properly. Although a woman may take these measures in an attempt to enhance her beauty, the message received is that the woman actually lacks the natural beauty traits that she believes she is highlighting. In fact, studies have indicated that makeup applied inappropriately or excessively triggers negative impressions.⁵ The message perceived by observers is that the woman who applies makeup in excess is not vital, healthy, or a good gene holder. Men are similarly perceived if they attempt to highlight their sexually defining or sexually dimorphic character traits. A strong chin, a strong jawline, a full head of hair, and tall stature all are beauty-defining features in a male, but if he attempts a "comb-over" to cover a balding vertex or wears platform shoes in an attempt to compensate for his lack of height, these measures will be recognized subconsciously by females as physically unattractive. Any attempt to hide a genetic weakness must be covert; otherwise it loses its value. This is the reason Michael Jordan, the famed Chicago Bulls basketball star, looks better bald than he did with a receding hairline. If his hair loss

isn't recognizable in contrast to his scalp, the uniformity of his head provides a more youthful appearance.

The raw tenets of beauty that pertain to the face can be categorized into the core traits of symmetry, averageness, and youthfulness.

1.4 Symmetry

The more symmetric an object is, the more favorably it is perceived. This is true across the contexts of art, nature, and humans. The explanation for this fact is linked to the brain's ability to process symmetry fluently and rapidly. The brain shows preference for what it is able to do more easily and quickly.⁶ As symmetry diminishes, the brain needs more time to process an image, as it has to reconcile any unexpected glitches. Accordingly, the less symmetric that an image is, the longer it takes the brain to process it, and the longer it takes for the brain to do something, the less pleasure it receives.

Dr. Ingo Springer and colleagues demonstrated that symmetry is particularly important in regard to the midline of the face,⁷ because the brain processes symmetry from the middle and works its way laterally. In their study, they showed that an asymmetric mole is often considered unattractive when near the midline of the face but is considered increasingly less unattractive when toward the outside of the face. In other words, it is the reason why Cindy Crawford's mole near her outer lip is referred to as a beauty mark, but a mole in the middle of her forehead would likely be judged less attractive.

With the location of the nose being right in the middle of the face, it is no surprise that the nose is one of the first features (after the eyes) to be noticed by observers. Subsequent to its position, the nose also plays a key role in the processing of facial symmetry. A person with an oddly shaped or sized nose is less likely to elicit an impression of supreme health and vitality. If the nose becomes too distracting, it also deters from the appearance of the eyes. For this reason, many satisfied rhinoplasty patients report that their peers tend not to comment on their altered nose, but more often comment on the beauty of their eyes.

1.5 When Being the Best Is Not Best

Years spent striving to be the best may have been time wasted—that is, in an evolutionary sense. Darwinian principles indicate that the more common something is, the more likely it is to thrive. Just like outliers in a dataset, extremes in any direction are often discarded, because they are not representative of the majority. Accordingly, beauty is most desirable when it is the average appearance of a population. This results in its being most familiar and comfortable. The reason nature selects for those beauty traits found in the

middle of the pack is due to the brain's processing what it is familiar with more easily than something foreign. This ease results in the translation of something as more beautiful and pleasing. This postulation was reinforced by a study performed by Langlois and Roggman, who found that attractive faces were also the most average faces of a population.⁸ They determined this using the blended composite photos of a population, which were deemed the most attractive by the study subjects. Darwinian principles would suggest that the preference is reinforced by the fact that the most blended individual would embody the most diverse gene combination, thus providing them with the best chance of survival in any environment. Thus, nature selects for averageness.

1.6 What's in the Fountain of Youth?

Nature favors youth: it has the most potential for procreation and is less likely to contract disease. Furthermore, for a female, the more infantile her features, the more attractive she is perceived to be. In a study done by Victor Johnston, computer composite photos of females were evaluated by 40 people (20 men and 20 women) ranging from 18 to 30 years of age.⁹ Precise anthropometric sites were marked on the photographed faces and were used to determine the exact positions and sizes of the lips, nose, chin, eyes, and other features. The photos that the evaluators found most attractive were associated with large lips, a small chin, a high hairline, and large eyes—features strongly associated with younger women. The average age of the faces judged to be the most beautiful was calculated to be 24.9 years.

Even across cultures, youthful characteristics remain the same: high cheekbones, large eyes, a small chin, even skin tone, and plump lips. A youthful face draws attention to the eyes and positions an imaginary inverted triangle with its width spanning the cheekbones and its most narrow point occurring at the chin.

1.7 It's All in the Eyes

A youthful face is deeply rooted in the eyes. Heterosexual males selecting for a mate are attracted to large eyes in females, particularly if their pupils are enlarged. Furthermore, it was shown by a study done in Norway that women in their ovulatory phase produced a maximum dilation of up to 8%.¹⁰ The ability to recognize the dilation is not necessarily a conscious effort; however, the subconscious picks up on the subtle changes. Furthermore, males prefer blue eyes over other colors because the lighter color renders the pupils easier to discern for the male.

Advertisers and artists have caught on to this phenomenon. A close look at popular dolls and children's books reveals that Barbies and princesses all have wide, doe-like eyes with large pupils. The editors in charge of Photoshop-

ping magazine images also engage in altering the models' eyes to garner more attention from the audience. For women, more contrast between the color around the eyes and the surrounding skin increases attractiveness.¹¹ This explains why nearly 70% of women in the United States use mascara. It also goes a long way to account for the hundreds of thousands of options women have for eye shadow shades and eyeliners to accentuate their eyes with the dark, colorful framing. Cosmetic medicine has tools to further draw attention to the eyes. An intradermal injection of a small amount of neurotoxin a few millimeters inferior to the ciliary margin at the mid-pupillary line can be used to weaken the muscle as a means of opening the palpebral aperture of the eye. This results in a more open appearance of the eye and the appearance of increased friendliness. This is used in conjunction with neurotoxin injections to the corrugator supercilii, procerus, depressor supercilii, and orbicularis oculi muscles. Weakening these muscles effectively inhibits frowning, creates the appearance of eyes set further apart, and raises eyebrows. The collective benefit of such results is a more friendly and approachable appearance—which is considered beautiful (**Fig. 1.1**).

1.8 Lips

Direct indicators of youthfulness are full, red lips defined by a distinctive white border. Lips plump slightly during the height of female fertility. In a study in which males identified the size lips they found most attractive, they chose the photos of females with lips of 19.4 mm.⁹ The male's subconscious mind recognizes large lips and correlates them with youth and fertility. Beautiful lips are also marked by an upper lip that protrudes 1 to 2 mm further than the bottom lip.

Lip enhancements tend to be one of the most talked about nonsurgical procedures when it comes to celebrities. When they are done well, nobody should notice that anything was done, but when overfilled, lips are the "Scarlet Letter" of cosmetic enhancement. (Unfortunately, "duck lips" have become an everyday phrase in patients' list of concerns, but they are completely avoidable.) As women age, they tend to lose their lip roll, which once provided youthful definition. Additionally, the lip body loses volume and the upper cutaneous lip elongates, both of which are tell-tale signs of aging.¹² To combat this, filler with a higher viscosity can be used in the upper and lower vermilion body and border to recreate the roll. To address the loss of volume, a hydrophilic hyaluronic acid filler can be injected into the upper and lower vermilion body to create a more plump lip.

1.9 A Youthful Glow

In cosmetics, we tend to become caught up in use of injectables for their quick way of addressing structural deficiencies. However, a person is only as beautiful as the skin

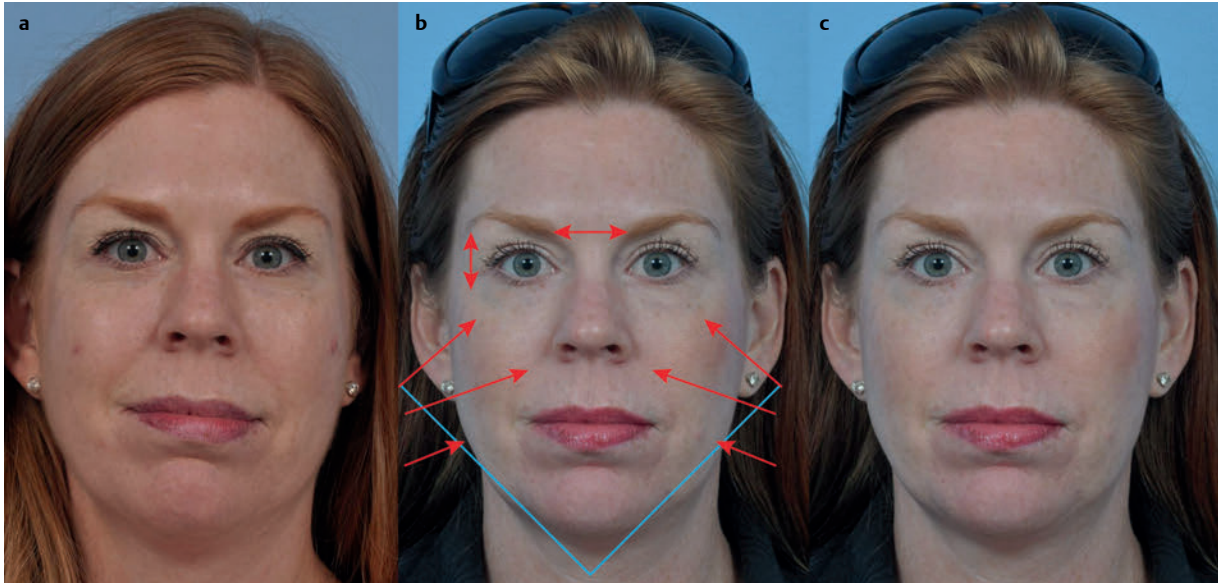


Fig.1.1 (a–c) Non-surgical treatments, such as fillers and botulinum neuromodulators, can be utilized to make subtle changes in the face resulting in the patient projecting an improved first impression. The alterations result in a natural outcome we call “subliminal difference.”

that displays their features. Historically, youthful skin has homogeneous tone and color. Health and youth correlate with translucent and clear skin. As blood is pumped to the skin, light bounces off the blood vessels, which produces the desirable pinkish tint that exudes health and viability and attracts the opposite sex. Consistently across all cultures, female beauty results from skin that is a few shades lighter than their male counterparts’ skin tone. Biologically, this creates an advantage for women by allowing the absorption of more sunlight, resulting in the increased production of vitamin D, a nutrient essential for pregnancy.

As a woman ages, collagen denatures, soft tissue and fat atrophy, and skin volume is lost. This process partly results in wrinkling and creping of skin. Additionally, as a woman goes through pregnancy and beyond, her skin begins to darken and take on a more uneven appearance. Aging also results in the visibility of tiny blood vessels in the skin, known as spider veins or telangiectasia, which detracts from homogeneity and signifies the loss of youth and/or health. From an evolutionary perspective, abnormal skin coloring signals potential disease. Someone seeking a mate would likely be more inclined to spend their energy and resources on someone apparently more youthful and a better carrier for their genes.

Luckily, skin-care companies have recognized the value of science and have developed products that not only protect skin from the harmful rays of the sun, but also correct damage that has already occurred and slow the rate of collagen breakdown. The combination of nonsurgical treatments that includes filler neurotoxin to alter facial architecture coupled with chemical balancing peels and

topical skin care can improve the first impression the person projects as well as the individual’s self-esteem.¹³ Combination ablative and nonablative lasers target pigment issues as well as work on resurfacing and retexturizing the skin. The complete and prudent cosmetic provider will incorporate a skin-care regimen into their practice to enhance both the skin and the well-being of patients.

During the aging process, the soft tissue, fat, and muscle that once created “apple-like” cheeks descend. The area around the eyes subsequently becomes hollow, and the soft tissue starts to fall over the jawline, creating jowling. This in turn makes the jawline appear squarer, a masculinizing trait that leads to a less physically beautiful female appearance. And while there are aggressive surgical procedures to treat an isolated jowl or hollowing, it is the complete face within the holistic context of the person’s individual desires and goals that we must consider.

1.10 The Subliminal Creation of Beauty

Traditional plastic surgery training seems to have fixated on the physical “ideals of beauty,” but too often the ideals may be taken out of the context of how they fit the individual person. As a result, surgeons aim beyond natural results to a glorified ideal that may not proportionally or emotionally match the individual patient. To improve appearance and well-being, we need to dampen radical changes in exchange for placing focus on subtle ones. It is the collective minor facial alterations, although barely detectable,

that will stimulate the subconscious mind of both the individual and the unknowing observer to interpret them as beauty.

Accordingly, the authors have adopted a new philosophy, “Subliminal Difference,” which allows one to factor in the evolutionary aspect of beauty along with the neuropsychiatric interpretation of how it is perceived (Fig. 1.1). This has added a third dimension, the subconscious mind, to the two dimensions of form and function formerly used as guiding forces. The philosophy of Subliminal Difference embraces mostly nonsurgical facial cosmetic treatments, but it can be translated to strategic surgical procedures that serve to illuminate the eyes and deemphasize the lower third of the face. As an example, combination in-office neurotoxin and filler treatments can be a more readily available means for aging gracefully. Treating the upper one-third of the face with a neurotoxin can result in the elevation of the brow, creating a subtle separation of the medial clubs of the brow, which results in the reduction of forehead wrinkles and the opening of the eyelid aperture. This conveys a more friendly and youthful message. Eyelashes are easily enhanced, drawing attention to the eyes. The use of filler in the malar cheeks further pedestals the eyes and draws attention away from the lower third of the face. If the jaw appears too square and masculine, the lower third of the face may be deemphasized and the width of the mandible narrowed with injection of a neurotoxin into the masseters. This allows the lips to become more noticeable. If a patient has volume loss in the vermilion body or border, hyaluronic acid filler may be used to subtly redefine them. Ablative and nonablative laser treatments or chemical peeling may be used to address discoloration and texture changes that are associated with aging, and this is followed with a home skin-care regimen. The importance of a proper diet and adequate exercise is discussed during aesthetic interventions, as it is our belief diet and exercise benefit the psyche and ultimately our patients’ satisfaction and outcome.

Although the approach described here was specifically developed as a way to achieve subtle results from in-office procedures with little to no downtime, the same “less is more” doctrine can and should be applied surgically. For example, if a patient requests a drastically smaller nose, the surgeon cannot look at the nose alone. Just as with a sculpture, alteration of one piece must be considered only within the context of the entire piece of art. While the patient may be underwhelmed at first with the computer imaging projecting the expected result, subsequently they are further informed that the end result is the surgeon’s best effort to enhance all of the other characteristics of beauty that they possess. This includes the eyes, as well as the creation of facial balance and harmony that is most pleasing. The surgical (or nonsurgical) result is a face that conveys femininity/masculinity, youthfulness, and beauty while remaining subtle, natural, and within the context of the patient’s age. Ultimately, patients feel better about themselves.

Our efforts have shown that all it takes is mild, barely perceptible alterations in facial appearance to impact the first impression the patient projects and to elevate patients’ self-esteem and quality of life.^{14,15,16,17} And, as our colleagues in neuropsychology and behavioral psychology have shown, regardless of physical appearance, those with elevated self-esteem stand taller, appear more extroverted, handle conflict better, and even can earn more money.^{18,19} A confident disposition can, and often will, trump physical perfection. In the authors’ opinion, our goal as plastic surgeons and cosmetic physicians, regardless of culture, ethnicity, or language, is not to improve the patient’s appearance per se but to use our aesthetic skills and interventions to elevate our patients’ self-esteem.²⁰ Those who feel beautiful project a more favorable impression and are awarded all the social benefits of beauty. Ultimately, those who feel beautiful are beautiful, and that, in essence, is what we aim to achieve.

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