

(Parkland Life Column for February 2011)

Age of Your Valentine Influences Definition of Beauty

By David J. Levens, MD, PA, FACS

The notion that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” heralds back to the ancient Greeks. But a very modern survey shows that the definition of beauty depends a lot on the age of the beholder.

In a joint survey by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, participants were asked what aspect of physical beauty they found most appealing in another person.

Respondents in their 20s - 40s look for a fit, well-proportioned body while youthful skin ranked at the top for respondents in their 50s and 60s.

When asked which part of themselves they are most concerned about, almost all respondents listed their face, except those in their 30s who ranked their abdomen/hips number one in their concerns. Across the age spectrum, respondents were more concerned about their abdomens and hips than their breasts or any other part of their body.

Why work to maintain one’s appearance? All age groups ranked “boosting self-confidence” as the chief reason. Attracting potential partners was a close second for those in their 20s. In the 30s-50s, the second-most popular choice shifted to increasing professional opportunities, while in the 60s, the second strongest motivation was to help make new friends.

Fortunately, today there are many options, both surgical and non-invasive, to help patients address their personal beauty goals. Body procedures tend to be more surgical, as with abdominoplasty, liposuction, breast lift and/or augmentation, which can resolve many body issues and, in most patients, result in stronger self-confidence and a better self-image. On the other hand, there are a host of less invasive options for the face such as fillers, Botox and lasers, although traditional face, neck and eye lifts are sometimes indicated.

Meanwhile, whatever your age or physical issues, if your 2011 Valentine doesn’t value your inner beauty above all else, you might just want to find a new Valentine for 2012!

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