

# ISSUE 28

## Cosmetic Surgery

In times past, plastic surgery was used primarily by accident victims and by old people to restore their appearance. But now cosmetic surgery is in vogue, especially among the very young. They save their money to pay for an operation, ask their parents to foot the bill, or take out a bank loan. Adults are usually worried about the possible side effects from the surgery, but the youngsters don't seem to worry about them at all.

Why do you think plastic surgery has become so popular among young people?

- (1) It is like any other fad, driven by peer pressure.
- (2) They want to have a more prestigious job in the future.
- (3) They want to marry a more desirable mate.
- (4) They are looking for self-satisfaction.
- (5) They want social acceptance.
- (6) They think looks matter more than anything else.
- (7) They are insecure and lack confidence.



# Sample Answers

(A) As the old saying goes, do not judge a book by its cover. Apparently, people think that they can create an appealing exterior that will somehow hide their true nature. Or, perhaps, they believe that the way they look prevents other people from discovering their real selves, so they want a more appealing *facade*. Either way, psychologists have found that a person's feelings about himself or herself do not change at all after receiving cosmetic surgery, and neither do other people's *perceived* attitudes toward him or her.

(B) If clothes make the man, why stop there? Why not refashion the entire package? If there is no serious health risk involved, what's wrong with looking younger? What's the matter with having a better figure or a more attractive face? *Let's face it*, first impressions really do *count*, and by their very nature they are *superficial*. Most people never get beyond first impressions, so we might as well maximize our initial advantage.

## Speak Your Mind

1. What kind of cosmetic surgery would you want (if any)?  
A facelift? A nose job? A *boob job*? *Liposuction*?
2. Are you worried about the side effects of any surgery?
3. What would you say if your child wanted a facelift?
4. Who in your opinion really needs plastic surgery?
5. Do you think cosmetic surgery makes it easier to get a good job or find a good spouse?
6. Discuss the social background to the *boom* in *aesthetic* surgeries.

# Speak Your Mind Helpers

## 1. What kind of cosmetic surgery would you want (if any)? A facelift? A nose job? A boob job? Liposuction?

(A)

I've tried to lose weight through all kinds of diets and exercise programs. Nothing seems to *work* for longer than a few weeks. I had given up hope. But now I can have the fat removed, painlessly and safely, in just a few hours. And the procedure does not cost much to obtain. So why shouldn't I have liposuction performed?

(B)

I look at the models and actresses in the movies and magazines and I can't help but admire the way they look. I should be able to look that way, too. I think I'm not bad looking now, but just a little modification here and there and I could be really *gorgeous*. It's no different than a poet revising his work to make it perfect, or a composer *polishing* her symphony.

## 2. Are you worried about the side effects of any surgery?

(A)

What side effects? All the ads insist that the procedures are safe, painless, and easy to perform. They make it obvious that anyone can be transformed from being a plain person to a perfect one immediately.

(B)

Cosmetic surgery is like any other. Someone's body is being cut open; skin or bone or other body parts are being removed, carved up, replaced, or *augmented*; the body is being sewn up again. No matter how minor any surgical procedure is, there are problems with *scar* tissue, infection, bruising and *discoloration*, post-surgical pain, and *depression*. These after-effects may be mild or severe, long-lasting or brief, but they always exist, and no one knows in advance how anyone will respond to that particular surgery.

→ **work** : have a particular effect or result    → **gorgeous** : very beautiful

→ **polish** : improve (sth), such as a piece of writing, speech etc. by making slight changes

→ **augment** : increase the size, amount, or value of (sth)    → **scar** : permanent mark on one's skin from an injury or cut

→ **discolor** : change color badly    → **depression** : condition of feeling sad and sorrowful

### 3. What would you say if your child wanted a facelift?

(A)

I'd tell him to wait until he's an adult and can afford to waste his own money. Even then, he should think about it long and hard. We look the way we do because of our parents' genetic *disposition* and because of our own inner selves; *carving up* these factors is like stealing our entire identity.

(B)

I would talk to her for a long time about why she wanted one. If I were convinced that she had *thought* the issue *through* and that her desire was not just a passing *fad*, I don't see why her request should automatically be refused. After all, she knows her own fears and desires better than anyone. Of course, other discussions would follow, about health risks, costs, timing, and so forth, and, clearly, professional people would need to be consulted as well.

### 4. Who in your opinion really needs plastic surgery?

(A)

People who are *disfigured* by illness, disease, or genetics should have an equal opportunity for acceptable looks. And anyone who has been in a car crash or fire certainly needs to have his or her appearance return to normal. Unfortunately, the truly *bizarre*-looking people tend to be *shunned* by society, so they should be able to *redress* that discrimination.

(B)

Anyone who is dissatisfied with the way he looks should be able to improve his appearance. Getting plastic surgery is no different than getting our teeth straightened when we're kids or wearing glasses — or contacts! — to see better.

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers

### 5. Do you think cosmetic surgery makes it easier to get a good job or find a good spouse?

(A)

Many studies show that good-looking people are rewarded in their jobs and lifestyles. But none of them have demonstrated whether the results are due to the way they look or to their inner selves. Perhaps people who have always been admired for their looks are more confident and secure about themselves and more *extroverted* than ordinary people; and so, it is their attitude that is rewarded, not just their appearance. But people who merely change their looks do not change their characters overnight and will continue to have the same lack of confidence and insecurities as before.

(B)

As the world grows more competitive, anything we can do to improve our appeal makes us more *marketable*. We can do this by many means: getting more education or special training, meeting useful people, dressing more appropriately, taking care of our health and appearance, having a good reputation, and so forth. But certainly, *adjusting* the way our body or face appears to others *falls in* the same category of maximizing our success factors.

- **extroverted** : confident and happy in social situations

- **marketable** : of interest to employers or purchasers

- **adjust** : change or adapt

- **fall in** : belong to

## 6. Discuss the social background to the boom in aesthetic surgeries.

F : I think I'm going to get a nose job. What do you think?

M : I think your nose is perfect the way it is. Don't change it!

F : But it's too flat, don't you think?

M : But I like it that way. If you change it, you'll become somebody else entirely, not the "you" that everybody knows and loves.

F : But I don't love me the way I am. I want to try a different look. If I don't like it, I can always get back my old one, right?

M : You make it sound like getting a new *hairdo*.

F : From what I hear, it's almost as easy.

M : Somebody's been *feeding you a line*. We're talking about surgery. That's never "as easy as getting a hairdo," even under the best of circumstances.

F : Well, I don't know. I'm still *tempted*.

M : You're just brainwashed, that's all. The people who control the media insist that there is only one standard of beauty in the world, and if you *deviate* from it then there's something wrong with you.

F : But just look at the women in the fashion magazines and on TV. They're gorgeous. I want to look like them.

M : I don't look much like any of the big movie stars these days, do I?

F : No, not at all!

M : Well, then, it's the same thing, isn't it? Do you dislike me just because I'm not *conventionally* handsome?

F : No. It doesn't matter what you look like (although I think you look just fine). But I like you for who you are, not who you look like.

M : That's my point, exactly.

