



FINDING DR. RIGHT

FINDING THE RIGHT COSMETIC SURGEON

By Jason Cheng, DO and Frederic Corbin, MD

S ometime around middle age, it hits. The face and figure staring at you in the mirror fails to match the vitality a vigor you feel inside. You realize as time marches on it marches right across your face and every other part of your body, leaving its trail of wrinkles and misguided flesh to wallow where each pleases. To counteract the advancing army of aging radicals and their tell-tale signs, you reach for hope in a jar, hope in a pill, hope in an exercise machine and in a final act of desperation, you become an infomercial junky looking for any hope at any cost. Each of these hopeful cures spawns entire industries creating giants of wealth around the search for elusive youth. Temporary cures at best, manufacturers and gurus know you shall continue coming back; by the time you realize quick fixes rarely deliver, a new generation of hope seekers lines up to buy their products and promises. Hope springs eternal, even if youth does not.

Or does it? Once the benefit and secret weapon of the rich, famous and powerful, cosmetic surgery from face lifts, liposuction, breast augmentation and even minor procedures like laser brown spot removal or the obliteration of under-eye circles today enters the mainstream of affordability. Though never a decision to be taken lightly, surgical alteration, cosmetic surgery or surgical enhancement—these options may produce magical long-lasting transformations. However, like any surgical or medical procedure, research and ample due diligence in identifying the proper doctor continues as the primary determinant for success.

The following guidelines created by internationally renowned cosmetic surgeon Dr. Fredric Corbin, provide direction in securing a qualified surgeon.

1. INVESTIGATE EACH DOCTOR'S QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS—

a) Ask specifically if he or she is “BOARD CERTIFIED” by the “*AMERICAN BOARD OF PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGEONS*”. Then verify this.

Claiming and doing surgery are not synonymous. The ABPRS develops and oversees international standards and qualifications Board Certified Surgeon adhere to.

Why this is Important: Often specialists or general practitioners venture into the potentially lucrative field of cosmetic surgery with inadequate medical and surgical care training, thus making you the guinea pig and another step toward their attainment of experience.

b) Confirm your surgeon operates and has privileges to operate in an accredited hospital. With any surgical procedure, an element of risk is present. Should complications develop, the surgeon may transfer you to a hospital for further care. If a hospital does not show support for a nearby surgeon, chances are you shouldn't either.

c) Ask for references and check them. Ask for 2-3 professional references, (other doctors) and 2-3 patient references, (former patients).

2. ASK TO SEE SAMPLES OF EACH DOCTOR'S WORK

a) Experience, experience, experience: According to Dr. Corbin, *“A good plastic surgeon will have samples and pictures of patients who have had the same procedure done that you are requesting. Keep in mind that most surgeons will only show you his good work, so the more pictures and samples you find, the better.”*

b) Ask if the doctor has had any unhappy clients and what in his/her opinion caused the dissatisfaction. How, if such complaints exist, did the doctor rectify the situation? How a doctor handles disputes or problems is as important as his/her surgical skill. Then ask yourself if his/her answer is satisfactory to you. Double check with the medical association and governing boards for any complaints lodged against the doctor or his/her practice, the nature of these complaints, whether settled and the current status of each. Most doctors receive occasional complaints during a career, an unavoidable circumstance when providing a service and dealing with human beings. You determine, based upon the information provided, each complaint's seriousness or acceptability to you.

3. ARE YOU BEING SOLD OR ADVISED?

Consider this a job interview with you as the employer, hiring a doctor and not a salesman to sell you services. An excellent physician listens and assess based upon your circumstances prior to rendering suggestions and options. If the surgeon tells you that there is only one procedure he will do, without explaining what other techniques or available options, consider the candidate a technician in this field not an expert surgeon. The fees constitute a significant investment, deserving of a doctor whom will care for you rather than a scalpel-wielding salesman with a revolving office door and a waiting room of patients three feet deep.

4. VISIT MORE THAN ONE DOCTOR.

We shop online for the best cars, the best plane tickets, and even the best potential dates! Give your body the same respect. Interview several candidate surgeons and rate each on the options he/she provides, the amount of pressure placed on you to make a decision, the quality of work and even how he/she treats existing patients and staff. As you visit with more doctors, you will become more educated about your choices. Through the course of interviewing, you'll attain an instinct for the “market price” allocated to different procedures. Your goal during the interviewing process is to determine your level of

confidence in the doctor and if you want to put yourself in this person's care. Do not discount your gut instincts.

Ask yourself:

- 1) Am I comfortable with this doctor?
- 2) Do I feel that he/she will give me consistent care before, during and after the operation, even if complications exist?
- 3) Am I able to obtain satisfactory financial terms that will not be a burden?
- 4) Has he/she demonstrated a good grasp of what I want to accomplish?
- 5) Has he/she offered any alternatives to what I think I need?
- 6) Do I feel confident in this doctor's ability to care for me from beginning to end?

5. LOOK FOR A LIFE-LONG INVESTMENT, NOT A ONE-DAY CLEARANCE SALE.

Patients often equate cosmetic surgery with a fancy facial and investing in breast implants with the experience of buying a new pair of earrings. The risks of surgery are very real, with the possibility of not only poor results, but also disability or death. A serious issue, your decision deserves equally serious consideration.

6. CONSIDER CAREFULLY YOUR MOTIVATIONS FOR PERFORMING THE SURGERY:

Cosmetic surgery can transform your image, bolster your self-esteem and provide the confidence to enhance your relationships. It is not a fix-all, nor a solution to psychological problems and relationship issues. Issues present prior remain present after. Similar to man who loses 50 pounds and suddenly expects his entire life to change, a terrible disappointment befalls him when life fails to live up to his expectations. This happens because the problem is on the inside, not the outside and he failed to address the issues compounding his life. Rather he addressed it differently in an effort to fool himself and those around him. The façade eventually fades away.

Surgery enhances strong self-esteem; it does not supply it. It will not make your husband or wife love you more simply because you change your look, got bigger breasts or removed some wrinkles. If your motivations for doing it are because you think that everything in life will be perfect once a physical problem is altered, undertaking cosmetic surgery should wait until you have dealt with the issues causing you anguish.

Carolyn, an executive assistant since 1983 and still young at the age of 42 has accomplished everything she's set her sights on including two beautiful children, PTA mom of the year and she's been blessed with a loving husband who even does the dishes! Though energetic and young, at times her outward appearance says otherwise and she often cowers when someone exclaims, "Wow! You look like you've had a long day."

Her brother Mark, a 52 year-old retail manager achieved significant success ascending his company's ladder while supporting his three children and consistently volunteering at his church. Life even delivered

a few golf trophies. Yet despite a smart diet and regular exercise, he mid-section continues to expand with his good fortune. His outward appearance, he feels, contradicts the whole of who he is and may be holding him back from further advancement.

Carol and Mark's situations show healthy motivations for cosmetic surgery. In both examples, the reasons are to match their exterior with their inner feeling and prevent misconceptions. In either case, each person knows the change results from a desire rather than perceived need.

Improper reasons include using it to create an image to hide who you are or to please someone else. Consider Michael Jackson. His attempts to change via cosmetic alteration and surgery are legendary and his motivation continues in an effort to validate and sadly love himself, despite his talent and genius. His quest became an obsession and rather than create self-esteem and self-love, he destroyed it. Mr. Jackson is an extreme example of using cosmetic surgery for all the wrong reasons.

CONCLUSION:

Once you have successfully navigated the six steps:

1. Investigate each doctor's qualifications and credentials
2. Ask to see samples of each doctor's work
3. Are you being sold or advised?
4. Visit more than one doctor.
5. Look for a life-long investment, not a one-day clearance sale.
6. Consider your motivations

You will be ready to begin the exciting process and make the changes you've been longing for with the results you desire.

For a List of Certified Cosmetic Surgeons in Your Area See: [A Board Certified Plastic Surgeons Resource](#) or [Medical Resource Reviews Database](#)

ABOUT FREDERIC CORBIN, MD: *Couples Company's Expert on Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery*

Based in Beverly Hills, California and a recognized expert in his field, **Dr. Frederic Corbin** is fully certified by the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons and is a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. A graduate of Brown University, **Dr. Corbin** received his Medical degree from the New York University School of Medicine. He completed his Surgical Internship at the University Hospital of San Diego, and his residency at the prestigious Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston. **Dr. Corbin** has been featured in many newspapers and magazines, including People Magazine, Easyrider, Family Living, Muscle and Fitness, The Orange County Register, Brea Progress and Divorce Magazine. He has appeared both on TV and Radio shows, including Power 106, discussing current Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery techniques. **Dr. Corbins'** work has been featured on The Oprah Winfrey show, Lifetime, Turner broadcasting, MSNBC, Hard Copy and The Learning Channel.