

# Lewis M. Feder Melds Beauty and Therapy

By DON FLYNN

NEW YORK—He calls his work "appearance medicine," and "liposculpture," and scorns facelifts, which he says gives patients "startled looks" as though they're coming out of a wind tunnel.

He doesn't call it plastic surgery, either, but "cosmetic surgery" or appearance medicine.

Meet Lewis M. Feder, M.D., the famous Fifth Avenue cosmetic surgeon for the well-heeled and celebrities. He is bright, tall, elegant and out-spoken about everything—from politics to poverty.

Don't confuse Feder with somebody who thinks a little facelift or a tuck here or there for the Beautiful People is what a cosmetic surgeon does. Not that he's against improving what beautiful people see in their mirror.

But for Feder, your face is not only your fortune if you're in the public eye, but your private soul and well-being even if it's only for your spouse, friends, family and acquaintances.

Being unattractive—even ugly—can be a psychological disaster for anyone, he says. Helping them with their face and their body is helping them with their life.

"For some superficial people, it's a matter of perhaps some vanity," he said. "But for thousands of people I see, it's a matter of low self-esteem. People can feel and actually be miserable because of the size of their abdomen or their butt."

## High Self-Esteem

He has, he says, "deep compassion" for people who are heartbroken because they look the way they look through no fault of their own. Like it or not, people judge us by the way we appear, he noted, whether it's our fault or that it came with the package at birth. And Feder sees no reason for anyone to go on living behind a face or inside a body they don't like.

Indeed, he sees his reconstructing work as a mix of psychiatrist, psychologist and maybe Max Factor. He observed:

"Nothing pleases me more than to see a person who has been transformed with new, high self-esteem. They look and feel healthier—they have a glow."

Many times, too, in the process, health concerns are discovered and he refers patients to medical doctors.

And he says trying to change your appearance with diets is "nonsense." Only liposuction—that is, liposculpture—can remove unattractive areas of your body from different places and resculpt those areas.

Appearance medicine isn't just vanity, he declares. Looking good is feeling good and that's healthy.

Fifty percent of entertainment people have some done, and 40 percent of Feder's practice are men.

It all depends on how it's done and who does it, he suggests.

Feder told *The Medical Herald* that he does "liposculpture," or "body sculpture." That means getting rid of unattractive and dangerous fat, saving tissue and using it elsewhere in the body, such as the face or hands. He wants to say he works in flesh the way Rodin worked in stone.

"Ninety-five percent of the repair work I do as a cosmetic surgeon is liposculpture. I am one of the first doctors in America to do a technique in liposculpture called body sculpture with the French tumescent technique. Today, it is the most common cosmetic procedure in the world.

"Liposculpture involves sculpting the body to a more anatomically natural way," he explained. "Not only is it important cosmetically, it is very important medically. Women get it in the saddle bags and men get it abdominally.

"With severe abdominal fat in men, there is a much higher instance of stroke and heart attacks than in the general population. Taking out those fat cells is very good."

As for dieting, forget it. "Diets are all nonsense. All diets are a lie." Behavior modification is the only way to lose weight.

"But, more importantly, you never are going to lose weight where you want to. That is only through body sculpture."

For every extra pound of fat, he said, you need 300 miles of capillaries to feed it. "You are wasting the efficiency of the heart muscle by having to feed all of this extra fat."

As for face-lifts, forget them, too.

"Traditional face-lifting is really to be scorned," he declared. "It takes an average patient and makes them look not younger but different by taking away the natural contours by cutting and pulling.

"I never want that pulled look and I am scared when I see these wind-tunnelled looking patients who all have that startled look, like 'Ah!' and they all come down like gladiators in two years



Lewis M. Feder, M.D. wants his patients to have a winning smile.

anyway. It doesn't look natural."

The most important concept is non-invasive cosmetic procedures, he insists.

"The traditional cut-and-pull doesn't work. Facelifts whether you want to believe it or not, do not work."

He cites Joan Rivers as an example of a face-lift poster girl. "The most important thing is judgment. Michael Jackson himself had poor judgment and I believe his doctors themselves had worse judgment."

Jackson, he suggested, was "totally over-operated on."

Doctors should not give patients anything they want "Michael does not know what is right and wrong. He puts himself in the hands of his doctor and I personally think that it was unethical to have the amount of work that he had.

"He has had numerous nasal procedures. He's had his skin bleached. He's had his eyelids done. He has had facelifts. He has had numerous procedures. I think that he is in very bad shape as far as his nose is concerned to the point that it may affect his singing."

Feder, as you see, is full of opinions about plastic surgery, or cosmetic surgery, or "appearance medicine," and says he has learned at the hands of masters, not at hospitals. An upper East Side New Yorker, he was graduated from the New York Medical College, interned at the United States Public Health Service, spent three years at the prestigious Cornell Medical Center, a year in general surgery and three years on fellowships around the world.

His mentors were Pierre

Fournier in Paris, "the grandfather of cosmetic surgery," Benito Rich, a "founding father of cosmetic surgery," Bernard Korie in Los Angeles and Richard Caleel in Chicago.

"You learn when you apprentice yourself to the grandmasters," he said. "You do not learn these techniques in hospitals."

Feder says it's important to know when to say, "No," to a patient. Not everyone is suitable for every procedure.

Liposuction, which he prefers to call liposculpture, is the most frequent procedure in the United States and in the world.

If it is not sculpting, then it is a waste of time, he says. He says he does sculpture on any part of the body, the belly, hips, thighs, arms, calves.

"I did a Middle Eastern family whose forearms were very heavy. I do the neck. I do the buffalo hump. I sculpt the back, hips, knees."

He says he gets and save tissue and does not throw it away. "I save it for hand rejuvenation, for augmentation for men and augmentation for women. You can also stick that tissue in a woman's breast. I take from a hip and fill the breast up. I use the body's own tissue and rejuvenate the face."

All this removing and restoring is, however, not mere vanity, he says. To be as good as you can be "is fine for everybody. It is not a negative. It is positive in my opinion."

A face-lift is called a rhytidectomy, which in Greek means removing wrinkles. "But a face-lift does not really remove wrinkles," he said.

"If the sun has damaged the drapes, the procedure may be chemical peeling or resurfacing, a common procedure. I use laser for that.

"I still think dermabrasion and chemical peel, together, which I first described in 1985 is still superior to many laser procedures, because with laser you may have a healing period for four to six weeks or longer.

"Everyone thinks laser is a cure-all. It is just another way of resurfacing or cutting. It is not better or worse. As a matter of fact, the minute I get a laser, it is

outdated."

When it comes to doing something about the face, he says, it loses tissue, not tone. "My way of looking at the aging process is to give back to the patient what they have lost. The patient is losing subcutaneous tissue. I replace the tissue with some transplanted tissue from the belly, hip or thigh.

"Then I may put the 'Aptos threads' in to suspend it, which is a new technique, which goes under the skin and I am the first doctor in the United States to use it. I may at the same time, or later, do a modified S-lift facelift which is a very small incision just for elevation, not for pulling.

"We have re-used the body's own tissue to rejuvenate the face, which is a major breakthrough. There is nothing like it. Fournier and I developed this technique 20 years ago and I have been using it ever since.

"You have heard of collagen injections and restalyn. All of that stuff is nonsense. It is all foreign bodies and it is gone in four to six months. I use your own tissue. I freeze your tissue. I have over 1,000 patients' tissues in my freezer. I touch it up again in three months, six months and in nine months, and after those three touch-ups, that technique is permanent."

He calls that grafting your own tissue back to your face, to restore contours that you had 20 years earlier, "which is impossible with any other procedure.

"Nothing else can possibly work. That to me is the biggest breakthrough in cosmetic medicine in 50 years."

## Non-Invasive Techniques

Feder says that the key today is non-invasive techniques. Procedures that will allow you to look rejuvenated and well and better than your chronological age without a traditional cut and pull.

He also insists that cosmetic surgery is no longer something that the middle class cannot afford. The fees are very affordable to day.

"Most people can afford cosmetic surgery. Everybody is into it today. The middle class does it as much as the upper classes."

The skin is the mirror of the internal milieu of the body, he said. Sun damage is one of the major damages to skin.

"You cannot touch up the skin to the degree that it will hide an unhealthy body. I can look at your skin and tell you if you are healthy or not. Your skin will reflect that."

Such are some of the opinions of the appearance doctor, who practices at 965 Fifth Avenue in New York City and has a company, Dermatologic Formulations Inc., that offers over 75 treatment products worldwide.

Feder has a web site at [www.federmd.com](http://www.federmd.com).