

Belief in Beauty

By Karel Murray

Now I think I've seen everything – a commercial on television shows three gorgeous older women talking intimately to the viewing audience “Isn't it about time to consider Botox?”

I'm staring at the faces of these ladies and wondering “why in the world they think they even need assistance in enhancing their beauty?”

I do know that Botox is injected into facial muscles to smooth out wrinkles. Doesn't it also give the person a paralyzed forehead and a continual surprised expression? I know for a fact, there is no way I'd sit still, fully conscious and have a physician approach my face intending to jab me with a needle. What if a person is screaming as the injections are made... does their face settle into a look of horror that only time can erase?

Maintenance of beauty is a good thing at least that is what the cosmetic industry tells me. I know that, as humans, we want to keep what we value... close confidants, loving children, a secure financial situation and a purpose in life. I'm still trying to determine where beauty fits into the scheme of things...

Family photographs are not prevalent in our house unless they have been taken by a professional photographer. My husband, son and I have somehow missed inheriting the biological photogenic gene. Years of throwing away photos has shown us that we just don't have a “good side”. We've decided that postcards of exotic locations are much better than photos of us standing in front of a historic monument. Why run the risk of ruining the picture? We know we were there... why commemorate a split second of half closed eyes and wind tangled hair?

Friends and family alike have expressed dismay that we have so effectively non-documented our personal history. Quite frankly, Rick and I really don't want future generations pointing and laughing at our photos. We had our wedding photos taken 30 years ago under duress. When we look back on them now, we study each other and say “You don't look like you used to...” We're still debating whether that's a good thing. What we know for sure is that our perspective has changed from concentrating on external to internal improvements - to appreciating the beauty in everything around us.

I read once that experiments with children and adults prove that individuals consider a person more attractive when they see people whose facial features are symmetrical – fully balanced. I checked out my symmetry by placing a

mirror's edge at a 90 degree angle from my nose and then looked at the reflection in an opposing mirror. I discovered I truly don't have a good side. Bummer. Can Botox fix that?

Why does the magazine or televised image look so different from the actual person? Have you ever met a celebrity and thought "they don't look like I expected them to?" Is it their attitude or the fact that they have stepped down from the pages of a staged environment and relate to you on a purely human level? How much of the personality contributes to beauty?

This past year, I was speaking at a women's conference and the auditorium could only handle 500 attendees. The response to the session exceeded the ability to seat everyone, so a satellite video feed was beamed into the cafeteria where the "overflow" sat to enjoy the program. After the session was done, I joined the long line of participants at the lunch line. The lady behind me tapped me on the shoulder. She complimented me on my program and then tilted her head and gazed at me. With a quick smile, she then loudly announced, "You look so much better alive!"

I hadn't even known I had died on stage.

The new television series "Ugly Betty" has bravely ventured into the concept that what constitutes beauty begins with personal integrity. The main character is ridiculed for her obviously failing in fulfilling the beauty ideal. But in their arrogance, this "average" person begins to shine. Betty is not only a survivor, she is an eternal optimist, believes in her intelligence, and demands respect which in turn generates awe. Dove Soap has an advertising campaign which photographs women who more accurately reflect ageless feminine attributes; vibrancy, confidence, shapeliness, and pride in what they have to offer the world besides a perfectly balanced face. Are we finally beginning to look below the surface in order to discover the gems inside us?

Today, I'm making a personal pledge to concentrate on building a healthy body, affirming life with my family and loved ones, and celebrating the fact that I exist at all in this dynamic world. Perhaps, through my husband's eyes I will believe what he has loved about me for 30 years.

So, let's take license and change the chant reverently uttered in the movie "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure" and truly believe "We Are Worthy! We Are Worthy!"

Karel Murray, a national motivational humorist and business trainer is the author of Straight Talk: Getting Off the Curb (a book co-authored with KC Lundberg), Think Forward!® (a monthly e-newsletter with over 4,200+ subscribers), The Profitability Blueprint Series: Career Building Concepts for the Real Estate Licensee and numerous articles in local, regional, and national publications. You can contact her at karel@karel.com or call 866-817-2986 or access her web site at <http://www.karel.com>