



Dr. Mike Golpa of New Age Smile



Dr. Frank Stile of Clinique Plastique



Master Stylist William Whatley

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

It's your special day. The one you have been dreaming about and planning for your entire life. It's the day when all the focus, for better or worse (no pun intended), will be on you. With that kind of pressure, many brides consider undergoing cosmetic adjustments to fix those imperfections that they don't want to see in their wedding albums for years to come. Whether those are corrected with surgical procedures like breast augmentation and nose reshaping or minimally-invasive procedures such as a chemical peel and Botox, cosmetic procedures in the United States have exploded.

According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, in the last decade, the number of cosmetic procedures has grown enormously. Breast augmentations have gone up a whopping 676 percent, going from 32,607 breast augmentations in 1992 to 252,915 in 2004. Same goes for breast lifts, those numbers have increased from 7,963 in 1992 to 73,858 in 2004, an unbelievable 828 percent increase. Tummy tucks, too, have found amazing popularity with 16,810 in 1992 and 102,497 in 2004, which amounts

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to a 510 percent change.

But you don't have to be a prospective bride to desire a makeover. Last fall, *Luxury Las Vegas* magazine and our makeover experts, Dr. Frank Stile of Clinique Plastique and Dr. Mike Golpa of New Age Smile performed a cosmetic surgical and dental makeover on one of our readers. After receiving more than 75 letters we selected a candidate.

Our candidate, Marie Rice, sent in her very compelling story and photos. Marie struggled with her weight for much of her adult life. She underwent gastric bypass surgery in 2001 that resulted in a dramatic weight loss. After her surgery, Marie went from wearing sizes in the 18 to 20 range to wearing a size 4 or 6.

Marie's results were more than she could have hoped for. "In junior high I was a size nine. That was the smallest I ever got," she explained. As for maintaining her weight since her surgery, Marie takes it in full stride. "Basically they get you prepared for that. It is hard to maintain to a degree. A lot of it is a mindset," she explained. "This (gastric

bypass surgery) is just a procedure. You have to change your life. You still have to really alter your eating habits. I feel I have been pretty lucky."

There were many things Marie had to get used to following her gastric bypass surgery. That included everything from the way she ate to the amount she could drink. "Even water was very heavy in my stomach. The first two weeks you are doing nothing but liquids. Even for six ounces, it would take me 20 minutes to drink it," explained Marie.

The mother of one also had to get used to going clothes shopping. "It's really weird. Even though I can look in a mirror and tell a difference and feel a difference, I still go to my old size on the clothing rack," Marie said. "Now I can understand how anorexics may feel. Even when you look in a mirror you don't see it, but when you look at a picture you can see it. It clicks. Even when I get food, I put more on my plate than what I can eat. It's just habit."

But gastric bypass surgery does have a dirty little secret that you don't hear much about. Even though physicians fully prepare

Dear Luxury Las Vegas magazine,

Did you ever wake up one morning and just say, "I have struggled with my weight. My weight was physically, just walking for short periods of time. The pressure of the weight I carried around. My husband couldn't leave without carrying my inhaler on the roof and it was obvious that my body was also

Emotionally I was so sick of yo-yo diets and weight gain. Every time I would get to my ideal weight, I would gain it back. As the song goes - a picture tells a thousand words. I would block out everything from the neck down if I was in a picture. That's when the reality of it all is unavoidable. I would or somehow hide behind others so that I was not the center of attention.

I struggled with depression because of my weight. I was around people who were thinner than I was. They would smile like they were on top of the world. It was just trying to live through the day. I would join in just trying to live through the day. "why can't I be like that person?"

Now, try shopping - not fun. How can it be? I couldn't buy clothes. My thighs and then, of course, the butt. No pressure there yet, intimacy. I don't believe there was ever a time that I was completely nude with my husband. I would play the part of the innocent.

This was a very lonely period in my life. I was spiraling. I couldn't live like this anymore! I decided to do something. I had a friend who had gone through the same thing. She was 5 feet, two inches in height and 230 pounds, I did it! The life had begun.

Physically, it was tough in the beginning, but I was determined to accept this life-changing event and make it work. I can remember the first 4 weeks were tough, and trust me it wasn't because I was hungry; it was because it was difficult to eat or drink the portions that I was instructed to have. Now you have to remember that my stomach was now no bigger than an egg.

I started out slowly each day taking short walks and after the first week, I was walking my daughter to and from school. Then you start to realize that just weeks before, this type of walking would have been torture on my body. As weeks turned into months, I just got better and better.

I no longer needed my inhaler. It could stay at home while I did my thing and didn't need to worry about unexpected asthma attacks anymore. The weird part of this is that I could feel the weight coming off and with each check-up I saw the pounds just melting off, but when I looked in the mirror I couldn't see it. But when a picture was taken. WOW! I could really see that my body was changing and that I was really losing weight!

Within a year I had done it! I lost the weight and things were good, but not great. Before my gastric bypass, I was required to have a psychiatric evaluation to determine if I could handle this type of surgery and the changes that could my take place in my life. Easy, right? Wrong!

I recall how my counselor discussed with me how my body would change and also how this surgery could affect relationships. The friendships and family never became an issue, but the body that remained did. The weight came off and I did indeed feel better. But what remained was evidence of a body ravaged by a lifetime of being overweight. The sagging skin was a constant emotional reminder of all I had been through. It was like a cruel joke. I had taken great steps to lose all this weight and for what? Just to be unhappy for different reasons?

The sagging skin of my breasts and abdomen is the worst. It is hard to handle having all this extra skin just "hanging" onto my body. When I wear panty hose I get rashes and you can see the extra skin still bulging in places that I can't hide. My breasts, well, let's just say if someone asked to see my breasts, I feel like I could lift my skirt and the rest is history! They are flat and hang very low.

The surgery also left scars. I also no longer have a nice round belly button. When the surgery was performed the incision was made went into my belly button, so when they closed my stomach my belly button turned into a deformed oval shape. I exercise and watch what I eat, but I have gone as far as I can. I just want a normal body.

Even though I have lost the weight, it is still hard being intimate with my husband. I still try to hide the flaws and not let my husband see my body. He never complains, he does the opposite and tells me how proud he is of me.

I am asking to be picked as your makeover winner. With your help, I can have the plastic surgery that will correct the unsightly changes left by my weight loss. It will really give me the body I could never have on my own.

I would finally be able to say I am physically complete inside and out. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my story. I hope that you will keep me in mind and consider me as one of your makeover candidates.

Sincerely, Marie Rice



All my life.



Marie Rice before her gastric bypass surgery in 2001.



Marie Rice is pictured with the team of makeover experts that created her new look.

their patients for the surgery with a 250-question psychological exam and counseling related to the procedure, there is still the matter of how your body looks once it has shrunk and the skin hasn't.

"Your skin doesn't have the elasticity that it used to. Your body isn't going to bounce back. I have had friends who had gastric bypass and the extra skin hasn't bothered them," offered Marie.

But it bothered 46-year-old Marie and so she applied for our makeover and received a tummy tuck, breast lift, and breast augmentation from Dr. Stile, and dentist Dr. Golpa performed a full upper and lower mouth restoration with a full set of veneers.

"It's a cruel joke, they are left with a body that interferes with their quality of life. Even though bypass patients are by far better off with respect to their global health than obese individuals, they have basically traded one form of disfigurement for another. Anyone who does make that investment deserves to be rewarded," explained Dr. Stile. That was one of the reasons Dr. Stile and Dr. Golpa choose Marie as the makeover candidate.

"We felt that she worked the hardest, was the most motivated and therefore earned the privilege of having it. She invested the time and took the risk to have a gastric bypass in order to better her health," explained Dr. Stile. "She has made huge physical and emotional sacrifices to overcome the adversities in her life."

Marie did not take the process of making over her body lightly. "In California I had gone to a couple of plastic surgeons, but it was almost like they couldn't relate to my lack of comfort with my body. They do it so often, that sometimes they forget the human side."



Marie Rice's teeth before Dr. Golpa transformed them.



Marie with her beautiful new teeth.

Marie put off undergoing any body contouring procedures, and then she was selected as our makeover candidate and was immediately won over by Dr. Stile and Dr. Golpa.

"During my visit, he (Dr. Stile) immediately sat me down and explained the process. When I stood up and wouldn't look in the mirror he said 'Don't worry I know how you are feeling and it will be okay.' To him, I wasn't just another patient, he knew I was a person and how I felt," explained Marie of her confidence in Dr. Stile.

Marie's direction to Dr. Golpa regarding her mouth makeover was a little more simplistic. "She just wanted to get a new smile, a Hollywood dazzling smile," said the dentist. "As far as her teeth go, they were a disaster. But basically she now has beautiful teeth."

As for the actual plastic surgery, Marie said it was a breeze compared to her gastric bypass. "After going through gastric bypass, I had gone through the worst of it. After the surgery and when I got home, Dr. Stile kept calling me and keeping tabs on me.

"Recovery was really easy, it was not that bad at all. I was back to work in a few weeks. All three surgeries were completed at once and

it took several weeks to heal and for the swelling to resolve (tummy-tuck)," said Marie.

Now when Marie looks in the mirror she feels like a whole new person. "There's no more discomfort of standing in front of the mirror. Now I don't mind taking my clothes off in front of my husband. In my job, I deal with the public, now I have much more confidence in front of a group of people. The whole feeling is fantastic," explained Marie.

Her family has also enjoyed the benefits of her weight loss especially her husband of 15 years, who now gives her more affection inside the bedroom and out. "I like the comments from husband. He will say, 'Did you see that guy he was looking at you?'"

While Marie may feel fantastic, Dr. Stile is overjoyed with Marie's results. "I remember her telling me when she first came in, that prior to her weight loss, she couldn't even walk a half block without being winded. And, now, after her surgeries, her daughter said 'I can put both my arms around you.' That's what it's all about!

"Many people think that cosmetic surgery is a very self-indulgent and superficial endeavor but for me its patients like these that make me

MIRROR, MIRROR



Marie looking good and ready to take on the world.

realize it's not. It makes me proud that I have enhanced the quality of a persons life," explained Dr. Stile.

Dr. Golpa concurs with his colleague but enjoys his patients' reaction the most. "When the patient looks in the mirror and the patient is in shock. They are just so surprised," he explained.

With a new body and summer on the way, Marie has big plans. "We have a boat now, which we will take out on Lake Mead and to Cottonwood Cove. We also have a Harley. When I ride on the back of the bike I feel sexy and know people are saying 'Wow.'"

But for Marie it's more than boats, bikinis and getting double-takes. "As long as I am happy and my husband is happy, I don't really care about anything else." □