

To be or not to be, that is the question

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Most of us seek perfection in an imperfect world. This is **not** to be. Nevertheless, it shouldn't discourage us or foil our efforts to strive for that impossible goal. The same is true in plastic and reconstructive surgery and beauty enhancement. Our expectations are sometimes shaped by commercial interests; for instance, the barrage of television or Internet advertisers that are aimed at creating dissatisfaction, as well as setting goals that are rarely met. It has been said, in fact, *that the most common reason for unhappy patients is unrealistic expectations*. One of our greatest challenges is to educate the patient to reality.

One can almost always say that there is still room for improvement no matter how much has already been achieved. A good rule of thumb is that *a series of treatments is better than a single treatment* for a variety of reasons, even considering the fact that it would seem otherwise. Another rule of thumb is that *in a series of treatments the earlier treatments generally return the greatest improvement*. Each subsequent treatment therefore shows less and less improvement. Nevertheless a person who wishes to be her very best should plan a program and not a single treatment.

For example, an appropriate program involving laser treatments would involve a series of treatments rather than a single treatment. The number of treatments should be set by a person's expectations. Each treatment will provide an improvement and should be followed by an appropriate healing time. The depth or degree of treatment is frequently limited by factors outside the control of the plastic surgeon or even the patient. How deep a laser treatment can be done is usually a function of the skin healing. Too deep a treatment can lead to complications, and too shallow a treatment minimizes the improvement. There is no limit to the number of treatments that can be done, only the depth of each treatment. Generally, the same goes for other modes of reconstructive or cosmetic surgery.

The very best program for each patient can only be achieved through education and communication between the surgeon and the patient. Although there are many treatment methods that might improve the patient's condition each method have its nuances, advantages and disadvantages. There are probably more than 20 commonly used laser types in use. Many overlap and share commonalities. Although one laser may provide the great result, a combination of lasers may be even better. Thus, we at the Institute of Aesthetic Surgery believed that education and open communication is extremely important to help you achieve your goals.