

# Face time with Dr. Karam

An expert's personal view on keeping a youthful face.

By Sandra Yacura  
Photo courtesy of Carmel Valley Plastic Surgery

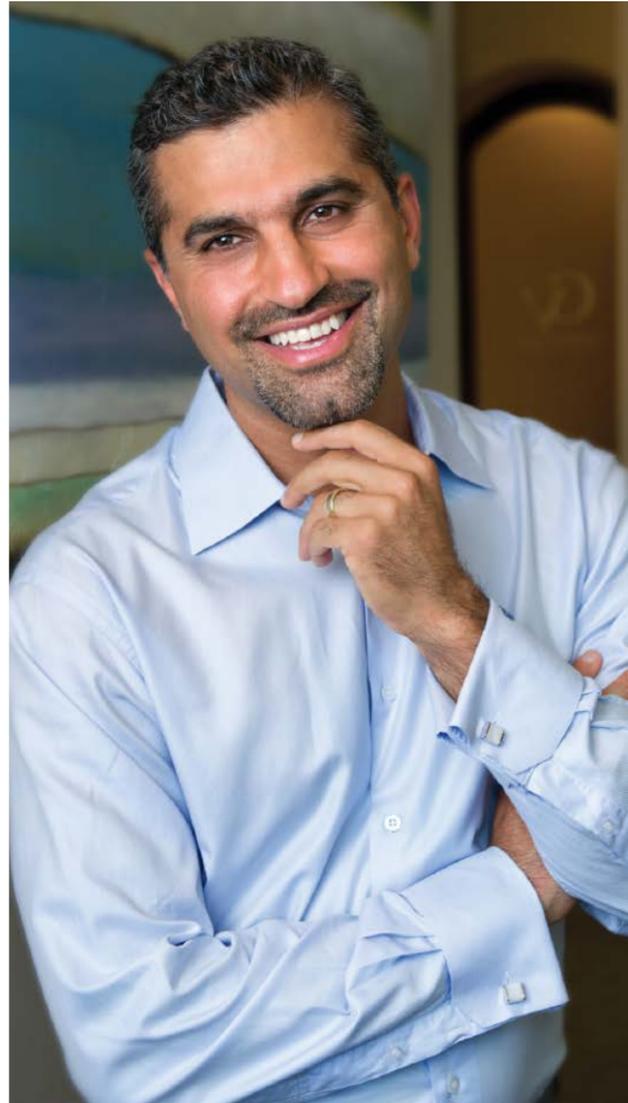
Our face is our most important physical feature. It is, by far, the part of the body that people look at the most. It is a powerful reflection of our self-confidence, and defines the first impression we make on others.

I had a better understanding of this after I met Dr. Karam. I spoke to Dr. Karam in his Carmel Valley office, where his comfortable and homelike office matches his caring and kind demeanor. Unlike many cosmetic surgeons, Dr. Karam doesn't specialize in one type of procedure. Instead, he focuses on one part of the body: the face. He has spent his life studying all of the choices – surgical and non-surgical – that are available to make faces look better.

At the root of his life's work and his passion are the immediate emotional benefits that people feel after his procedures. "I've had people come to my office for minor 'lunch time' procedures, and leave with a completely different posture, walk and outlook on life," said Dr. Karam. "It is a joy to help so many people feel better about themselves."

As Dr. Karam explained to me, when something feels "off" on our face, whether from genetics, age, accident, or a previous cosmetic procedure, we become preoccupied and self-conscious because of it. Our inability to look past our own facial flaws makes us shy, uncomfortable and awkward, even with the people who love us, and even with the people who never noticed that we had a "flaw."

"In the early days of cosmetic surgery, people were told that they were vain for wanting to change their appearance," added Karam. "Although cosmetic surgery grows more popular every year, the guilty hangover of those days still remains. Looking our best feels



good! There is nothing wrong with wanting this."

What was most fascinating to me was Dr. Karam's philosophy on aging. "The days of trying to 'turn back the clock' to return your youthful appearance are over," he said. "Now, we can begin earlier in life, with a wider choice of less dramatic procedures, to keep from looking old in the first place! Your aging face is just like any other problem – the earlier you take care of it, the better the results." He talks about this new age of cosmetic procedures in his upcoming book, which will be released in a few months.

"It all boils down to whether or not something on your face is bothering you," added Dr. Karam. "It doesn't matter if other people notice it, or if they tell you that you don't need to fix it. If this preoccupation is having an impact on your life, then why live with it?" ■

*Sandra Yacura is a freelance writer living in San Diego.*