

# Skin-Deep Philosophy

Metaphysics of Plastic Surgery: Botox, Soft-Tissue Fillers, and IPL — What Does It All Mean?

Plastic surgery and philosophy: two concepts seemingly diametrically opposed. Isn't one incredibly superficial and the other awfully deep? Dr. Philip Miller, who offers presentations for the thinking person who is considering enhancing their appearance, doesn't think so.

Miller's Beauty Rejuvenation Experience does a lot more than answer questions about the difference between IPL and laser resurfacing or Restalyne and Botox. His process explores the mind-body connection inherent in beauty-enhancement treatments.

Women probably know more than they realize about plastic surgery — some recent fashion magazine articles practically read like dermatology journal submissions. Even men are on the bandwagon.

But lots of technical knowledge does not equal understanding of the real reasons, motivations, and results involved in facial work.

A board-certified facial plastic surgeon and an otolaryngology/head and neck surgeon with a busy practice, Miller's also an assistant professor at NYU and codirector of its fellowship in facial plastic surgery.

Fellow plastic surgeon Dr. Paul Nassif of Beverly Hills, CA, calls Miller "one of the top facial plastic surgeons on the East Coast. His patients look rejuvenated without a 'surgical' look."

Miller began developing the rejuvenation experience approach after seriously contemplating the challenges his patients faced.

"I had a close friend who had never had her nose done. When she was engaged, she finally decided she was secure enough to go through with the surgery. The internal changes in her were incredible. She blossomed," Miller recounted.

After a serious car accident, Nona Snyder worked with Miller. "I was suffering inwardly too," she recalled, "from anxiety. It wasn't just deciding on Botox; I needed to look inwardly to decide what I wanted to do. It's not just the skin; it's the inner body as well."

"He responds to the intelligence of his patients with the same intelligence," she said. "He understands



the rationale of what we are doing. There really is growth."

"We help [our patients] understand their current situation — both strengths and weaknesses — and create a powerful vision for their future," Miller said. "Then we look at the roadblocks standing in their way and develop strategies to overcome them."

What roadblocks? Well, many patients suffer conflicted minds. They want to look and feel better, but fear prevents them from taking action. All too often, Miller sees plastic surgery patients who "wind up looking different — but not necessarily better."

To prevent that, Miller provides information about the many strategies out there and results that can be realistically expected, all the while discussing the whole person — mind, body, and spirit.

He knows his stuff: A quick overview of soft-tissue fillers covered collagen (derived from cows, it's the least durable), Cosmoplast (human collagen; slightly longer lasting), and Radiance (a newer alternative, this form of hydroxyapatite lasts three to five years).

Skin resurfacing can be ablative (injurious to the skin's surface to induce profound healing) or nonablative. Laser resurfacing is ablative, requiring weeks for recovery. Intense Pulse Light Therapy (IPL) doesn't injure the skin while lightening pigmentation and decreasing pore size and redness. Radiofrequency therapy removes bumps and lumps quickly and cleanly.

Miller's information seems inexhaustible, and his method is provocative and deeply thoughtful. His review of Botox as wrinkle preventive rather than wrinkle cure includes a wonderful art history illustration involving paintings by Renoir and El Greco. It is the thinking person's approach indeed. ■

More information about Miller is available at NYU Medical Center, 530 First Ave., Tower Suite 7U, 212-263-5959, [drphilipmiller.com](http://drphilipmiller.com).