

Debating an issue – An opinion piece

For and against cosmetic surgery

For **Jenny Duffield**

Yes, I admit it – I’ve had cosmetic surgery! And I’m tired of being made to feel ashamed about it. I had a facelift when I was 52. I gather that it makes me a very shallow person, but it was bothering me that I no longer felt attractive when I saw myself in the mirror. The results were life-changing. **Just as** it made me look younger, it made me feel younger, and I felt I could carry on enjoying my looks for a while longer, instead of feeling middle-aged and ‘past it’.



Likewise, over 15 million people a year spend billions of pounds on cosmetic procedures, and the rest of you really do need to get over it. Why does it make people so rabidly judgemental? Men spend billions every year on hair restoration, **too**, but no one seems to get het up about that. 90% of cosmetic surgery is done by women of course, and the fact that this is seen as a scandal suggests there is sexism at the root of this hypocrisy. **Equally**, it’s double standards when women denounce their sisters for clinging to ideals of youthful beauty and refusing to grow old gracefully – these will often be the same women who sanction the use of hair dye and spend £7 billion a year on it. So what’s happened to the demands that we all accept the ways of nature and focus on who we are inside rather than worrying about looks?

I accept that cosmetic surgery can reflect a preoccupation with the shallower aspects of life, but **in the same way**, spending a fortune on new cars and boats and ever bigger TVs is hardly evidence of embracing the more profound aspects of our existence, is it? Again, that probably concerns mostly men, though, so it’s not as despicable.



Then I hear people going on about how incredibly risky cosmetic surgery is. Well yes, there are risks involved, but **similarly**, skiing, horse riding, and motorcycling are pretty hazardous ways of making yourself feel good. And in fact, the risk of serious complications with a cosmetic procedure is less than 0.5% – that’s about the same risk of having an accident faced by every motorcycle rider.

We’re becoming an increasingly tolerant society, where we accept that people have the right to do whatever they choose with their bodies. If we accept this with regard to tattoos and body piercings – hideous in my opinion, but perfectly respectable nowadays – then **by the same token** we ought to calm down when people opt for surgery that makes their bodies more attractive. It’s my body, and I’ll do whatever I want with it.