



creating confidence

FACIAL PLASTIC SURGEON **DR MICHAEL ZACHARIA** TALKS TO GEMMA GARKUT ABOUT HIS TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY WHEN IT COMES TO PERFORMING THE FACELIFT AND RHINOPLASTY PROCEDURES.

The patient-surgeon relationship is a pivotal part of any cosmetic procedure, says Sydney ENT and facial plastic surgeon Dr Michael Zacharia. 'Part of the success of any cosmetic procedure is the patient's understanding of everything that's involved in the process,' he says. 'The best way to ensure both the patient and surgeon are on the same page is to cultivate an honest and supportive relationship.'

Dr Zacharia says this is particularly important when the face is the central area of cosmetic concern, which he explains is why the consultation process is carried out in two steps. 'When a patient has concerns about their face, it can take a lot of courage to seek cosmetic enhancement for fear that their individuality might be lost after the procedure, or that there might be complications,' he says. 'My job is to be a listening ear and to work through the patient's concerns and insecurities until we reach a plan of action together.'

'An important part of the consultation process is educating the patient about what to expect during and after surgery, but it's also important for the surgeon to learn about the patient individually,' he continues. 'This is why I believe in being completely honest with the patient about the treatment options that will work best for them, and addressing each of their concerns in a straightforward manner. As a result, both of us can feel confident about the expectations and desired results.'

Facelift

When performing a facelift, Dr Zacharia says an essential factor in producing the best results possible is the patient's skin quality. 'It's important for patients to know that a facelift isn't going to change the quality of their skin,' he says. 'Because of this, talking to my patients about the treatments that are best for them is an important part of the process – I believe in being upfront about what a person needs. If someone asks specifically for a facelift but is actually concerned about the wrinkles or fine lines in their skin, we can work towards treating this using a laser treatment, dermal fillers or through creating a skincare regimen. If they're also concerned about a degree of sagging in the face or neck, we can then look to the facelift procedure.'

Dr Zacharia believes in outlining exactly what is possible with a facelift, but also what is impossible. 'I don't believe in giving people more than they need. In some cases a patient needs only minimal adjustments, in others it's the maximum treatment plan,' he says.

Understanding that the face is an important part of a person's identity is essential in creating a result the patient will be comfortable in. 'We all have a tendency of honing in on one part of the face – the mid face, the brow, the neck, the jaw line,' he says. 'There's a difference between dramatically changing a person's look and rejuvenating what they've got. You can achieve great results using Botox, which can lift

the brow and create more open-looking eyes – it's about understanding the subtleties the patient is looking for.'

For those patients who are looking for full facial rejuvenation, Dr Zacharia says augmenting and lifting the face can be achieved with a natural-looking result. 'The false, startled look usually occurs when the lateral part of the eye is changed,' he says. 'There's no reason this has to happen during a facelift. My ENT (ear, nose and throat) background has made me extremely confident in the inner workings of the face and, consequently, in achieving effective results.'

Dr Zacharia has also developed a technique designed to reduce the appearance of scarring after a facelift. 'Reducing the amount of tension on the incision line is the key to reducing the appearance of a scar,' he explains. 'A technique which I developed to achieve this involves anchoring the stitches to the underlying tissues, as well as the skin itself.'

Rhinoplasty

There is a distinct interplay between the aesthetic and function of the nose during a rhinoplasty procedure, which Dr Zacharia says calls for specific surgical training and techniques. 'Rhinoplasty is one of the most complex cosmetic procedures,' he says. 'While aesthetic concerns can be effectively addressed through surgery, they need to be done in a way that preserves the functionality of the nose.'

He performs most rhinoplasty procedures via internal incisions. 'In my experience, performing the incisions internally means less swelling post procedure and faster healing,' he says. 'Also, the natural architecture of the nose is more obvious to the surgeon during the procedure, allowing us to have a clear concept of the nose as a whole in relation to what needs to be achieved.'

When it comes to changing the nose, Dr Zacharia says there is a real matter of marrying the patient's expectations with the surgical possibilities. 'A rhinoplasty typically happens in two stages – the first initial operation stage, and the second "tweak" stage, which usually involves minor non-surgical changes,' he says.

'Unlike a facelift, patients are typically younger people who have been living with something they don't like about their nose for a long time,' Dr Zacharia continues. 'This might be a small bump or a slightly deviated tip and, although it might seem insignificant to other people, correcting this can create a significant improvement for the patient's sense of wellbeing.'

Dr Zacharia looks to the rest of the face when assessing a patient before a rhinoplasty procedure. 'A lot of the time, if a patient has a smaller chin this can make their nose look bigger than it actually is,' he explains. 'Other techniques such as facial implants can work well to re-proportion the face and consequently make the nose appear smaller.'

No matter what kind of procedure, one of the most valuable resources Dr Zacharia offers his patients is the

experience of his previous patients. 'Sometimes patients might feel uncomfortable talking about more personal things they want to clarify before surgery,' he says. 'I encourage these patients to talk to some of my previous patients. I believe in giving patients the real deal and offering as many resources as possible to make them feel confident in the entire process – from consultation and treatment to post-op and recovery,' he concludes. **acsm**



BEFORE

AFTER facial rejuvenation by Dr Zacharia



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