

# THE CANONS *of beauty* ARE CHANGING DRAMATICALLY

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**PM** We are meeting under quite exceptional circumstances – your book is about to be released soon, isn’t it? How did it come about and when will it be available?

Well, the book has turned out to be a nice surprise for me, too, as my original intention was to write something a tad different from the final result. Whilst hosting a programme on Polsat television, in which we helped women who had suffered various accidents and diseases which necessitated breast reconstruction, I encountered a myriad of problems and stories, some truly touching and dramatic. One of our guests was a young woman who at the age of 25 was diagnosed with breast cancer. We showed our viewers her recovery and breast reconstruction process, as well as the support she received from her partner – things which for me as a physician were foreign and outside my interest. Thanks to the programme, I could witness all this transformation process. The idea for the book came about during one of the conversations I had with my friend. I reckoned the audience would find it tedious to read about breast reconstruction only, the process I know the most about. So I decided to elaborate on several patient stories and to offer advice as to when you should consider plastic surgery, at what age, which method is preferred, and which is not, etc. The human body has become just another thing to sell, and our looks are very important, and this often becomes the subject of a regular fight to remain on the market. Physical appearance is also another factor which boosts our confidence. Once you believe you look good, you fare better in the professional sphere. At the same time, though, we need to remember that besides physical appearance there is personality. Even the fairest beauty will lose much attraction if not backed by personality. Just look at the canons of beauty in modelling. Most



of these girls seem to all look the same, which is something I cannot understand. In the 1980s and 1990s the modelling scene had such figures as Claudia Schiffer and Naomi Campbell, who have left a lasting memory. But today the canons of beauty have changed dramatically. The trend is now to draw the audience’s attention to a specific item of clothing, rather than the model. So my book does not talk about surgeries per se, although this might have been interesting to a handful of people. I took a somewhat broader perspective to discuss the matter in more detail,

also explaining the difference between the two commonly mistaken terms – plastic surgeries and aesthetic medicine – as these are separate disciplines.

**PM** You have said that today beauty is a product. Should a doctor then, if he or she were to release a book, be more mindful of the fact that not everybody needs to have that perfect look?

The problem about aesthetic surgeries stems from their being a bit like a commodity. A new term has even been coined, “medicalisation”, meaning that doctors no longer advise their patients on what they should do about their appearance, but now it is the patients who bring their expectations into the doctor’s office. I, for one, openly say which surgery can be performed and which is absolutely out of the question. Unfortunately, at private clinics, marketing and sales are dealt with by people other than those who carry out the surgeries, so sales figures often take precedence over the medical aspect. This sets a trap for the patients who are led to believe any surgery offered by the clinic will be suitable for them. But there is a fine line which, once crossed, can turn “good-looking” into “ridiculous”. Another problem I addressed in my book is that aesthetic medicine has become almost everyone’s specialty, to the point that doctors switch over to it whenever they fail in their original field, or at least this is how I see it. The truth is, however, that a good anaesthetist, for instance, will be busy enough to not even think of another specialty. All in all, there are great disparities when it comes to the skills of aesthetic medicine professionals. Patients need to be advised on what to pay attention to so that they are able to choose the right doctor. And this is what you will learn from my book. □