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DR.
GARTH
FISHER
ON
*The Business
of
Beauty*



JAMES CAMERON



DONALD TRUMP



FLORENCE MATTAR



SMOKEY ROBINSON



HUGH HEFNER

Dr. Garth Fisher

on fatherhood, personal & professional reinvention and the business of beauty

by Suzanne Takowsky

Each month of the year is known for a special occasion. And without a doubt June is one of the most important as it carries Father's Day, a day to recognize men whose loving concern and ongoing contributions make a difference in our lives. But it's not just our own fathers and husbands who deserve our appreciation. Each of us know men outside our families who step in to save the day when life gets tough to take on our burdens to make our lives easier. They take time out of their busy schedules to offer advice when things get complicated and stand watchful when we need a strong shoulder to lean on. It is the ripple effect of these men and their heartfelt generosity that helps us, people in our city, country and throughout the world—have better lives. Father's Day celebrates each man, who despite the personal heartbreaks he has endured, negative circumstances and obstacles he has had to overcome and fears he has had to face and survive, does his very best to not only live a life that he can be proud of, but a life that we can look up to and aspire to emulate. Men are fathers to the world and the caretakers of humanity.

Garth Fisher happens to be one of my favorite people. I've known him for years—way back to when he started his practice here in Beverly Hills. Years of hard work, motivation to be the best surgeon possible, incredible skill in the operating room, an eye for the smallest detail, an iron man will to overcome obstacles and negativity, a sympathetic bedside manner and generous, giving nature have put and kept him at the top. Fisher is a concerned humanitarian who gives of his time and is willing to use his extraordinary surgical talent to help others. And he does it without fanfare or expecting recognition.

Fisher leads an extraordinary life, though you wouldn't know it from him. He is low key and grateful for what he has. One of his most enduring qualities is his deference when it comes to accepting accolades for his work. He

always finds a way to point to the next person in line giving him/her the credit. A doting father to his own two daughters Sierra and Neriah, and stepfather to Josie, daughter of his wife Jessica (a talented businesswoman in her own right) is a role Fisher cherishes above all else. Speaking with him about his children and the importance he places on being a good father is something that never leaves his mind. He felt the devastating pain himself as a child and even still to this day struggles to come to terms with living without the love and support of a father. A Major in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam war, Fisher's father went MIA on a mission and was never heard from again. Fisher was 10-years old. He and his mother and sister made a life out of unanswered questions that the United States government refused to acknowledge. Reports surfaced that his father was alive and a prisoner of war along with hundreds of other military, but no investigation was ever brought forth by the U.S. government to find out the truth. To this day Fisher has no idea what really happened to his dad.

During our interview Fisher told me a story that as I recalled later realized it just didn't apply to his life, but to each of our lives as well. Months back at a business conference, Fisher ran into a well-known and extremely successful businessman he knew. The two spoke about the heavy demands and obligations that go hand-in-hand with achieving success and how, time consuming and overwhelming life gets the more you achieve. Fisher asked the man if he had any advice on micro-managing or delegating responsibility that helped him achieve his success. The gentleman said, 'Be careful about delegating or you'll delegate yourself to oblivion. Remember we got to where we are because we are better than everyone else. If you lose sight of that and think that someone can do something as good as you...you will lose your edge.'

When Fisher told me last year that he was set to launch a cutting-edge skin

care line, named CellCeuticals, I was astonished. I remember thinking... how will this man find one spare minute to develop a skin care line? Well, not only did he find the time, but he launched CellCeuticals on QVC to rave reviews. Thousands of clients worldwide have snapped up the anti-aging miracle products making the line a tremendous success. Arguably the most well-known and busiest plastic surgeon on earth, Fisher's surgery planner is packed until the year 2000forever. He has been profiled in every publication you can think of from Forbes, to Vanity Fair and beyond. Television appearances range from E' to the Biography Channel, ESPN, Larry King, and Oprah. Then, there's Fisher's own

I've been surrounded by women my entire life; in my family and in my business. I've heard all the complaints about what works and what doesn't. As a plastic surgeon the more involved I got in the beauty business, the more I become aware of not only what it takes to surgically enhance someone's beauty, but of the bigger picture.

reality TV show, ABC's Extreme Makeover which made its debut in 2002 and became an instant hit worldwide for years. Each week Fisher performed life-changing incredible plastic and reconstructive surgeries on patients and along with other M.D.'s on the show offered head-to-toe—a new lease on life. To this day, Fisher is considered the Godfather of reality plastic surgery makeover shows and got the ball rolling for all others that followed. Word on the downlow is that Fisher is working on another Extreme Makeover featuring celebrities. But as far as he is concerned mum is the word

and he would not comment on it even though I begged and begged.

Beauty is business for Fisher. And he is about as good as it gets when it comes to improving and remodeling what mother nature handed out. Even still when I asked what true beauty is...his answer wasn't what I expected from the plastic surgeon whose surgical expertise is behind many of the most famous celebrities and well-known social and political faces and bodies in the world. Fisher's extensive training and knowledge of his craft keep him on the cutting edge of research and new legitimate procedures. He always has his eyes on more effective ways to provide the best outcome possible for his patients.

In keeping with his desire to separate fact from fiction Fisher wrote and produced, *The Naked Truth About Plastic Surgery*, in 2003. This award-winning six volume video series is a comprehensive and frankly honest educational series covering all phases of plastic surgery and anesthesia. Included are before and after photos, detailed explanations of the possible risks and benefits, advice on how to choose a surgeon, and viewers have the opportunity to follow the patients through the surgery experience. Every applicable question and answer you can imagine can be found to help potential patients make educated decisions on whether or not plastic surgery is right for them. People worldwide love the videos because of their truthfulness and thoroughness. Their design was not to send patients to Fisher...rather to be an educational vehicle helping to build realistic expectations for anyone considering plastic surgery. These videos cut to the chase where procedure and result are concerned. Fisher is in the process of updating this series. They can be viewed by everyone for free on his website at: www.garthfisher.com. It's not just about



getting a facelift or a nose job; it's making certain that whatever you do — and whoever does it—doesn't make you into someone that even you don't recognize.

In addition to bio-medical anti-aging skin care treatments through his suc-

cessful CellCeuticals skin care line, Fisher's practice offers the ultimate in cosmetic and reconstructive surgery from facelift, browlift, necklift and all facial rejuvenation procedures including foreheadplasty, bone contouring, upper and lower blepharoplasty, nasal reconstruction, contour body sculpting, liposuction and complex scar revisions to breast augmentations, lifts, reduc-

tions, and tummy tucks to extensive facial rejuvenation injectables, and laser procedures. He was selected as one of the United States best facelift and facial aesthetic surgeons by his peers in "The Best Doctors in America" book as well as in Town and Country Magazine.

they are getting older and have friends, things to do and that the day may come when they think that I'm too boring to hang around with. We want our house to be the coolest so the kids and their friends want to come and hang out. It's a terrific way to keep an eye out for what's going on. I think it is so important for parents who are divorced to do whatever it takes to maintain a friendly relationship so that kids feel very comfortable going to both homes. I'm fortunate to have that. It's difficult for adults and children when divorce happens. But making certain that children are happy at both homes and are welcome and feel loved not only by their mother and father, but also by a step-parent as well—helps bridge the gaps. We will enjoy Father's Day just being with each other.

ST: I'm sure that Father's Day is more meaningful for you as you had to learn to grow up without the support and presence of your own father when he left to serve in the war and never made it back.

GF: What I do as a father is just remember what I went through not

having a dad. It was so painful to me as a child throughout all of my school years. I was in sports and nobody ever came to watch me; whether it was baseball, football, whatever, no one ever came. I used to look up in the stands and it seemed everyone had their family; had someone, but me. I felt so bad. I can still remember every part of it to this day.

It was the whole process of not having my dad around, of not knowing whether he was alive or dead...I think the whole experience certainly made me stronger internally. But what I am finding with my own kids is that what I didn't have as a child—a father—I am so over abundant in trying to provide for them. I am committed to being very active in every aspect of their lives. I attend every event they are in and watch from my seat with intense pride and passion. I prepare many of their meals, help bath them, shop with them (I know all their sizes) and am active in their school. My favorite time is actually homework time and reading to them at night. It's a precious and valuable opportunity to provide a future. Sadly, I think that too many dads miss out on what their children do. I understand because it's hard to juggle family commitments and work. However, my childhood without a father has magnified the importance and priority of being present every step of the way in theirs. There is no replay or second chance. My children provide me with a sense of unparalleled value. My family is the center of my

Parents can't afford to have their kids look to or depend on people in the entertainment industry or sports world to set standards for them. That is our job. It's my belief that we have to establish those standards in our own homes.

universe. As I watch my children grow and develop, a day does not pass which I think what their life would be like if I was suddenly taken away from them. As a physician, I recognize the value of human life and on a far more personal level, I am cognizant that every day with my family is a personal blessing and an achievement of its own in a very special and unique sense.

ST: Especially here in L.A. it seems that family life and being with the kids takes a back seat all too often...

GF: Sadly family values are disintegrating. This whole thing about role models in Hollywood and in sports... parents can't afford to have their kids look to or depend on movie stars, singers or sports figures to set standards for them. That is our job. These people are not supposed to be my



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Fisher's office is a beauty-fest to be sure.

ST: Father's Day is coming up...any special plans with your family?

GF: I love my kids so much. I do whatever it takes to spend as much time with them as possible. I am going through the typical father stage where I'm preoccupied with the thought that

children's role model—I am! We cannot abdicate this responsibility and we need to provide our children with guidance in the development of values. It is up to me and all parents to teach their kids to know the difference between what is good and bad, and what is acceptable or not. It is my belief that we have to set strong enough standards in our homes to overcome bad public examples. What we see that occasionally goes on with reckless or misbehaving celebrities is unfortunate, but it is not up to them to parent our children. It is up to us and our failure if our children do not know the difference.

ST: Last year you and beauty veteran Paul Scott Premo launched your CellCeuticals skin care treatment product line. Now you're on QVC. You seem to be taking this beauty product venture seriously and very personally. What made you go into the skin care business?

GF: I've always been interested in proper skin nutrition and health. I've been surrounded by women my entire life; my family has always been all women, my business is primarily women, my

office is women. I have heard all the complaints and frustrations about misleading claims and what works and what doesn't. As a plastic surgeon the more involved I got in the beauty business, the more I became aware of not only what it takes to surgically enhance someone's beauty, but the bigger picture. Obviously, not everyone needs plastic surgery, but everyone needs a good skin care regimen. Improving the quality of skin will also improve any surgical result! If a person does not need plastic surgery, I can still offer something that may dramatically improve their skin. During Extreme Makeover, numerous people knocked on my door to get my involvement in their skin care products. I thought about it then, but did not want my name slapped on just any product. I wanted to do it right, start from the bottom and truly produce the best, highest quality products on the planet that I could put my reputation behind. I sought out and found one of the most respected names in the industry, Paul Scott Premo, to develop our line together. He is tremendously experienced with 37 years in the industry,

has won numerous prestigious awards and he also has incredible integrity. The CellCeuticals line is a culmination of 15 years of clinical protein research and we have been at work for the past four years bringing it to the market. Our hard work and patience has paid off; it has turned out to be all we

The commercialization and exposure needed to create a brand and make it thrive is hard work and time consuming. My way of doing things is not to stay at home and wait for the phone to ring. That's not who I am and I don't think that way of thinking works.

had hoped! Paul and I wanted to create the most high performance skin care line based on truly innovative technology and validated by objective independent scientific clinical studies. It had to be easy to use and affordable as well. The clinical study

findings were spectacular and patient feedback has been incredible. The products are light, and easily work under makeup. Our newest product "PhotoDefense" is a sunprotectant that has garnered a lot of national attention and is "best in breed" in my opinion! The QVC process has been an exciting experience and I'm impressed that over 20 million people watch that channel daily. I admire QVC so much for their integrity and how super selective they are in accepting products for their channel. Their standards are high and their regulations are stringent which ensures higher value for consumers. We had a very successful debut and are proud and excited about developing an ongoing working relationship with them. We are preparing for our next trip to Pennsylvania in the next several months.

ST: You're going in many directions and each is doing well. You're not only surviving...you're flourishing. How are you able to prioritize your various projects?

GF: I have always had a passionate capacity for my projects. I have been

continued on page 59



blessed with a unique skill set that allows me to focus and accomplish my goals in a constructive manner. My surgical patients and devotion to the creation of beauty are part of the same paradigm. I've concentrated on the cohesiveness of my "branding" for 20 years. My surgical skills and opportunity to participate in the Extreme Makeover television project were part of the same developmental goal; to increase the public's awareness of surgical procedures. Mystifying surgery does not create the transparency and accountability that our science demands. Consumers make much better patients and have much more acceptable outcomes if they become participants in the process. The Extreme Makeover series augmented and enhanced that process. CellCeuticals was developed as an extension of my desire to

"While I embrace new technology, I am very cautious to implement such methods until it is proven. I never jump on the bandwagon and go for the latest and newest item unless it is time tested."

formulate a scientifically grounded cosmeceutical company that provided high quality and accountable ingredients that could serve as the basic building blocks of an enhanced and nourished skin. Surgery is not for everyone; however a passionate and clinically developed approach to skin care offers validation for everyone. All my projects are part of a continuum that began over 20 years ago and remain on purpose today and provide direction for tomorrow.

ST: What's with all the over the top plastic surgery we see? Do patients force surgeons to do this or are doctors just getting desperate?

GF: Cosmetic surgery is a scientifically based surgical specialty, but also an art which involves judgment and experience. There is a balance in the process of the creation of beauty and the performance of surgery. We've all seen the results of horrendous facelifts on exhibit in the grocery aisles or the escalators of luxury clothing stores. Maybe some surgeons should not be participating in this process? I think there may be an unfortunate intersect of over-commercialized,

over advertised, unproven, gimmicky technology and doctors who combine that technology with bad judgment. The results are shocking. It is also incredulous and disappointing that there are surgeons actually performing facelifts on 20 and 30-year-old women! Maybe they should just say "NO". There is a huge explosion of marketing touting new technology which often does not truly reflect an advancement in technology but is really just a new marketing angle. It often takes years to determine if something "new" is really effective and actually not harmful. Unfortunately, the driver in the market place is no longer the relationship between the doctor and the patient. It's companies marketing new products through ad campaigns to patients that are new but often not necessarily proven to get the results advertised, combined with surgeons who are lulled into accepting such ventures. It creates a vicious cycle of high patient demand and doctors having to purchase the technology or lose business. It's easy to get caught up in that but I don't think it's healthy or serves us. While I embrace new technology, I am very cautious to implement such methods until it is proven. I never jump on the bandwagon and go for the latest and newest item unless it is time tested. There is a quote in our profession that most complications in plastic surgery occur within three months of a plastic surgery meeting. I think that is probably true and reminds me that we always need to put our patient's safety first and not just search for surgical shortcuts.

ST: The concept of what people see as "beauty" these days seems to be distorted. What defines beauty?

GF: Beauty is an interpretation. Beauty is about what makes each individual feel good about themselves. Personally I think that being unique is beautiful. Unique is special and that's what I think is important for plastic surgeons to remember; preserve the uniqueness about a patient and have that patient look as natural as possible. Little details that bother us on our faces and bodies are not noticed by others. We see them and focus on them and look for perfection even though the uniqueness that each of us have is what makes us special. I tend not to go along with patients who focus on perfection. My philosophy is: there are patients you can help. There are patients you can't help and there are patients you shouldn't help.

*Only a plastic surgeon
can do more.®*

Garth Fisher M.D.
Beverly Hills



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