



*T*he Phil Donahue Show can be credited with first imprinting cosmetic laser surgery on the public's consciousness. The day after Joan Swirsky's article about laser surgery appeared in *The New York Times* Long Island Section in 1993, a producer from the show called to invite me (Deborah Sarnoff) to perform laser surgery before a worldwide audience. After I removed a port-wine stain from a patient's face, a young man in the studio audience, a total stranger, asked if I could treat a red blemish on his face. With 10 million viewers watching, I "zapped" the spot in a split second. The take-home message for the viewers was that laser surgery was for anyone!

Only a handful of lasers were being used for cosmetic purposes at that time. Within a year or two, the industry seemed to explode and, with the advent of skin resurfacing lasers, laser surgery became a media event. It wasn't long before Geraldo Rivera even had his *own* wrinkles resurfaced on his TV show.

The media hailed the laser as a "miracle," a mystical beam of light brushing gently over the face like a magic wand. Then came the backlash, with frightening reports of faces badly scarred and eyes blinded by laser light.

Although the confusion that resulted demonstrated that the public needed clear, concise answers to their questions about cosmetic laser surgery, our search of bookstores, libraries, and even the

Internet revealed that virtually no resources existed to tell a curious and somewhat bewildered public what they wanted—and needed—to know. Here was the ultimate challenge: trying to shed some light on the subject of lasers in a way that was interesting and exciting and to explain what aesthetic laser surgery realistically could be expected to achieve.

It is our hope that *Beauty and the Beam: Your Complete Guide to Cosmetic Laser Surgery* will answer your questions and help you determine if you are, in fact, an appropriate candidate for cosmetic laser surgery. After you've read the book, we trust that you will approach this subject with a full appreciation of the many amazing applications of lasers and the care you must take in asking the right questions and selecting the right doctor and laser facility.

While cosmetic laser surgery has certainly become the most popular and desired of elective procedures, it is not always the “zap-you're-gone” surgery the public has been led to believe it is. Our goal is to separate reality from myth. Once you, our readers, have done your homework, we have no doubt that you'll make an informed and rewarding choice.

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