

A BALANCED LIFE

San Diego's **leading** facial plastic surgeon **Dr. Amir Karam** shares his journey to success.

Dr. Amir M. Karam, Founder/Director of Carmel Valley Facial Plastic Surgery, takes pride in providing his patients with unique results that are tailored to fit their individual anti-aging goals. To him, it is as if he is treating his mother, or his sister, or his wife. Treating patients with the care, respect, and compassion of a family member is not a trick he picked up in medical school, but one that was engrained in him at a young age. Whether he realized it or not, Dr. Karam was preparing to be a board-certified facial plastic surgeon before he even applied to medical school.

Growing up, Dr. Karam's mother had a congenital heart defect; hospitals and doctor visits became a normal part of life for the future physician. But it wasn't until he was in high school, and his mother was in desperate need of a heart transplant, that Dr. Karam realized his calling as a doctor. Watching his mother's transformation from extremely sick to suddenly vibrant and full-of-life, he realized he wanted to have the ability to help people as a surgeon. Along the way, he never forgot his mother's journey

and the important role her surgeon played throughout the process.

"My mother demonstrated the most amazing mental toughness throughout her struggle with her condition," says Dr. Karam. "Feeling unable to help my mother, I realized that I wanted to assist people, just as her surgeons had helped her."

While in Medical School at UC Irvine, Dr. Karam discovered Facial Plastic Surgery to be the best outlet for his desire to help people while taking advantage of his creative nature, as well as cultivating his highly technical surgical skills. People care about their faces. There is no more important part of the body than the face – it is how people see you, and it reflects your personality. Therefore, there is no greater honor than being trusted to improve someone's facial appearance. "I am humbled by the opportunity every day," says Dr. Karam.

There is so much more to improving one's appearance than the aesthetic result. While making facial adjustments may seem superficial, there is actually a much more profound psychological component involved



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in improving one's appearance. This mind-body connection and helping people feel better about themselves and all that goes with it is what Dr. Karam loves most about his work. A patient can improve their outlook on life by simply having a few injections of Botox – and there are numerous research studies to prove it.

"I am continually amazed by my patients' attitudes before and after their procedures," expresses Dr. Karam. "Helping a patient restore their youthful appearance, and aligning how they feel with how they look has a significant positive impact on quality of life."

Helping people improve their outlook – both physically and mentally – is a place where many would be uncomfortable, but this is where Dr. Karam thrives. The technical skills are what he worked so hard to achieve in medical school

at UC Irvine and residency at UCI Medical Center, but the artistry of being a facial plastic surgeon comes from within. He takes great pride in helping men and women, young and mature, from diverse backgrounds become their best selves. While others would find this extremely challenging, Dr. Karam enjoys using his creativity in combination with his advanced surgical training to allow patients to put their best face forward – literally.

Dr. Karam's fascination with, and dedication to, improving the deep connection between the mind and body is something he practices in his personal life as well. As a husband, and father to four young boys, it is important for Dr. Karam to be in balance, meaning the harmony between his mental and physical health is always top priority.

"For me, I feel best when I am well-

adjusted," states Dr. Karam. "Work-life and personal life both need to be in accord for me to feel like the best version of myself." It is by taking time for himself with golf and working out that Dr. Karam is able to maintain his equilibrium.

And no time has been more important to find balance than in the last few months. In October of 2013, Dr. Karam and his staff moved into a newly remodeled 4,400 square foot location complete with two surgical suites and a recovery room. It was a huge undertaking to complete the renovation of a space four times larger than his previous practice. With the help of San Diego's top architectural firm and medical construction company, Dr. Karam was able to complete the transformation and move in just six months.

It has been a learning process for Dr.





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Karam to keep his life so composed, and he can thank his patients for the lessons in self-improvement. After years of performing surgery and evaluating the health histories of his facial plastic surgery patients pre-operatively, he noticed something very clear- his patients were healthy and living full active lives even in their 60s and 70s. Very few, if any, had any history of heart disease or diabetes.

"These are the most common chronic diseases in the population and yet I rarely see them in my private practice," notes Dr. Karam. What does he attribute this to? The commonality among this group is a very healthy lifestyle composed of healthy diets and regular exercise. He noticed the number one question asked by his patients before having a procedure was how quickly they could return to exercise.

"I recognized a real pattern. This inspired me to do the same for

myself and motivated me to share these concepts with my friends and patients. I have seen some amazing results. Several friends who were on blood pressure and cholesterol-lowering medications for years, managed to completely stop medication simply by addressing their diet and exercise, and keeping a positive mindset," states Dr. Karam.

The concept of a composed life and cultivating mental health is essential for a facial plastic surgeon. "As a physician that is trying to align the outward appearance with the inner-self, the idea of balance could not be more important," notes Dr. Karam, which is why it is even more important for Dr. Karam to practice what he preaches. "As I work so closely with patients to achieve that mental and physical balance, I certainly understand the value of keeping one's self in harmony."

Being a father of four boys under 12 certainly keeps Dr. Karam poised.

"While I love being a surgeon, it is just as important for me and my children to spend quality time together, so I am achieving the ultimate balance between my professional and personal lives." The boys help their father unwind with soccer games and family outings. When this personal time is achieved, it makes the surgical time that much more fulfilling

So with each patient he sees, Dr. Karam is reminded of the strength of his mother, and the patience of the physicians dictating her course of treatment. He considers the joy that his wife and children bring him, and the harmony within his own life. He isn't merely improving the patient's appearance, but he is improving their outlook on life. For Dr. Karam, the greatest gift bestowed on a surgeon is a result that leaves a patient's outward appearance united with the beauty that is found on the inside. ■