

Changing faces, changing lives

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By Jacklyn Tran
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A victim's face of domestic violence can sometimes be a revealing one. When the aftermath leaves scars and deformation, victims who have already taken intense paths toward emotional recovery must also reconcile with their altered visage.

Dr. Philip Young, a facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon of Aesthetic Facial Plastic Surgery in Bellevue, said, "[Domestic violence] happens to everybody on some level."

Domestic violence comes in forms such as physical violence, sexual or emotional abuse, economic and social deprivation, or intimidation.

With an overwhelming number of domestic violence incidents in the United States alone, from 960,000 (as reported by the U.S. Department of Justice) to 3 million incidents a year (from the Commonwealth Fund), Young is determined to lend his services to victims one case at a time.

Young completed his bachelor's degree in molecular and cellular biology at the University of Washington before attending the Tulane University School of Medicine. It was during his residency at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles when Young came across his first cases of domestic violence.

It was the powerful stories, on all aspects, that have commanded his attention. He's heard stories such as a husband who sliced his wife's face with a knife. Another story involved a woman beaten and locked up for three days in a cellar, from which she finally managed to escape and as a result, suffered a broken nose and other injuries.

Young said, "As a senior resident, you could pick and choose your surgeries. Hearing [victims'] stories, you couldn't help but to want to help them. It was then that I saw how I could help people, and I wanted to continue that."

Following his residency, Young completed his fellowship at Louisiana State University under the direction of renowned surgeon Frederick Stucker. Young was able to persist with his charitable interests through Stucker, a founding member of the organization Face to Face.

Face to Face is an international humanitarian program. Surgeons and medical personnel donate their time and expertise to aid those in need, including children with congenital deformities and victims of domestic violence. His first mission with the organization took him to Vietnam in 2006 and then to China in 2008.

From his charity work, he said he feels "a huge sense of accomplishment. It's something you can't get from getting paid. It gives me a sense of self-worth. ...In the end, you look back on life and what matters is how you've helped others."

Young identifies with the financial struggles that his patients face. "My parents came to America [from Taiwan] with \$100 in their pocket. Coming from humble beginnings and not having much in life provides motivation to give to people who don't have much either."

Whether he is treating patients at his practice in Bellevue, providing pro bono services for domestic violence patients, or donating his time to children in need overseas, "Dr. Young is helping people to recognize themselves a little more," said Janette Turner, office manager of Aesthetic Facial Plastic Surgery.

Young is providing something unique to patients of varying circumstances. "There's a huge emotional release when scars of violence are being erased. But the person getting older or the person experiencing a lot of teasing or those uncomfortable with their appearance suffers too. If he's able to change that, it's huge in any situation," said Turner. What makes Young remarkable is that "he is able to see beauty in a different way. He understands the technique, has the training, and the hands to get beautiful results, along with his heart which makes a beautiful combination," added Turner.

The basis for his approach has earned him an award. His theory on facial beauty, "Circles of Prominence," won the Sir Harold Delf Gillies Award for Best Basic Science Research by a graduate in the field of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in 2005. The theory is essentially a guide to distinguish what makes a face attractive. Young was not satisfied with using proportions and rules, a theory that dates back to the 14th century. Rather, his innovative hypothesis defines beauty in the order that the brain processes dimensions of the face.

Equipped with his theory, Young wants to do more than just facelifts in the future. He plans to work with worthy organizations such as Chaya, New Beginnings, and his continual relationship with Face to Face to ensure that his humanitarian efforts will continue.

"The world can kind of be a cold place," Young said. "And I want to be someone that brings warmth to it. I want to be a person that helps when no one else can, when others turn their back." (end)

For more information, visit www.drphilipyoung.com. For more information on the organization Face to Face, visit www.facetofacesurgery.org.

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Dr. Philip Young (right) and colleague Dr. Mark Hamilton (left) perform surgery on a patient. Young, a facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon, participates in Face to Face, an international humanitarian program. Photo provided by Philip Young.

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