

I YAM WHAT I YAM



“You can pretend to be something other than who you are but eventually you will run out of energy to continue, because that’s not authentically you.”

—Caroline Myss

“When you do not seek or need external approval, you are at your most powerful.”

—Caroline Myss

The other weekend, I decided to get ahead of my social media postings and spent hours creating content for Transformation Tuesdays, Mythbuster Mondays, and the like. Because I only know how to put my signature videos together using iPhone apps, that meant hours staring at my phone. By Sunday night, my eyes physically hurt from those hours without adequate blinking. Several applications of lubricating eyedrops and I was good as new. But there’s another syndrome that stems from social media that is more difficult to manage: old fashioned insecurity.

If you view enough postings from other aesthetic practices, you’ll get the impression that:

- Everyone buys every new device sooner than you do
- Everyone gets more “Best of” and “Top” awards than you do
- Everyone else’s practices run seamlessly even on weekends
- Everyone is more successful than you are.

In essence, you return to the teenage state of mind when you were certain everyone else was more popular and had more fun than you did and everything would be fine as long as you could just do what they did.

Intellectually, adults understand that social media shows a well curated, filtered view of life. We tell the teenagers in our lives to ignore it because it isn’t reality. But if we are honest with ourselves, we do the same thing. And the results can be equally devastating. Why? They feed our deepest insecurity: We will never be good enough. Mix in the financial and psychological pressures from industry, the marketplace, regulatory agencies, and patients, and you have a recipe for dissatisfaction or burnout.

How do we protect ourselves? By remaining true to our authentic selves. I know it sounds “New age” “self-helpy”—the antithesis of most physicians’ training and inclination. But stop and think about it. When have you made the worst decisions in your practice? For me, it was when I made a decision based on other people. An associate said she liked a particular device, and my colleagues were all racing to make purchases by end of year, so I bought it...and it sits unused.

When have I made the best decisions? When I followed my instincts about what felt good for me. Leaving my university practice, deciding to limit my private practice to what I do, i.e. aesthetics, and jumping all in on a major renovation have been life altering. I go to work calmer and happier and leave each day more satisfied. And my attitude spreads to my staff, patients, family, and friends.

So read and post and read some more. But take it all in with a grain of salt. And if you start to feel the peer pressure, stop, breath, and think about what you’d tell a teen: “If everyone jumped off a bridge, would you?” And “social media is not reality”.

Popeye the Sailor said, “I yam what I yam.” Be true to who you are and be happy. ■

—HEIDI A. WALDORF, MD
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