

The Beauty Enigma

The Art of Ageless Beauty... from the Inside Out



Demetria Victor Newman, M.A.



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THE BEAUTY ENIGMA: The Art of Ageless Beauty From the Inside Out

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Dedication

I dedicate this book in loving memory of my mother, Eugenia Victor, who taught me grace in both living and dying; and to my father, John Victor, for the gift of quiet strength and dignity. Both embodied the quintessence of beauty.



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Last but not least, I would like to thank my readers for the opportunity to share what I have learned and experienced over the years. Being able to share is a blessing; we are all beautiful works in progress. This book is written from the heart and I have made every effort to provide you with accurate information.

Love,

Demetria



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I would not interfere with any creed of yours, or want to appear that I have all the cures. There is so much to know... So many things are true... The way my feet must go may not be best for you. And so, I give this spark of what is light to me, to guide you through the dark, but not tell you what to see.

— Author Unknown



Introduction

The Beauty Enigma is a book about discovering and celebrating real beauty. It encourages you to recognize the beauty of your unique expression of life as you honor the beauty of all others in our shared humanity. *The Beauty Enigma* is not about inner beauty versus outer beauty or your beauty versus another person's beauty. Within these pages, real beauty is perceived in broader terms, a viewpoint that celebrates the spirit of our differences and interprets beauty in its totality.

The Beauty Enigma discusses how to embrace life and allow your true essence to unfold. Reclaim ageless beauty now, by creating a mindset and lifestyle that allow your beauty to fully blossom.

*Reclaim ageless beauty now,
by creating a mindset and
lifestyle that allow your
beauty to fully blossom.*

The Beauty Enigma contains age-old secrets and proven, lifelong regimens to aid you in the process of self-discovery. It provides tools for living a life of awareness, balance and beauty. Look and feel your best naturally. Save time, money and energy becoming the person you desire. *The Beauty Enigma* uses nutrition, breathwork, meditation (mindfulness training), yoga and other tools to help facilitate a sense of total well-being. *The Beauty Enigma BEing Me Exercise: Eight Steps to Discovering and Embracing the Real You* will embolden you to change your inner conversation about yourself, guiding you toward intrinsic beauty and self-worth. *The BE Approach to Daily Living* is a formula for walking through life with ease and grace, a gentle reminder you are free to choose—to be the *most* beautiful you.

The Beauty Enigma debunks the stereotypical idea that beauty is age-specific and wholly dependent on outward appearance. Modern society promotes the concept of beauty as “perfection.” For the most part, in order to be beautiful a woman must be young, thin, sexy, pretty and flawless. In today's world it seems we have come to misunderstand the definition of beauty. Faulty beliefs can cause us to become anxious and fear-driven. We have the potential to harm ourselves in search of living up to these standards and ultimately block our *real* beauty. We also become blind to all the beauty that exists in the world in which we live.

The Beauty Enigma is a call for a paradigm shift on how we define beauty. It explores

the psychological implications of today's distorted view and will help to enrich your perspective. You will discover how to push past being overshadowed by the mainstream concept of beauty, through mind, body and spirit alignment.

I have been fortunate to travel extensively throughout the country and to many parts of the world. I have spoken with a cross-section of women, amazing sisters of different ages, sizes, colors, religious beliefs, nationalities and professions. This book is a tribute to those women whose paths I have crossed, for the profound beauty they projected through expressing strength, vitality, intellect, humor, compassion and love. For their honesty to fearlessly live authentic lives. My intention is to write a book that inspires people with something good, beautiful and true. In part, this book is about sharing my journey as a woman struggling to understand the illusive nature of beauty and the lessons learned along the way.

It is my hope to encourage women of all ages to be true to themselves, to realize we do not have to be seduced or beguiled by the commercialization of "beauty." Let's face it: we all want to be considered beautiful. But what does beauty really mean? How do we recognize it and become truly beautiful? My mission is to show you *your beauty!*



The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.

— *Helen Keller*





Chapter One

What is Beauty?

Defining Beauty

There are many definitions of beauty. Throughout history, beauty has been linked to words such as *truth*, *divine love* and *kindness*, to name a few. The philosopher George Santayana said, “Beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing.” It is a positive value, an emotion and an expression of our volitional and appreciative nature. Greek civilization practically revered beauty as deity, even drawing a connection between mathematics and beauty (the golden ratio). The Greek “ideal” of beauty was characterized by having proportion and symmetry, thus creating perfect harmony, balance and design. In Platonic–Aristotelian philosophy beauty was associated with the idea of “the good.” We think of nature as natural beauty; music and art as poetic beauty. No matter how we define beauty, generally our experience of beauty affects our senses and produces a feeling, a sensation, of pleasure.

Unfortunately, the concept of beauty in today’s culture has become superficial and narrowly defined from a purely aesthetic point of view: that which is pleasing in appearance. While outer beauty may be easy to recognize, it does not determine the depth of a person’s beauty. Or, if in fact that person is truly beautiful. This, in turn, explains why the impression of what we see changes when we then perceive negative inner qualities. On the other hand, positive inner qualities like integrity, kindness and grace have a quiet strength that deepens our perception of beauty. Sadly, this purely aesthetic viewpoint is widely commercialized while the characteristics of inner beauty have been abandoned.

For discussion’s sake, I make reference to inner and outer beauty for two reasons. First, this helps to distinguish real beauty from superficial beauty (basically how beauty is viewed today). Second, this establishes the standpoint that real beauty emanates from our core and requires inner work.

However, I believe *absolute beauty* is indivisible. It cannot be divided into inner and outer parts. Beauty is what it is: BEAUTY. When a person exudes genuine beauty it

supersedes all physical appearances and human conditions.

The nature of beauty is something much deeper, an intangible quality too complex to describe in terms of any other quality. The words written by John Keats, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," are profound. I believe real beauty is linked to spirit and eternal truth. The human experience of genuine beauty has a positive value, in that it elevates our understanding of beauty. It strengthens our moral fiber and opens us to love and compassion. Truth, beauty, goodness and love are interwoven values essential to our happiness, to our mental, physical and emotional well-being. The secret to projecting beauty into the world is wholly dependent upon our ability to cultivate these positive, intrinsic values.

I would like to share one of my favorite stories that taught me about beauty:

Several years ago, I was invited by a friend to hear the late Maya Angelou speak at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. I had always admired Ms. Angelou's work and welcomed the opportunity to hear her speak in person. I knew she was an extraordinary woman, but I did not realize her far-reaching effect on others.

My friends and I arrived early. Seated in the theater, we watched the audience consisting of every hue, age and gender grow into a packed house. The enthusiasm was contagious! People were on the edge of their seats, chatting with excitement, awaiting Maya Angelou's performance. Immersed in a pool of conversations, I could not help but overhear what was being said about this beloved artist. I was amazed by the remarks, so much so I began to roam about like a journalist needing to validate a consensus.

Eventually the lights flickered, indicating it was time to begin the program. I returned to my seat. Shortly thereafter, a spokesperson appeared onstage and began the introduction. The crowd tried to be obliging, but they were overcome with restless anticipation.

Backstage, Ms. Angelou must have sensed her fans' fervor. She peeked her head through the curtains and shooed the emcee away, causing us to roar with laughter. Then she gingerly walked onto the platform, seated herself on a plain wooden stool and burst into a medley of song and poetry. In an instant, despite her awkward gait, Maya Angelou, a woman in her eighties, swept us up in a whirlwind. The audience was mesmerized. Merely listening to the melodious tone and sincerity of Ms. Angelou's voice was enough to hold you spellbound.

Her impact was palpable. The audience was so enraptured it broke my trance. For a short time, my head whipped between the audience and Ms. Angelou, as if viewing a Ping-Pong match. A young, well-groomed man seated next to me gasped and shouted to his guest, "My God, she's so beautiful!" A teenage girl seated in front of me sat gaping in awe. Two rows up to my right, a gray-haired woman quietly sat smiling with a twinkle in her eyes.

I was moved by Ms. Angelou's compassion and fascinated by her ability to speak to us with the intimacy of a one-on-one conversation. Clearly, we were all enchanted by her dignity, wisdom, humor and grace. She was a star in a room full of hopefuls. Not in the sense that Ms. Angelou was a celebrity, but from the standpoint that we knew she had "It," and we desperately wanted "It." Maya Angelou was beauty personified.

The message was simple. Whatever frailties we are taught to assign to aging, whatever hype we give to facile beauty, Maya Angelou defied it all. In that particular space and time, the audience recognized a spirit imbued with all the qualities we hope to see in others and ourselves—mostly innate qualities we have yet to discover. Ms. Angelou exhibited the innocence of an infant’s spirit, which confirms youthfulness can be characterized other than by chronological age. With an ageless spirit and open heart, she came to us willing to share the innermost parts of herself. Her journey. A life filled with heartaches and triumphs, serving to remind us of our unlimited potential.

It is time to re-examine our modern take on beauty and shift the winds back toward the direction of real beauty.

The purity of each moment unfolded and transformed us. We witnessed the alchemy of energy; form, intelligence and spirit coalesced. She showed us it is never too early or late to learn to accept, love and have compassion for our true selves. She was quintessentially beautiful.

It is time to re-examine our modern take on beauty and shift the winds back toward the direction of *real* beauty.

Media, Society and Beauty

The commercialization of beauty has given rise to unhealthy social norms. We are bombarded daily with messages about the war against nature, the war against wrinkles, aging—the war against just about every aspect of our appearance. The over-exposure to devaluing messages creates an environment of self-consciousness and self-doubt. Youth has become synonymous with beauty and time is the enemy. We are prodded into an ongoing battle. We are enticed to remain vigilant and fight to stay in the game by any means necessary.

Author Marshall McLuhan, the patriarch of media analysis and criticism, examined the effects of technology and a media-dominated society on the human psyche. He wrote numerous books during the early stages of television and coined the terms “the medium is the message” and “global village.”

Dr. McLuhan foresaw the benefits and dangers of technology and media. He believed “we become what we behold.” In his book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, he examined the effect of technology as it relates to popular culture and our relationship with others. Dr. McLuhan concluded, “Media is an extension of our senses.” As early as 1951, he wrote *The Mechanical Bride*, which exposed advertising as a means to manipulate, exploit and control people for the purpose of selling products.

Evelyn Crowley, assistant editor of *W Magazine*, said, “There’s more pressure than ever to look young, to look perfect. . .” The quest for beauty and perfection has led to all types of chemical injections and plastic surgery, including extreme surgeries such

as: butt implants, labiaplasty, belly button reshaping, shoulder lipo and toe shortening. Women and young girls are suffering more than ever from eating disorders, anxiety, depression, body dysmorphic disorder and surgery-related complications.

In a *New York Times Magazine* article, Daphne Merkin commented, “The Platonic ideal of beauty is now more humanoid than human; more the product of an art director’s digitalized pastiche of desirable features than a naturally occurring phenomenon. The reasons for this include... our even more phobic attitude toward aging and dying; and our worship of young, blank, unlined faces.”

Media and technology clearly play a major role in how we view beauty and help define social norms. There is no doubt advertisers have become savvier and use consumer-driven tactics. Advertising is about stimulus and response. Big business is about making a profit; it supplies what consumers demand. Last year, Americans spent in excess of \$12 billion on cosmetic procedures, surgical and non-surgical. This figure prompts me to question: Is living all about trying to become what we behold? Are we headed toward a “cyborg chic” culture of expressionless, unnatural beings? Is beauty becoming just a commodity for purchase?

When a five-year-old girl wins “best eyes” in a beauty contest after lying on a tanning bed and wearing green contact lenses, what message is being sent to our children? It appears as if we are moving in an unhealthy direction.

During an *Oprah* show, guests discussed the topic of what constitutes beauty and explored different views from various cultures. Even though the concept of beauty was as diverse as the cultures represented, the show revealed the surprising results of an international study conducted by Dove. The study revealed that 90 percent of women wanted to change some part of themselves, 70 percent thought beauty was too narrowly defined by looks and 91 percent believed advertising does a poor job of representing women other than those in their youth.

The upside? Oprah Winfrey’s closing remarks: “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and it’s really about what we say it is.”

How do *you* define beauty?

I do not claim to know all the answers. I do know, collectively, we hold the power to guide beauty in another direction. *The Beauty Enigma* will help reframe the way you think about beauty and help you reclaim your birthright to live a healthy life of ageless beauty. You will find viable alternatives presented to point you in the direction of vibrant health, well-being and timeless beauty. You will learn to cultivate attributes to live beautifully.

Examine your motives and evaluate the consequences when thinking you must fit today’s standards. Yes, the modern concept of beauty scoffs at inner beauty, and we laugh at the axiom “beauty is as beauty does,” or clichés like “age is a state of mind.” But I trust people intrinsically know where real beauty resides and I believe they ache for it to be rediscovered.

We have the power to create norms based on our acceptance. We have the voice to

redefine beauty. Today's choices are tomorrow's standards.

Defining Your Beauty

I believe each and every one of us is born beautiful and perfect, an original, one-of-a-kind extension and expression of divine spirit. Remember the words of John Keats, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." Truth feels good and empowers us. On the other hand, false thoughts about ourselves weaken us.

I believe our connection to real beauty has eroded. The mirror reflects false thoughts and feelings about ourselves because we have been conditioned to believe we should look a certain way. We are stuck in a reflection of false awareness. The first step in defining your beauty is in changing your consciousness. When you penetrate the veil of illusion that conceals who you really are, you become aware of your connection to a much bigger reality—the stream of eternal existence—and you begin the beautification process.

The first step in defining your beauty is in changing your consciousness.

Your beauty is within you waiting to be uncovered. *The Beauty Enigma* is an invitation to reflect. I invite you to expand your awareness and celebrate your uniqueness. The legendary make-up artist Kevyn Aucion believed true beauty came from within and told *W* magazine in an interview, "Just because something is different doesn't mean it isn't beautiful."

In order to define your beauty you have to discover and nurture it. Ultimately, you will find and learn to love yourself. It takes honesty and courage to be who you really are. Dare to be you! I will suggest many ways to help accomplish this in Chapters Four through Nine.

Beauty is Ageless

If we understand what real beauty is, we will find it becomes easier to understand why beauty is ageless. Quantum physics has proven we are made up of the same essence as everything in the Universe: energy. We are energy housed in a physical body. Our bodies will not last forever; however, our essence is eternal.

Draw on this knowledge, instead of relying on conditioned beliefs about aging. You can change your mindset from that of *growing old* to *becoming ageless*. When my mother made her transition in 1997, she wanted me to read Mary Elizabeth Frye's poem at her "home going" celebration.

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there, I do not sleep

I am a thousand winds that blow

I am the diamond glint on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain,

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you wake in morning hush

I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet

Birds in circling flight.

I am the soft starlight at night

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there, I do not sleep.

I share this special expression because I think it best describes our nature. We are energy and energy moves in and out of form. Many years ago, I read a book by Napoleon Hill called *Think and Grow Rich*, and had an epiphany. The author did not disclose his message outright. Rather, he wanted you to root out the single most important idea that would bring you untold riches in every aspect of life. My understanding of his intention was that we should discover we are energy and our bodies are matter in which energy takes form. We are each a part of the intangible force that animates the whole of life. When we operate from this premise, we have unlimited access to all there is to create and manifest the life of our dreams.

I knew then the magnitude of our individual and collective potential. It is not important what you label the force underneath all life; what matters is the recognition of divine wisdom and our connection to it. We are much more than we appear to be; we are in this world and the world is within us. There is a primary, dynamic energy and intelligence that pervades and integrates all of creation. You and I are a part of the whole of life, which includes eternal youth and endless beauty. "Thou art that," as Joseph Campbell said. I ask you: How can you not be beautiful and ageless?

Heraclitus, a pre-Socratic philosopher, once said, "The only thing constant in life is change." Our bodies are going to change, but our essence, our oneness, will never change. Agelessness and beauty are a part of our consciousness; they are a state of mind. There is a science of being and an art to living. If we recognize and become

familiar with the dynamics of inner beauty, we have the ability to develop it into outward expression.

The truth is that you are already a part of the landscape of beauty where you sit. There is nothing more beautiful than the expression of a smile on a person's face whether they are eight or 80. A rose in full bloom is every bit as beautiful as a rosebud, if not more so. Nature teaches us every stage of life has its own beauty. Think about it for a minute. A rosebud is an unopened flower of a rose. A rose in bloom is rich in color, texture and fragrance, with layers of depth. I smile at the thought of being a rose blossom.

Be present! Living in the moment is liberating. It gives you the ability to dissolve perceived “mind-made” problems.

A large part of biological aging is our approach to it. You are much more than your body. What you think and how you live can determine how you age. As you begin to work with nature, as opposed to against it, you will embark on a rewarding and wondrous path toward eternal beauty. Beauty unfolds at any age with a healthy mind, body and spirit. In part, beauty is happiness—and being happy shows. I invite you to tap into the source and embrace all facets of life.

This means dealing with the reality of the physical self and putting aging in its proper perspective. It means trying to let go of the fear of aging by recognizing the ageless quality of your true self. Take each moment as an opportunity to be born anew. As Pujari, a spiritual advisor and yogi, says, “Each moment has a life of its own; be alive in it. Arrive there, be there and dissolve into the next.” Be present! Living in the moment is liberating. It gives you the ability to dissolve perceived “mind-made” problems. Over the course of this book, I will discuss various ways of expanding your consciousness, keeping your biological clock running more efficiently and developing your unique beauty sensibility.

BE yourself

Oscar Wilde once said, “Be yourself; everyone else is taken.”