



# Dr. Carolyn Chang

*Top female plastic surgeon, brilliant, chic and under 40*

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Chanel suit and a scalpel are all it takes to make Dr. Carolyn Chang smile. The 39-year-old plastic surgeon is fast becoming a force to be reckoned with in the world of nips and tucks, but if you ask Dr. Chang what really makes her happy it has nothing to do with superficiality. "I love helping my patients feel better about themselves on the inside," she said. But she isn't your



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everyday General Practitioner; she’s a well-recognized and respectable Plastic Surgeon, recently chosen by *San Francisco Magazine* as one of the ‘top doctors in the San Francisco Bay area to look for’. She is flattered by the compliment.

Dr. Chang grew up in Tennessee before moving to California to study medicine at Stanford University. She has been working in San Francisco for the last five years. In that short time she has earned a promising reputation not only in San Francisco but around the world. In many ways plastic surgery was and still is considered a male dominated industry but that fact has never hindered Dr. Chang’s career. “I didn’t experience too much discrimination,” she said. She believes that sometimes the *idea* of an obstacle becomes someone’s greatest challenge. “It’s important not to have a chip on your shoulder and to show indifference. And it helps to have a mentor.” It wasn’t until she met her mentor in college that Dr. Chang knew she wanted to be a plastic surgeon. “I knew I wanted to be a surgeon,” she said. “But my mentor was a plastic surgeon and that’s when I really knew that was the kind of surgery I wanted to do. It was very creative.” She said having a positive attitude is the key to success and the secret to earning your colleagues’ respect and admiration. “They will embrace you more because of it,” she said.

Dr. Chang said the hardest part of her road to success has been all the time she’s had to invest in her work, both at the office and away from it. “It’s a life investment,” she said. “Not too many women, or people in general, for that matter, can do it. You can’t go on vacation and leave your work at the office. You can’t turn off your pager. When I leave at the end of the day my patients don’t, so I can never check out completely. There is a lot of personal sacrifice and it can take away from having a family and a personal life.” Never married, Dr. Chang admits to having missed most of her 20s because of her training – but she doesn’t mind. “I care a lot about what things look like and with plastic surgery you really have to have an eye for detail. It’s a very creative process.”

That creative process has spilled over into other areas of her life, as well. A successful plastic surgeon, Dr. Chang is equally popular for her love of fashion and was recently invited by Chanel to attend the label’s fall fashion show in Paris, France. “I think the connection there is that fashion and plastic surgery are not only very creative, but both can be used to enhance someone’s appearance and boost their self confidence, providing their motivation for change is correct.”

She is careful to explain the difference between correct and incorrect motivation. “The motivation behind someone’s need for change is more important than surgery or clothes,” she said. “If someone is not happy with themselves, plastic surgery or a haircut or new clothes are not going to help them achieve inner happiness. Change of appearance is only meant to enhance certain features. It’s for people who feel good on the inside and want to look that way on the outside.”

For Dr. Chang, transforming your image is not about looking your best – it’s really about feeling your best; the other stuff is just a bonus. So, whether you’re sitting on the sidelines of a high-style fashion show, going under the knife, or simply waxing your eyebrows, remember: you only look as good as you feel... it’s what’s inside that counts. 

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