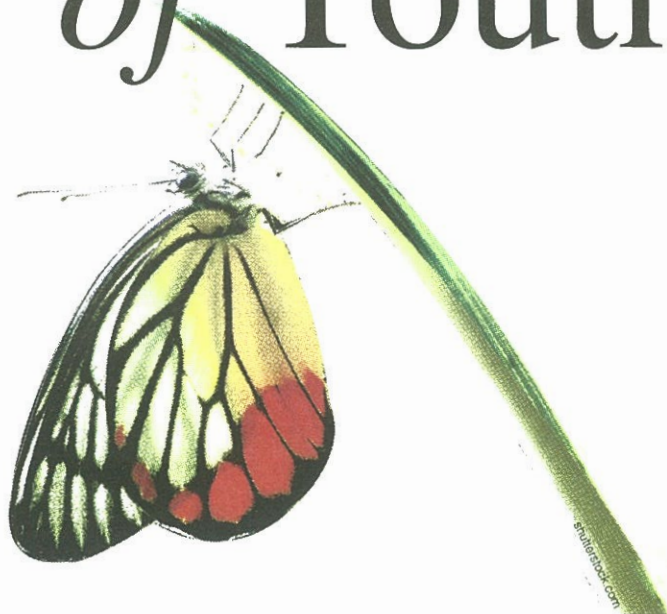


In Search of My Fountain of Youth



By Lillian Wollman

I am soon to be a 70-year-old woman who has successfully made her living in the ever-evolving beauty industry. I've witnessed the desperation in other women, and within myself, to maintain the youthful appearance we once possessed.

There are countless procedures now available at a price to maintain or even temporarily reverse the effects of aging. References to the all-desired fountain of youth date back to as early as the fifth century B.C.

We look to our mirrors and feel a sense of guilt for aging. We see the young, shapely models and wonder, "What's wrong with me?" The lessons we've learned, our many successes and our wonderful attributes grant us little comfort. As we compare ourselves to others, to our younger selves, and to the image of what we think we should be, we ask ourselves, "How can this be fixed? How can we work on this?"

How? By saving every dime to fix it? It's a viscous cycle of fixing, correcting and searching for faultless, flawless beauty. I could have fed a third world country with the money I've spent combating, delaying, and bantering the natural aging process.

In hoping to feel better about myself, I have made my own discoveries. Respect must come from the inside. My value comes from looking in the mirror and saying, "I love you." Self-esteem does not come from others or from their approval. It must come from within me.

There is a healthful balance in caring about physical appearance. It is good to feel groomed, moisturized and pampered; perhaps a little nip or tuck as one can afford it. But, it is unhealthy to make it an obsession. To allow the chase of the fountain of youth to become the paramount in our lives can be a shallow existence, an endless pursuit.

One day I will pass on. My physical body will have no more significance than the discarded cocoon from which the magnificent butterfly emerged. My beautiful, vibrant, ebullient soul is my importance, my value, my gain and my greatest accomplishment. My soul is beautiful, wrinkle free and radiant.

I'm totally done with the chase for my fountain of youth. Okay.... Probably not, but it is not my obsession. It is not the secret to my true beauty. 💋