



MICHAEL R. BURGDORF, MD, MPH

Advantage®

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PREFACE

My Path to Plastic Surgery

When writing this book, I took careful consideration to make sure my voice and my personality came through accurately. Not because this book is about me but because you'll be listening to me a lot throughout our time together. This book is about mothers and their individual struggles with considering and undergoing a major change in their body image. I want you to get to know me in a real way, not just by reading the accomplishments, awards, and degrees from the back cover or my website. I want to show you who I am and why I care in an informative, comforting, encouraging, and helpful manner as we navigate together, starting with this book, the wonderful world of reclaiming your body—and your sense of your self—through the Mommy Makeover.

My name is Michael R. Burgdorf, MD, MPH, usually just known as Dr. Mike. I grew up in New Jersey as part of a large, and forever-expanding, blended family. My parents divorced when I was quite young and each subsequently remarried. What started out as a traditional family of four turned into an exciting and chaotic arena of stepbrothers, stepsisters, and half sisters from both sides of the family tree. With a total of six siblings on one side and five on the other, and

many of us now married with children of our own, you can imagine the circus we affectionately call family holidays.

I had the benefit of growing up with two strong and loving male role models, my father and my stepfather, both very successful and accomplished businessmen. But my mother was the constant and guiding presence in my life. She cheered me on daily. She sacrificed a significant portion of her day to get me to a school near my father's house so I could get a good education and maintain a relationship with him. She taught me to dance. She taught me how to relate to and communicate with girls. She taught me how to be sensitive to others, how to be tough when I was sad, and the importance of being kind even when I felt angry. As a registered nurse, she inspired my interest in the medical world by recounting tales of her experiences working in the operating room. My mom is special to me; we share a bond like no other in my life.

Thankfully, my mom is not the squeamish type, and she allowed me to start playing football in the fourth grade. She encouraged me in this sport from the beginning, not realizing the huge impact it would have on my life. I played throughout high school and am proud to have played linebacker for the University of Notre Dame under the legendary coach Lou Holtz. Coach Holtz's commitment to excellence in all parts of life was exemplified by his WIN (What's Important Now?) philosophy. While embracing this philosophy as a young student athlete, I played football and maintained a sharp focus on academics, which got me invited to the academic excellence banquet each year at Notre Dame and, ultimately, earned my admission to medical school. And I still ask myself that WIN question on a regular basis.

Lou Holtz would often say, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” That belief truly changed my life. At the end of practice or after a game, coach would often say something like, “All right, men, it’s important to realize that the words we speak and the actions we take can affect people in a very profound way. Always consider the sensitivities and the needs of those around you. Be aware of how your actions hinder or help someone.” I strive every day to live this lesson in my medical practice and my life in general. “Consider the sensitivities”—while that may seem unusual coming from the football world, it has become my mantra in many aspects of my life.

So has “Do the right thing.” Coach punctuated our Friday night practices with a relaxation session during which he would talk to us about being honest with ourselves. “Men, you can fool the television cameras, the fans, even your friends and family ... but not yourself. At the end of the day, you have to look at yourself in the mirror and know that what you did was the right thing to do.” I hold this philosophy dear in my life, want it to always be a part of my character, and teach it to my own children. I want to live my life openly and honestly with the highest of integrity à la Lou Holtz, imparting the skills I have developed—intellectually, personally, professionally—with kindness and compassion.

Thanks, Coach, for all this and for so much more.

I moved from the gridiron to the Big Easy when I finished undergrad and attended medical school at Tulane University in New Orleans. The day I was accepted to Tulane, my top-choice school, I was playing in the Notre Dame versus Navy game in Ireland: truly one of my lifetime’s top-ten moments.

Ah, New Orleans! I loved being there for medical school and other obvious reasons—the people, the food, the music, and riding on some floats in Mardi Gras. I was also there to study—and study I did! During my first year in medical school, an opportunity arose to earn my masters in public health (MPH) concurrent with my doctorate in medicine (MD). I jumped at the chance. I also trained at the renowned Charity Hospital. I wanted to have a tough, demanding medical education, and that’s exactly what I got. Day one of medical school: I show up at Charity’s emergency room. A doctor I had never seen before called to me, “Hey you! Here! [Hands me a chart.] Go sew up bed four!” It was sink or swim, and my first lesson, loud and clear, was “If you show up, Dr. Mike, you better be prepared.” I decided I was never going to “practice” on people, never going to think in terms of bed numbers, never going to see a patient as a disease instead of a human being. In my clinic today, there are no numbers on the room doors; we call our patients by their names, not their condition being treated.

I stayed in New Orleans at Tulane for my surgical residency. My world there was filled with chaos and trauma, a battlefield of real, raw, bare—and very human—need. And here, in the midst of all this, was a young surgeon’s opportunity to bring calm, quiet confidence, compassion, and efficiency to an environment that was anything but controlled. One night, very early in my tenure there, three gunshot victims rolled in in rapid succession. I was in Room One, when the attending surgeon steps in, grabs my hand, and guides it to the patient’s chest and says, “Open him up stem to stern.” The room was suddenly filled with blood and guts—and tension. This guy’s life was literally in our hands. The attending remained calm and cool, spoke quietly and directly, moved quickly, and helped me stop the hemorrhaging. “If you’re the captain of the ship and you behave as

if it's sinking," he told me later over coffee, "everyone around you will panic. If you remain calm and decisive, even if you are standing in knee-deep water, the sailors will grab some pails and start bailing. You did that earlier. Thanks for captaining the ship with me tonight."

And on the subject of deep water ... My residency at Tulane ended prematurely and abruptly when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. I left in a rush on Sunday, the day Katrina made landfall in New Orleans, to ensure the safety of my wife, my only son at the time, and our family dog. It was my plan to get them to Mississippi, leave them in the charge of my in-laws, and return quickly. That was not to be because of the timing of the storm and the disastrous flooding that ensued. While the work I did in a makeshift clinic in Jackson, Mississippi, at the time was still important, for a guy who had spent many months preparing professionally and emotionally for such events, this was but a poor substitute for what I felt and, in some ways still feel, was what I was *really* meant to be doing in New Orleans that week. It still tears at me today.

I have had to draw on my strong faith, belief in God, and an understanding that I am where I am, doing what I am supposed to do, for good reasons that I may not yet comprehend. Just as I learned to be calm and efficient in the face of the world called Charity Hospital, I have had to learn how to face the chaos, the trauma, the lack of control that was Katrina and the circumstances that prevented me from being there to help. I continue to draw on the resiliency, the belief, the faith that I am meant to bring goodness to the lives of many and that God will guide me in doing it well, for the right reasons, each and every day.

Because my wife's family was in Mississippi, we chose to stay there after Katrina. I had already determined that plastic surgery was my

passion. After finishing my general surgery residency, I was blessed to be able to complete my plastic surgery residency at the University of Mississippi in Jackson, home to one of the largest plastic surgery groups in the US.

And speaking of Mississippi, I would be remiss if I didn't mention my wife when trying to provide insight into myself. My wife has been my perfect partner through life. She has provided me with a beautiful family and, as a physician herself, understands the crazy life of a doctor as only one who lives it can. As any working mom does, she struggles daily with the pull of her career (her patients adore her) and her family. But she's really good at both. I mean *really* good. Even though she has put aside her goals and desires to allow me to pursue my own, has sacrificed her body and her sanity to become pregnant four times, and helps raise our four children, she still keeps it all together. She keeps all that medical knowledge at the front of her brain (even during her "baby brain" phase of pregnancy). She's forever gentle and loving to our kids and worries about the tiniest detail in their lives. I don't know how she does it ... she just takes care of things. She is the best woman I know, in all senses, is the best mother to our children that I could ever ask for, and has ceaselessly supported me in my life, as well as my career as a plastic surgeon.

I love the creative and artistic parts of plastic surgery as much as I love the technical challenges. I love restoring self-confidence in my patients, improving their lives, and helping them see themselves in a renewed light. Plastic surgery allows me to have a significant impact on many peoples' lives. What's exciting for me is that the impact seems to extend like a ripple in the water. I help make changes on the outside of an individual. Then I can be a witness to the countless changes that occur on the inside of that same person. The effects on

people within that person's sphere can be profound. With Mommy Makeovers, that ripple effect can permeate through an entire family. To me, that is just so special.

The specific procedures for a Mommy Makeover are important, as are the skills of the individual surgeon. I am aware, however, that my ability to make these changes in someone else is not solely dependent upon my skill alone or the procedures chosen. I depend on God for the skills I have and the opportunities I receive. Before each surgery, I ask him to guide me and my hands and allow me to achieve the results I am trying to obtain and which the patient desires.

I bring my knowledge; skills and experience; integrity and character; commitment to excellence; a kind, caring, compassionate heart; and a strong faith to the world of my practice and my patients in Nashville. I try to be someone who maintains perspective that the patients' desires, concerns, and fears are very real. I try to be a person who treats others like I would like to be treated.

I hope that offers some insight into Dr. Mike Burgdorf and allows you to trust me as we go through this joyful journey of rejuvenation in exploring the Mommy Makeover together. Thanks for taking the first step with me.

MOMMY MAKEOVER MYTHS

Myth: Exercise can lift and augment your breasts naturally.

Reality: Not so. You can exercise hours every day, and your breasts will still be droopy. Your pectoral muscles will be in good shape, but the size of your breasts won't change.

Myth: You can't breast-feed after a breast lift.

Reality: While this hasn't been completely proven one way or the other, the consensus is that about two-thirds of all women can breast-feed before breast surgery; about two-thirds can breast-feed afterward. It is important to choose an experienced, board-certified plastic surgeon who knows how to preserve breast function.

Myth: If you have breast implants, a mammogram can rupture them.

Reality: Unlikely to occur, unless there are capsular contractures present (see chapter 16).

Myth: Exercise will tighten your tummy and get you back to the way you were before the baby.

Reality: No amount of exercise can tighten up fibrous tissue that has been stretched by pregnancy.

Myth: Rubbing creams into your abdomen and breasts will prevent stretch marks.

Reality: When the skin is stretched by the natural swelling of pregnancy and breast-feeding, the marks may fade a bit, but they are permanent, a form of scarring. The best practice is to reduce the problem by maintaining good hydration and having moderate weight gain throughout pregnancy.

Myth: If you have liposuction, you can't regain weight in that area.

Reality: Yes, you can. With large weight gain, you can actually eat through the liposuction.

Myth: A Mommy Makeover isn't safe.

Reality: All surgery has some risk, but a Mommy Makeover is very safe when performed by an experienced, board-certified plastic surgeon.

Myth: You will look plastic or fake after the surgery.

Reality: A skilled surgeon will give you natural-looking results. Subtlety is key.

Myth: Everybody will know I had surgery.

Reality: Only if you tell them—which I hope you do and refer them to me as patients.

Myth: My husband just won't understand.

Reality: You don't know that until you talk about it. He may surprise you and be very supportive—that has been my experience with my patients over the years.

Myth: I can't afford it.

Reality: Yes, a Mommy Makeover costs real money and is not covered by insurance. Think of it as an investment in yourself.

Myth: I'm not worth it.

Reality: Yes, you are.

Myth: I'm not ready to have such confidence.

Reality: Look out, world!

Myth: I'll never get my body back to what it was before my baby.

Reality: Oh, yes you will! Your Mommy Makeover will amaze you.

Part 1

DECISIONS



Chapter 1

MOM, ISN'T IT TIME FOR YOU?

5:30 a.m.: Baby is stirring ... Ugh! Gotta get out of bed ... Hurry! Get the bottle ready, and get her changed so she doesn't wake the rest of the house. Oops, too late. Here come the boys ...

6:00 a.m.: Okay, time for breakfast ... Cereal for one, eggs for another, third one not hungry this morning. "How about a cereal bar, honey?"

6:30 a.m.: Noise, chaos, so much noise ... and the endless moving parts of backpacks, lunch boxes, plates, cups, and silverware. "Come on, finish eating so you don't miss the bus." Jackets on, shoes on ...

head on a swivel, making sure each one is accounted for with the appropriate garb as they rush out to catch the bus. “Don’t forget your lunch. Good luck on your test today. Here’s your jacket. Wait! Your backpack!”

7:45 a.m.: Whew! Why am I so exhausted before 8:00 a.m.? Maybe the baby will go back to sleep, and I can nap with her for a bit. I’ll go to the gym tomorrow.

8:10 a.m.: Guilt overriding any thoughts of sleep. I need to do the laundry, clean up the kitchen, and organize that pantry. Breakfast for me? Later. Makeup? In the car ...

And you pick the scenario: I’ve got to get to work, baby’s crying again, etc.

The day goes on at this hectic pace and only mildly slows when the kids are at school.

You start each day hopeful and think you’ll be fine. Most times your thoughts revolve around your kids. You worry. Are you teaching them well, are they making the right friends, fitting in, have we signed up for the right activities, will they grow up to be kind, thoughtful, empathetic, etc.? You make it through the day, barely, and still don’t exercise or even get a short nap.

Afterschool activities ramp up the harried schedule again, and you are living in the car. But you’re good. You’re organized. You’re Mom. After going through your checklist of diaper bag, diapers, wipes, baby food, coloring books, homework, etc., you realize you forgot your phone. Again. Oh well, you’re needed to help with homework anyway; they’ll leave a message if it’s important.

The schedule basically repeats itself in reverse for the nighttime activities. Sit down for dinner? Yeah, right! Unless it's done in your car. For your meal, it's either fast food to accommodate the kids, or it's stealing bites of mac 'n' cheese from your child's plate as you race around the kitchen to make sure everyone else is fed and satisfied. And you are exhausted. Will you ever find time for yourself?

It's rare for a mom to think of herself first—they usually put themselves last, if at all. Moms are the best. They sacrifice *everything* for their children, including their bodies. My own mother sacrificed for me; certainly my wife has sacrificed for our four children. Moms are always there, no matter what you need. But all that sacrifice—pregnancy, breast-feeding, months of getting up in the night, the erratic diet—has a price. Many women find that their bodies have been permanently changed by having children. They've become stretched out in some areas, droopy in others. They don't look or feel as good as they could.

That's where the Mommy Makeover comes in. Through safe, effective plastic surgery, we can restore a woman's body and reverse the effects of childbearing. To me, it's a great joy to be able to help a woman transform or renew her appearance. After all the sacrifices she makes in her life for her family, she *deserves* something for herself. To be a part of that change is awesome. And, in some small way, it makes me feel like I'm helping my own mother or my own wife when I help make another mom look better. I love to help moms achieve dreams they have been thinking about (and putting off) for a long time.

Here's a snapshot of one of my patients, Kristin. She was in her early 30s and the mother of two adorable young kids. She was physically in great shape, but two pregnancies and all that breast-feeding had permanently altered her body. Her breasts were deflated; she had

a belly overhang that no amount of dieting and crunches in the gym could fix. She felt embarrassed and frustrated at how her appearance changed by having kids. She didn't mind the sacrifice, but Kristin really wanted her body back. She brought the idea of plastic surgery up with her husband, concerned that he might disapprove. To her surprise, he was all for it. That was all Kristin needed to call my office and make an introductory appointment.

Kristin went through with a Mommy Makeover that included a breast lift with conservative augmentation and a tummy tuck. After the surgery, Kristin was one of the happiest patients I have ever had. She was just ecstatic over her restored body. She healed up beautifully and very quickly. When I saw her in a follow-up visit, she had a new confidence and new vibrancy. Her self-image soared. She went to the neighborhood pool without reservation, she looked forward to shopping again, and the relationships in her life improved. It's what the Mommy Makeover is all about.

Every mom knows that having kids is a huge physical sacrifice. You're reminded of it every day when you look in the mirror. During pregnancy, your body expands—it changes and grows as your unborn baby matures. Your breasts get larger in preparation for breast-feeding. Your abdomen swells, the skin stretches, and you gain weight as the baby grows larger and you eat more to feed you both.

All this takes a toll on your body. Generally, after the baby is born, the abdominal area gradually shrinks back down and some, even most, of the extra baby weight comes off. When you stop breast-feeding (or if you didn't breast-feed at all), your breasts will gradually get smaller as well.

But nothing in your body fully returns to just what it was before pregnancy. And the more children a woman has, the more the physical changes are likely to be permanent. My wife likes to remind me that something “breaks” with each pregnancy. And she is right. As the baby grows, for instance, the fibrous band of tissue that runs down the middle of the abdomen can become permanently stretched out of shape. Many women end up with what some of my patients call a *dunlap*. (A strange Southern term for a Jersey boy like me. It means muffin top, pooch, or love handles when referring to the abdomen, as in “My belly has done lapped over my belt.”)

A woman’s breasts are permanently changed by pregnancy and breast-feeding. And that scientific paper I read as a young resident that claimed that breast-feeding had no effect on breast size and shape? Quickly debunked by my wife when I shared it with her after the birth of our second child. If I remember correctly, she threw that paper against the wall, stomped on it, and glared at me. After seeing countless patients in my practice, I *now* know that by the time a woman has had her second or third child, her breasts are often deflated and pointing south. Bulges, stretch marks, wrinkles, shape changes, drooping—no matter how hard you work out, no matter how diligently you diet, no matter how many expensive creams or products you use, things will never be quite the same as before.

All these changes and the continuing futility of the effort to recover from them can make a woman feel worn-out, unattractive, demotivated, and generally unhappy. Some women find that they have lost their self-confidence; others worry that they are less desirable to their partners; some describe feeling old before their time. And there are cases where the changes from childbearing can be physically uncomfortable or can interfere with a woman’s day-to-day life activities.

Women put up with *a lot* during pregnancy, childbirth, and the aftermath. Morning sickness, heartburn, swelling, waddling, shortness of breath, changes in skin and hair, feeling “as big as a house” (per my wife), frequent trips to the bathroom, trouble sleeping at night, and restrictions on what to eat and drink. You do your best, eat well, avoid caffeine and alcohol, try to keep moving, and take naps when you can. Then the baby comes—and you are instantly turned into a milk factory, open and needed at all hours. And you are tired! Will you *ever* again have time for yourself? When is it mommy time?

After all this sacrifice, its impact on your physical and emotional well-being, your very sanity, perhaps it is time to consider something for *you*. Perhaps it’s time to consider a Mommy Makeover. Let’s take a look at what that means.



Chapter 2

WHAT IS A MOMMY MAKEOVER?

A Mommy Makeover is plastic surgery, also known as cosmetic surgery, to restore a woman's body after childbirth. A Mommy Makeover may include some or almost all of the following procedures:

- A tummy tuck to remove stretched-out skin, excess fat, and stretch marks in the abdomen. The procedure also tightens up the midline and can even reposition your belly button.
- Liposuction to remove stubborn fat in the midline, love handles, and sometimes the thighs and hips. We can also do liposuction in the bra strap area.

- Breast augmentation to restore the flattened upper area of the breasts and bring back your cleavage.
- A breast lift to raise sagging breasts and restore the nipples to their original position. We can also improve the appearance of the nipple and areola (the pigmented area around the nipple).
- Breast reduction to remove excess weight still trapped in your breasts.
- Labiaplasty to restore the vaginal area, tighten the excess tissue that may have been permanently stretched during pregnancy and the birthing process, and/or improve the appearance of the genital area.
- Eyelid lift to remove wrinkles and under-eye bags from all those sleepless nights with the baby.
- Other facial procedures, including Botox to help remove the elevens (vertical wrinkles between the eyes), crow's feet, and other wrinkles, or HA (hyaluronic acid) fillers (Voluma, Restylane, Juvederm) or fat transfers to improve the wrinkles around the nose, mouth, and lips and to restore fullness in cheeks.

We will discuss each of these procedures in more detail in later chapters. We will also cover skin-care concepts (safe to use while pregnant or breast-feeding—just in case), as well as some recommendations on the best food for your skin and how to avoid and treat stretch marks. But first let's talk more about the bigger picture of deciding whether a Mommy Makeover might be right for *you*.



TELL ME, WHAT DON'T YOU LIKE ABOUT YOURSELF?

When a mom visits me in my office for the first time, we spend time talking about how she feels about her body right now:

- What parts do you like? Why?
- What are your areas of greatest concern? Why?
- How did you feel about your body before your first pregnancy?
- How has your appearance changed since?
- How would you like your body to be different in the future?
- Are you happy with the size and shape of your breasts?
- Is it time for the bigger breasts you have always wanted?
- Are you confident in tight-fitting clothes or being seen naked?
- Do you wear a bikini now? Will you in the future? What will that take?

Some women say they liked the way their breasts looked while they were breast-feeding. Now that they have stopped, they feel that their breasts look like “fried eggs” or “pancakes flopping on their chest.” Some moms just want more fullness, others want a little more cleavage, and some want their nipples to stop “looking downward.” It’s all possible.

Some women come in and tell me, “I hate the way I look in jeans,” or “I hate the way my belly hangs over,” or “I want to get back into that bikini.” Others just say, “I want to get rid of this extra weight.” These concerns can be met too.

Of course, some want to restore both their breasts and their bellies.

One thing I’ve learned over my years in practice is that no two women will have the same desires or concerns. It’s all a very, very personal and individual decision. I like to help my patients dream a little about where they see themselves after surgery: what they would like their results to be. That’s where all the questions above come into play. As a surgeon, I can guide you through what is appropriate and safe, as well as what can be done in a single surgery versus multiple surgeries. As a patient thinks through the possibilities, I can help her process and envision what the end result could be. Then we can discuss what Mommy Makeover procedures are right for her.



Chapter 3

IS A MOMMY MAKEOVER RIGHT FOR YOU?

Having dreamed the dream and seen the vision, there are now other questions to be worked through. Plastic surgery is a big decision, one you should not enter into flippantly. I work closely with my patients to help them distinguish the difference between their desires and what's appropriate and possible, to understand the benefits and some potential challenges that are in store for them.

- Are you ready mentally and emotionally for this change in your life?

- How do you feel about plastic surgery in general?
- Can and will you give yourself permission to actually have plastic surgery?
- Is the timing right? Do you plan to have more children?
- Is it safe? Can combination procedures be performed on you?
- How will you pay for it?

Let's take these one at a time.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL

Plastic surgery definitely has side effects—some good and some more challenging. We'll talk about these as you prepare for your Mommy Makeover.

Some points to consider:

- The transformation in your self-image—you'll feel more self-confident, leading to good things in your life, your career.
- The responses of those around you to your decision—some will celebrate with you, and some will question you.
- The potential impact on relationships—some will be pleased for you, some will be critical or even jealous, and some relationships may even be reinvigorated.

Are you mentally and psychologically prepared for making this significant change in your body? Are you ready for the compliments and the new wardrobe? Are you ready for the reactions of those

around you? You need to mentally prepare for all the challenges and the victories that encompass a Mommy Makeover.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON PLASTIC SURGERY?

We've come a long way ...

Plastic surgery is no longer something to be embarrassed about. Moms talk about it, work through their decisions openly, share their results, tell their friends. In fact, many of my patients come to me through referrals. They tell their friends, "I was where you are three years ago, and I finally decided to do it. I just wish I would have done it much sooner." People now don't worry as much about being thought of as vain or self-centered if they have surgery. Instead, they realize that they're doing something to make themselves feel better and look better as well. To me, that is a healthy approach to cosmetic surgery. (To see some of these results, visit my website www.musiccityplasticsurgery.com/galleries/)

I had one patient who was extremely shy and nervous. She was so embarrassed that she just closed her eyes during the preoperative photos. Shortly after surgery, her embarrassment vanished, and she asked, "Well, when are you going to use my pictures on your website? I've already told about five women to come see you." I remember thinking to myself, "What happened to the shy, demure girl that I met two months ago?"

PERMISSION: MAY I PLEASE DO THE MOMMY MAKEOVER? ASK *YOURSELF* FIRST

I see many mothers who feel guilty even considering doing the littlest things for themselves, let alone plastic surgery. It seems to stem from the inherent nature of moms to think of everyone else first and always put themselves last. Let me ask you: If all the logistics of childcare and household duties were met, all your questions answered, and all your concerns addressed (which I'll attempt to do throughout this book), will you *then* give yourself permission to have plastic surgery? Do you feel you're worth it? Only you can answer this question. But I say, if you are a mom who has sacrificed to carry a baby and has gone through the delivery process, you have more than earned it. And, as we all know, a mom's sacrifice doesn't just end with the delivery; it continues through the life of her child.

I have seen so many families blossom from having a mother who is happy and confident in herself. This surgery not only affects the individual woman but, like anything a mom does, can profoundly affect her entire family, too.