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Faces

We place a lot of importance on our face and on the faces of others. This is not just a cosmetic or vain observation. We talk about "saving face," a matter of pride, a sense of self-esteem. We use the term "putting on a good face" to mean making the best of a situation, and we talk about "being two-faced" negatively. It is not deemed praiseworthy to show different faces in different settings, meaning that our face represents us and what we stand for. We question how someone of poor integrity or someone of whom we disapprove can confront himself or herself: "How does he or she look at his or her face in the mirror?" It is as if "looking at your face in the mirror" is the hardest thing to do. It is the time when we confront ourselves each day. It is the time when we must be honest. *Can we face ourselves? Are we satisfied with our decisions, our effort, our performance or our deeds?* After all, one cannot really deceive one's self. We know what we really meant to do regardless of how others may perceive our actions or how we may represent them.

Although it may be difficult to deceive ourselves each day in the mirror, that is not really the most difficult confrontation. After all, many of us do not blatantly choose to be self-centered, ingenuous, deceitful or dishonest. Rather, it happens gradually: a little compromise here, a little deceit there. The face that judges us privately is yesterday's face. It is not so different from today's face. It understands the problems we have had and the needs that we still have. It understands us. It is who we were only yesterday.

There are other faces, however, that are also available to judge us. Most of us have appeared in a yearbook at some time. Perhaps it was high school; for some there is the college yearbook as well. Let that face look at you. It may be more difficult for that face to understand why we have done some of the things that we have done. It is still our face, but it is the face we had before we started compromising. It is the face that had hopes and plans and dreams for the future. Can we look at that face? Can we tell that face, our innocent self, that we have fulfilled its dreams, its hopes and its ideals? Can we tell that face that we at least tried our best or that we did the best we could do under the circumstances?

Is that face pleased with the face it is looking at? Did we keep the promises we made to ourself?

Stanley J. Goldsmith
Editor-in-Chief, *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*
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