

The Science of Beauty - Why Are Some Things Beautiful?

Why is it that some things are considered 'attractive' and other things are considered off-putting? What is it about clear skin in particular that makes someone seem like a better catch? And how can understanding the science behind this attraction help us to be more effective at improving our own looks?

This post will explore those concepts.

Evolution and Looks

The key to understanding the seemingly arbitrary set of rules that define attractiveness is to understand the role that evolution played in creating them.

Evolution you see, is all about survival of the fittest. It's about the traits that help us to stay alive longer and pass on our genes becoming more dominant. This also accounts for our 'tastes' when it comes to the opposite sex. People who choose evolutionarily 'better' partners, are more likely to pass their genes more effectively.

In other words then, our desires and our tastes in men or women are dictated by the signals that suggest a higher chance of survival. We pick people who look *healthy* but we also pick people who seem to be resourceful, powerful and important. This way, we think that our children will be better cared for and will inherit more of those positive traits.

What Does Skin Have to do With It?

So with that in mind, where does healthy skin come in? What does this tell us about a potential mate?

For starters, healthy skin suggests a good diet. This in turn suggests access to resources that will benefit offspring and it suggests generally better health.

At the same time, healthy skin *also* suggests a good balance of hormones which might in turn suggest more virility and fertility.

Next up, healthy skin makes us look more symmetrical. Why is symmetry important? This part isn't actually clear but one theory is that symmetry suggests healthy cell division. The cells in our body reproduce by splitting in half to form two exact copies - a process called mitosis - and this occurs millions of times a day.

The problem is that the process doesn't always go completely smoothly. Sometimes, a small error will creep into the process, leaving the cells not *quite* identical. Normally this isn't a big deal but sometimes it can cause damage to integral parts of the DNA - and this is where cancer comes from. Cancerous cells then spread because they *continue* to split and reproduce and as a result the 'flaw' in that cell is reproduced throughout the body.

Organic Beauty = True Beauty

There are many more examples, but essentially beauty and health are very closely linked. And this is why *organic* beauty is the truest form of beauty. Organic beauty means making yourself healthier *first* so that your natural beauty shines through.