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# Passion and Purpose: Interviews with Legal and Health Professionals (Part Three)

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It is always interesting to hear stories of professionals in the fields of law and medicine, particularly why they chose their careers. It is even more interesting to hear them discuss what motivates them to go to work every day and what they love the most about their jobs. Doctors and lawyers also tend to have very interesting stories about clients and patients they have served during the course of their career.

For example, one of the doctors we interviewed recalls a time he was working at a hospital and had a patient who came in unresponsive with a bleed in his brain. He successfully treated the man back to recovery. Several months later, that same man returned to the hospital to visit someone else. The man recognized the doctor, ran up to him and said, "You saved my life, I remember you, thank you so much!" The man explained to the doctor that he couldn't have survived without the hospital's treatment.

Stories like this are the stories you never hear. These are the types of experiences that keep our legal and medical professionals motivated to serve us in times of need.

Here is Part Three of the interviews we did with doctors and lawyers across the United States. Here is [Part One](#) and [Part Two](#).

## 13) Dr. Richard Ellenbogen, [Beverly Hills Body](#)

### What made you decide to become a physician?

I became a doctor to be a plastic surgeon. My sister was a pediatrician and she showed me the cleft lip patients and making them look normal was magic. The only other connection to plastic surgery was my classmates in high school coming back from Christmas vacation with bobbed noses. I wondered why plastic surgeons couldn't make the new noses look natural. Those two divers conclusions headed me into a profession where I could make deformed children look normal and prevent my classmates from looking like freaks with unnatural noses.

### How long have you been practicing?

I have been practicing plastic surgery for 42 years. I practiced in Europe, Mexico, Colombia, Italy New York City, but mostly here in Beverly Hills where I practice today. Many of those other places were pro bono helping the local doctors with cleft lip and other pediatric deformities.

### What do you love the most about being a physician?

I enjoy today the most making a woman once beautiful look young again. When I was 9 years old in 4th grade in upstate New York it was parent teacher's day and I brought my mother to meet my teacher. My mother had me when she was 41. She was now 50 and the average mother there was 25 to 30. The teacher came out of her room and greeted me then asked if I would bring my "grandmother" into the [office](#). My mother started crying. "Why are you crying" I asked her "I'm the best student in the class." She didn't answer but she wiped her tears and went in to meet my teacher. She was once beautiful in fact she was the Ipana toothpaste model and an Ivy league college graduate. But now she was just an old lady [crying](#). To bring back youth to a woman is a miracle I can perform.

### Describe a memorable story of a patient? What was so memorable about this patient?

When Lana Turner did *Dynasty* on television she came in to get her bags removed from her lower eyes. At the consultation she showed me her picture when she was 19 years old. I explained to her I can make it better, but that is impossible. She looked at her picture she brought, smiled, then put it away. "You know who had beautiful eyes," she asked John Garfield. "I played opposite him in *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. We had to kiss in that movie. We were both married at the time and married actors didn't kiss. Louis Meyer the studio head reminded we had enough bad publicity already. Meyer said, 'you guys get one kiss no retakes.' We rehearsed the head tilt and the look into each other's eyes."

Turner went on to say, "We practiced our kiss on the back of our fists for days. It looked like we were arm wrestling. Well Dr Ellenbogen we finally kissed one time with the cameras rolling. Dr Ellenbogen, I've kissed a thousand men but that was the best kiss I've ever had. It's all in the eyes. That's why I want my eyes done."