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Today's skin topic is Dermatillomania or compulsive skin picking (CSP). Over the years I have run into this problem often. People affected with this condition cannot stop picking their face. Any pimple, or blackhead is fair game and once they start they cannot stop. There are three main reasons that propel people to indulge in this compulsive behavior. They are:

1. Self Soothing

### 2. Stimulation

### 3. Perfectionism

**Self Soothing:** A connection gets established between stress and picking a pimple. A person finds a soothing effect come over them when they stand in front of the bathroom mirror and watch the "stuff" come out of their pores. Once that connection is established then every time a stressful situation occurs, they automatically turn to picking pimples because it takes away the anxiety of facing anything undesirable. This pattern can become so ingrained that a person will not even realize they are stressed, only that they are in front of the mirror and picking pimples again. After which they are upset and angry with themselves because they have created a disaster on their face.

**Stimulation:** Boredom is another reason some people turn to picking. For some people the act of picking their face causes a needed level of stimulation for the nervous system.

It isn't anxiety that drives them to the mirror, but sheer boredom. None the less the results are the same. The skin is still left wounded with open sores and then large scabs that take days, sometime weeks to heal. Even when they do heal there is a red mark that stays.

**Perfectionism:** The need and desire for perfect skin is another reason for picking. It seems contrary for a person who wants perfect skin to mark it up on purpose, but that is what happens.

Some people will feel their face. If they run into any bump they will dig at it with their fingernails.

They feel that any irregularity they can feel on their face will be helped if they just scrape it off. Others will look in a mirror to find any bump. If they see anything they will try to squeeze it out. This compulsion actually can create an acne condition that did not initially exist.

Affecting a change in the thought process that drives Dermatillomania is something that I have perfected over the years. I have trained all my estheticians to understand the condition and put into effect our methods of retraining the brain. Whenever you do something over and over again you make a pathway in your brain that makes the task easier and easier. These pathways become deep grooves that create automatic behavior. Unfortunately bad habits are created in the same way. However these grooves do not have to be permanent. I have figured out through experience what works and how to build on each successful result. Now after over 25 years and thousands of Dermatillomania sufferers I have a system that achieves results. I cannot tell you how satisfying it is every time I guide a client through this process and the joy they have with the end result of beautiful skin and no desire to harm it.