



Body Confidence: How to like what you see in the mirror

From childhood we are sold on an ideal image of beauty; one few of us ever see reflected when we look in the mirror.

This article will show you how you can look in the mirror and despite the ideal, see only a beautiful you.

When you look in the mirror, what's the first thing you notice, and how does it make you feel? If you're like most people, the first thing that catches your eye is probably your least favourite asset. If so, don't worry you're not alone. Here's why.



Can you guess how much money is spent in just one year by advertisers to sell us on the concept of the "ideal" image of beauty? Well, I can't either but I do know this - it's a lot of money, certainly somewhere in the billions of dollars! So, technically, you can consider yourself brainwashed.

From your earliest childhood days - whether you played with GI Joe or Barbie - you've been receiving constant, consistent images telling you what beauty is supposed to look like. Never mind that these images are for the most part, anatomically impossible! And, would you really want to look like Fabio or Pamela Anderson anyway? Honestly? I'm guessing probably not.

So, here's how you can build your confidence with the body God gave you:

1. Look in the mirror
2. This time, really look at yourself. Reflect on the compliments you have received. Do people tell you how great your hair is? How beautiful your eyes are? That you have a nice smile? Try to see what they see.
3. Stand far enough away from the mirror so that you can take it all in. What do you see? Find at least three positive things.
4. Now, get up close. Really close. Look at your eyes - the irises. What colour are they? Are they all one colour or are there flecks of various colours? How would you describe them, using positive analogies or adjectives?
5. Now, smile. What does your smile convey? Warmth? Happiness? Sincerity?
6. Find at least three characteristics you like best about yourself, and then accentuate them as you dress to go out.

- If you love your eyes, make sure your hair doesn't cover them up
- Love your lips? Make sure to keep them soft and moisturized
- Your hair? Get a flattering cut and condition it regularly to keep it shiny and healthy

In short, amplify what you like, and don't worry about the parts you don't.

Here are some ways to do just that:

- Go shopping and bring a good friend. Ask them to help you pick out colours and clothes they think flatter you. Don't worry if your first reaction is "that's not me". Experiment!
- Feel better about whatever it is you don't like about yourself by picturing the absolute worst-case scenario. Exaggerate whatever it is you're hung up on and blow it up in your mind until it's comical. Then look in the mirror - not so bad anymore is it?

Accept yourself for who you are, how you look, and focus on what really matters - the things about you that can't be seen - *your heart, mind and soul!*

- What do you want people to praise you for? Is it really how you look? Probably not. You probably want people to think you're funny, smart, nice, or generous - something along those lines right?
- Make a list of your positive personal qualities and characteristics. Then ask yourself, what's more important? Get involved in activities that build on your personal characteristics-volunteer, join a club, or take a class to sharpen a talent. These will help you emphasize and focus more on the more important qualities that get you through life successfully and with more fun.

Live life, love fully and laugh often!