Mirror Mirror

Mirror walking, or mirror work, is a practice for inner reflection that involves gazing into a mirror to foster self-acceptance, awareness, and compassion through exercises like observing your emotions, repeating affirmations, and challenging your inner critic. To begin, set an intention and find a comfortable, private space, then focus on your breath while making soft eye contact with your reflection. Gently observe what you see and feel without judgment, and gradually incorporate affirmations or dialogue to reshape your self-perception.

Getting started

- Set the space: Find a well-lit, distraction-free space where you can sit or stand comfortably in front of a mirror.
- Set an intention: Before you begin, decide what you want to focus on, such as self-love, embracing insecurities, or connecting with your inner child.
- Tune into your breath: Start with your eyes closed to center yourself with a few minutes of mindful breathing. Notice your breath without trying to change it.
- Make eye contact: Gently gaze into your own eyes. It might feel uncomfortable at first, so start with brief glances and gradually increase the duration.

Key exercises and principles

- Observe without judgment: Allow yourself to simply observe your reflection and any emotions or sensations that arise without trying to change or judge them.
- Challenge the inner critic: If you notice critical thoughts, try to shift your focus to the "person" who is receiving the critique. You can also ask it what it's trying to protect you from, reframing it as a protective mechanism.
- Use affirmations: Repeat positive affirmations aloud to yourself, such as "I am more than enough" or "I love myself unconditionally".
- Practice acceptance: The goal is to cultivate a sense of acceptance, compassion, and self-worth. Acknowledge your feelings and see your reflection with more kindness over time.
- Stay consistent: Consistency is more important than duration. A short daily practice is more beneficial than a long, infrequent one.

How to progress

- Acknowledge physical sensations: Pay attention to how your emotions manifest physically, such as tension in your jaw or a tight chest.
- Connect mental and physical awareness: This exercise helps build a connection between your physical and mental states.
- Use dialogue: Ask yourself questions like, "What emotion am I carrying right now?" or "What situation repeatedly triggers this feeling?" Answer aloud to activate different neural pathways.
- Visualize your future self: Imagine a future version of yourself who has overcome a current challenge, and speak to your reflection as that future self.
- Track your progress: Note how your emotional responses change over time. Initial discomfort often transforms into neutral observation and then into warmth and self-acceptance.