

## Mirror, mirror

I have a reputation for being late to things. Most of my family and friends know this about me, but not a single one of them knows the main reason for it. For a while, I didn't either. I went through many possibilities: could it be that my alarm never goes off in the morning, I eat too slowly, or maybe I always forget something at my house?

I've come to realize that the main reason I'm slow to get out of the house is because of my constant self-deprecation. Self-deprecation is the act of belittling or undervaluing yourself and overthinking any weaknesses you may possess. It may sound strange to pin my tardiness on such a depressing habit, but many people have experienced this as well.

I stare blankly at myself in front of the mirror as millions of insults flood through my head. As I flip through different shirts, I overanalyze, worrying my outfit might make me come off as even more stupid, ugly, worthless, or awkward than I already am. I throw things on and off, over and over again until my appearance counteracts the terrible things I see in myself. As I walk out of the house, I still feel ugly and worthless: plus 10 minutes late.

I always hear people say self-love is important, but I've struggled with the idea of it for a long time. Some people find the idea of self-love to be selfish and narcissistic. When someone compliments me the best thing to do is reject the compliment and explain why it's not true, so I don't seem conceited, right? Well, someone once advised me to accept any compliment because rejecting it will only lower my confidence, making me believe the worst in myself. I've actually found this to be extremely helpful and even more assuring for anyone who compliments me. Something as simple as "thank you" reassures others that they have made someone else happy, and in return, they gain confidence as well.

When you are sure of yourself and have confidence, it's easier to get over any type of rejection. One person's opinion of me won't affect my entire day because I know I'm good enough for others. I won't be left questioning myself when someone makes one little comment. Knowing who you are helps immensely with self-love.

The most important thing I've learned is to love what makes me unique, even my own flaws. This opens the gate for others to feel more comfortable around me as well. It's so much more fulfilling to have people who like and accept the real me, rather than someone who dresses like everyone else and holds back because she's scared of what others might think of her. If others cannot accept me for who I really am, they have issues with the person they see in the mirror and are deflecting them back on me.

After all, the person you see when you look in the mirror isn't the real you. Instead it's found in the moments where you're doing the things you love. Those could be laughing with friends and family, watching your favorite movie, playing the sport you love, or performing onstage, not staring blankly into a mirror. Love your real self, so that a silly little mirror doesn't give you a tardy.