

Daily Mirror Exercise

The mirror exercise is one of the simplest and most powerful self-esteem building exercises in the world. Its purpose is to replace the normal negative limiting beliefs that dominate our thoughts with positive, self-affirming statements. It is an exercise that should be performed every night for a minimum of 30 days.

First, a gutsy check-in. We were not trained to acknowledge ourselves. In fact, we were mostly trained to do the opposite: “Don’t toot your own horn. Don’t get a swelled head. Pride is a sin.”

This is about slaying the conversations in your mind which are affecting the decisions you make in your career and personal life, gaining back the power to create the life that you want. Once you overcome those self-limiting beliefs, you become comfortable and free to consistently take on more everywhere. In other words, you design a life you love, on your terms.

Starting tonight, before going to bed, stand in front of a mirror and appreciate yourself out loud for all that you accomplished during the day. Start with a few seconds of looking into the eyes of the person in the mirror — your mirror image of yourself, looking back at you. Then start by saying your name, followed by appreciating yourself (out loud) for the following things:

Any achievements (business, financial, educational, personal, emotional)

Any personal disciplines you kept (exercise, meditation, prayer, dietary)

Any temptations that you did not give in to (eating dessert, lying, drinking too much, staying up too late playing video games or surfing the internet, etc.)

Maintain eye contact with yourself throughout the exercise. When you are done, end the exercise by continuing to look deeply into your own eyes and say, “I love you (your name).” Then stand there for another few seconds to really feel the impact of the experience — as if you were the one in the mirror who had just listened to all of this appreciation. The trick during this last part is to not just turn away from the mirror feeling embarrassed or thinking of yourself or the exercise as stupid.

Here is an example of what it might sound like:

“Marisa, I want to appreciate you for the following things today. First, I want to appreciate you for going to bed on time last night without staying up too late scrolling through the news which tends to negatively affect you. You got up early this morning, did your morning stretch routine and you had a really good conversation with Vince. And then you meditated for 20 minutes before you took a shower. You got the kids’ lunches together, and you ate a healthy breakfast.

“You also drank 4 glasses of water that you committed to drinking every day.

“You stayed in a good mood all day today. You didn’t let other people’s problems become your problems. It would have been easy to let others’ complaints get to you, but you didn’t. You were able to not feel personally responsible for what happened. And you didn’t take anything said personally.

Good job! That meant a lot to them. And now you’re going to bed before 11pm again. Woo hoo! Marisa, I love you!”

It is not unusual to have a number of reactions the first few times you do this. They include feeling silly, feeling embarrassed, feeling like crying (or actually crying), and generally feeling uncomfortable. Occasionally, people have even reported breaking out in hives, feeling hot and sweaty, or feeling a little light headed. These are natural and normal reactions, as this is a very unfamiliar thing to be doing.

As you begin to act in more positive and nurturing ways to yourself, it is natural to have physical and emotional reactions as you release the old negative self-judgments, unrealistic expectations, parental wounds and so forth. If you experience any of these things — and not all people do — don’t let them stop you. They are only temporary and will pass after a few days of doing the exercise.

While standing in front of a mirror and making eye contact with yourself...

1. Say your name.

2. Appreciate yourself for:

Achievements

Disciplines kept

Temptations overcome

3. Say, "I love you," to yourself.
4. Take it in (receive it) and breathe.

If you find yourself lying in bed, and you realize you haven't done the exercise, get out of bed and do it. The part of looking at yourself in the mirror is a very important part of the exercise. Remember, you will only get as much out of this exercise as you put into it.

One last bit of advice: If you live with someone (spouse, children, roommate, parents), let them know in advance that you will be doing this exercise each evening for a month or so. You do not want them to walk in on you while you are doing it and think you have lost it!