

# Mirror Work Exercise

This exercise is based on the work of Louise Hay, one of the original founders of the self-help movement. She has multiple books and workbooks on this subject so, if you'd like to delve deeper, you might want to read her NY Times #1 best-seller, *You Can Heal Your Life*.

Mirror work is all about learning to love and accept yourself (*for real*). It's about seeing yourself as worthy of love so you can raise your self-esteem and confidence and strengthen your *relationships (with others as well as yourself)*.

At its core, mirror work is about saying positive affirmations to yourself out loud, while looking in a mirror. The repetitive nature of these mantras/affirmations trains your mind. Instead of the harsh inner critic, you find compassion and kindness. Basically, you're facing your demons of self-criticism with love and gentleness.

This is a powerful exercise and makes most people very uncomfortable initially. Of course, the fact that it makes you uncomfortable, should tell you something about why it's so effective.

The good news is that, over time, mirror work becomes easier (*and even joyful!*)

*I suggest doing the mirror exercise in the morning and again sometime in the evening, for at least one week (optimal would be 30 days). When I do it, I generally do it right after I brush my teeth (hey, I'm standing there staring at myself anyway).*

## Here's how you do it:

1. Find a private place where you'll have three to five minutes of uninterrupted time.
2. Stand or sit in front of a mirror. You want to be very close (*within two to three feet*).
3. Take one deep breath, roll your shoulders back and tuck your chin so you're in straight alignment.
4. Look directly into your eyes.
5. Say, "I love you; I really, really love you" three times slowly. Adding your name is crucial (*"I love you, Abby" or "Jack, I love you"*).
6. Sometimes starting with "I love you" is just too much. In that case you can try something like this: "Abby, I'm willing to learn to like you." "Jack, you're worthy of being loved for who you are." "Abby, you're not perfect, but you're mine and you deserve to have great love." "Jack, I forgive you." Use your own words and find something you can say without flinching (*too much*).
7. Repeat the mantras, in three's, over and over with little breaks in between for at least three minutes.

By doing mirror work, you're developing a whole relationship with yourself. The more you do, the better. If you're up for it, check in with yourself in the mirror often throughout the day. It can be light and joyful: "Looking good, girl!" "Way to go with that big deal you closed!" "This is so cool!" "How are you?" or a simple, but heartfelt, "I here for you, Abby."

