

## SELF IMAGES

As you prepare to go out, you check yourself in the mirror. Everything looks good. The hairstyle is right, your complexion is tanned and your smile could make Liam Payne jealous. Later in the evening, when friends take photos, you are happy to pose for the camera. The next day, however, when the photos are uploaded to the Internet, you are shocked. You don't recognize that person. It can't be you! The facial features are all wrong, the skin too pale and the hair is horrific. So just why do we look different in photos to how we imagine ourselves to be? There isn't just one reason. Firstly, people often look better early in the evening than later on. You have probably just come out of the shower, brushed your hair, and put on your elegant clothes. If there was something wrong, you would do something about it and then admire yourself again. When the photos are taken, you may be tired or perhaps full after a good meal. Your hair may not look quite as good as it did. Often, when people get home and look in the mirror, they think: 'I look terrible'. It's just that, being home and alone, it doesn't matter. Another reason is to do with angles. In the mirror, we see our nose, mouth, and chin from above. This is more flattering than looking up from below. We also turn slightly and smile trying to get the best look possible. Unfortunately, our friends probably aren't as careful. Photos are taken when we aren't ready, often from the wrong position. You could watch carefully to see when someone is going to take a photo and pose for it but, although the photos might look better, your evening won't be very relaxing. Finally, there is the comparison with the people around you. Why do they all look so good in photos compared to you? Even those who aren't as attractive or slim as you? The reason is that you know exactly how they looked all evening because you could see them. There are no surprises. However, you are comparing yourself not to how you looked but to an image of yourself that was in your head. An image in which your complexion is clearer, your eyes bigger, and even your clothes are more stylish. So what can we do about it? On the one hand, for all the reasons above, photos of ourselves will rarely please us. There's a reason why many celebrities do everything they can to not be photographed in public. On the other hand, you should remember that your friends feel the same. So, when they look at photos of you, they will be as jealous of you as you are of them. Take comfort from that but maybe avoid looking at photos taken of you that appear on other people's social networking pages.