

# HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR MIRROR

We create stories to make sense of the world. Rather than just sit with “what is”, we craft narratives to understand our experiences. It’s just how the mind works. When you look in the mirror, the experience may be a negative one—but it doesn’t have to be. We create our own reality: the reflection we see in the mirror is not truth, it’s simply a story we create. And when we change the story, we change our reality. What do you say to yourself when you look in the mirror? Whatever you tell yourself, you will start to believe.

Look at it this way: if you put on a pair of glasses with blue lenses, everything you see will be blue. Switch the lenses to pink, and all you’ll see is pink. You get the idea: change the lens through which you see the world, and you’ll change your beliefs about it.

***The mirror is not the problem, our relationship with it is.***

Here are some great ways to help you finally make friends with your mirror:



## DECORATE YOUR MIRROR

Since we create our reality, choose a few special objects to surround your mirror that remind you how you want to feel, objects you'll want to look at everyday. Maybe it's a photo of a loved one. Or a vase with fresh flowers. Maybe found objects or family heirlooms. What do the objects surrounding your mirror say about you? Does they evoke calm, personality, and charm? Craft an empowering narrative about who you are and how you want to feel. Though, be mindful not to overdo it with stuff. Choose your objects wisely to avoid feeling smothered or overwhelmed. The idea is to create a mindful space, rather than a cluttered one.

## BUY A NEW MIRROR

Tired of the same old mirror you've had forever? When you look into it, what do you see? Is it the same reflection you've been trying to avoid for so long? Maybe it's time for a change. Visit a local thrift or antique store and you'd be amazed what's out there. Maybe you'll find an ornately-decorated wall mirror. Or an unusual shape. Or even a style you'd never considered before. Who knows: by starting fresh, you may see whole new reflection you haven't seen before.

## MOVE YOUR MIRROR

Speaking of change, consider moving your mirror to a different place in the room. Or better yet, move it to a different room altogether. When you change the location, you change your perspective. When we see things from a different angle, we see new possibilities. And with that, a new reality.



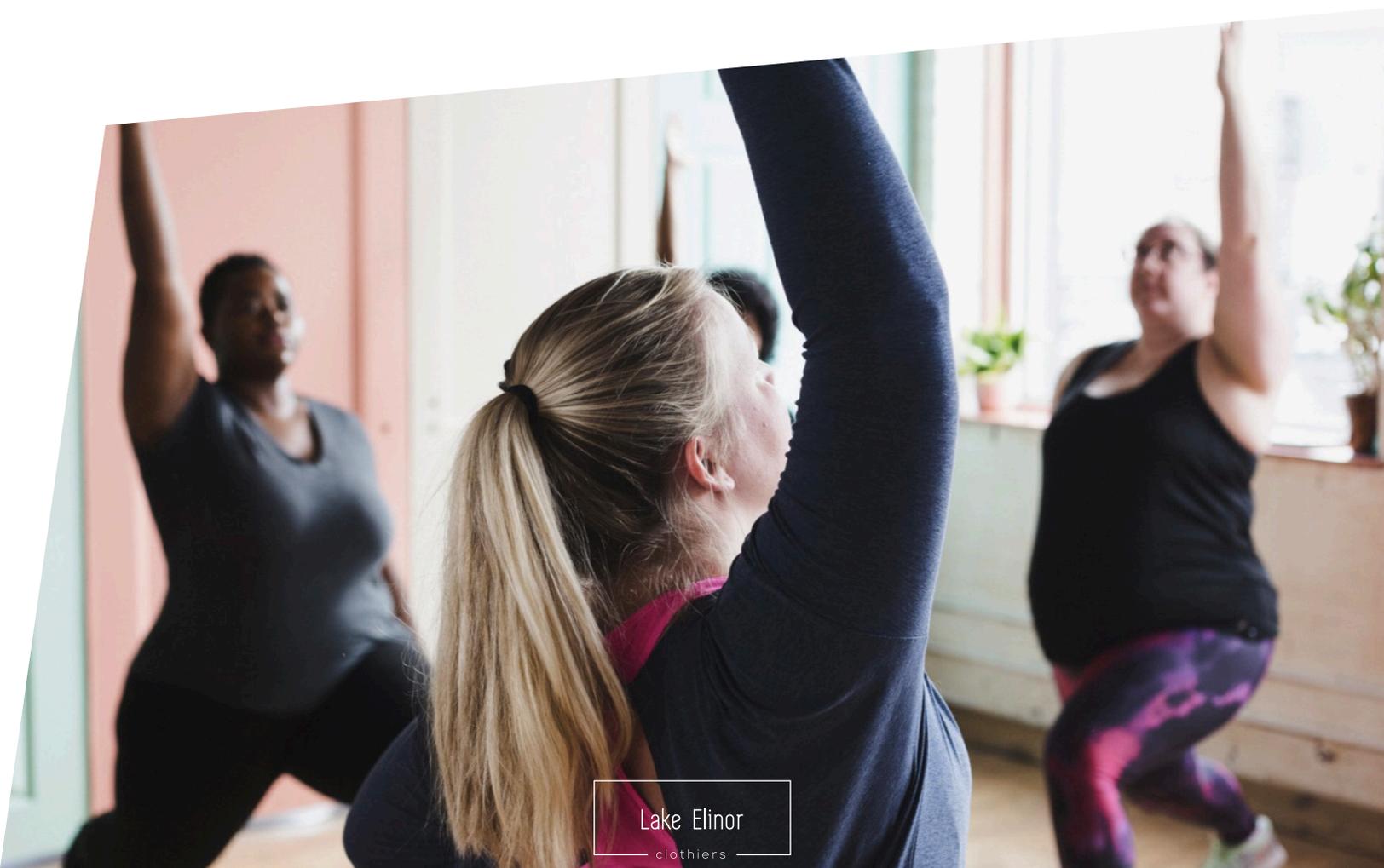


## LOOK AT YOURSELF NAKED

Stand in front of the mirror naked and just observe, without judgment. Notice what you see. If one area of your body feels especially triggering, focus your attention there and ask yourself why you feel this way. Can you simply be with what is, and can you feel love for that part instead of trying to hide or run away or speak poorly of it? When you look at your thighs, what comes up for you? Do you wish they looked different? Or can you thank your thighs for grounding you, for moving your body? And how do you feel about your belly? Do you speak poorly about its shape, its size? Or do you thank your belly for digesting your food and your life experiences? If you've had a child, can you offer gratitude for your belly as a warm, safe home while they grew inside? And then there's the stretch marks—those pesky reminders about how much weight you've gained (or lost). The body is always in transition, it's fluid. And because the body is always changing, stretch marks can be a reminder that your body is alive. When you look at yourself naked, there is nowhere to hide. And when there is nowhere to hide, you can become more curious and more loving toward yourself.

# TRY OUT A HOT YOGA CLASS

Yoga is a powerful practice for many reasons. Yet how often have you actually felt included and safe in a yoga studio? It's simply not as common to see larger bodies practicing yoga, mostly because of our over-emphasis in the West on what we think yoga "should" look like. The beautiful thing about yoga is, there is no such thing as an "ideal" yoga pose. Rather than look at yoga as moving (forcing?) the body into a pose, use the shape of the pose to feel the body. When we become more aware of the body, we become more aware of the mind that judges it. Ultimately, that can translate to looking at ourselves in the mirror with more compassion. There are so many different styles of yoga out there, hot yoga is just one of many different options out there:



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The traditional hot series is 26 postures and 2 breathing exercises, performed in a hot, humid room (105', 40% humidity). While this may sound challenging enough, perhaps the most challenging aspect to this practice is not physical, but mental: most hot studios are surrounded by mirrors, so you'll be looking at yourself for 90 minutes. This can be incredibly intimidating and liberating all at once. This practice offers the space to be vulnerable, curious, and nonreactive about what we see in front of us. And while we think everyone might be looking at us, frankly nobody cares what we look like or if our yoga pants match our top—everyone else in there is just focused on themselves and their own practice. You'll sweat profusely and will want to fidget around. The more you can remain still in between the poses, the more value you'll get out of just being with yourself for 90 minutes. There is so much power in looking into your reflection in the mirror for that long. If you're looking for both physical and mental transformation, this can be a great option. (As always, check with your doctor and listen to your own body before beginning any new exercise practice.)



# WEAR CLOTHING THAT REFLECTS HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL

You know it all too well: the poorly made, cheap polyester section hidden in the back of the department store. The Plus Size section. While plus size clothing has certainly improved over the years, there are still so few options for curvy women who want more luxurious, elegant clothing made from natural fabrics and which feel great on the skin. Where are all the premium clothes for elegant women above a size 10? So many of us have bought into the narrative that we're not good enough, that we don't deserve to look and feel elegant. And so we just buy what's available: mostly frumpy t-shirts and discounted large floral print polyester blouses. Lake Elinor is on a mission to change that narrative. How do you want to feel?



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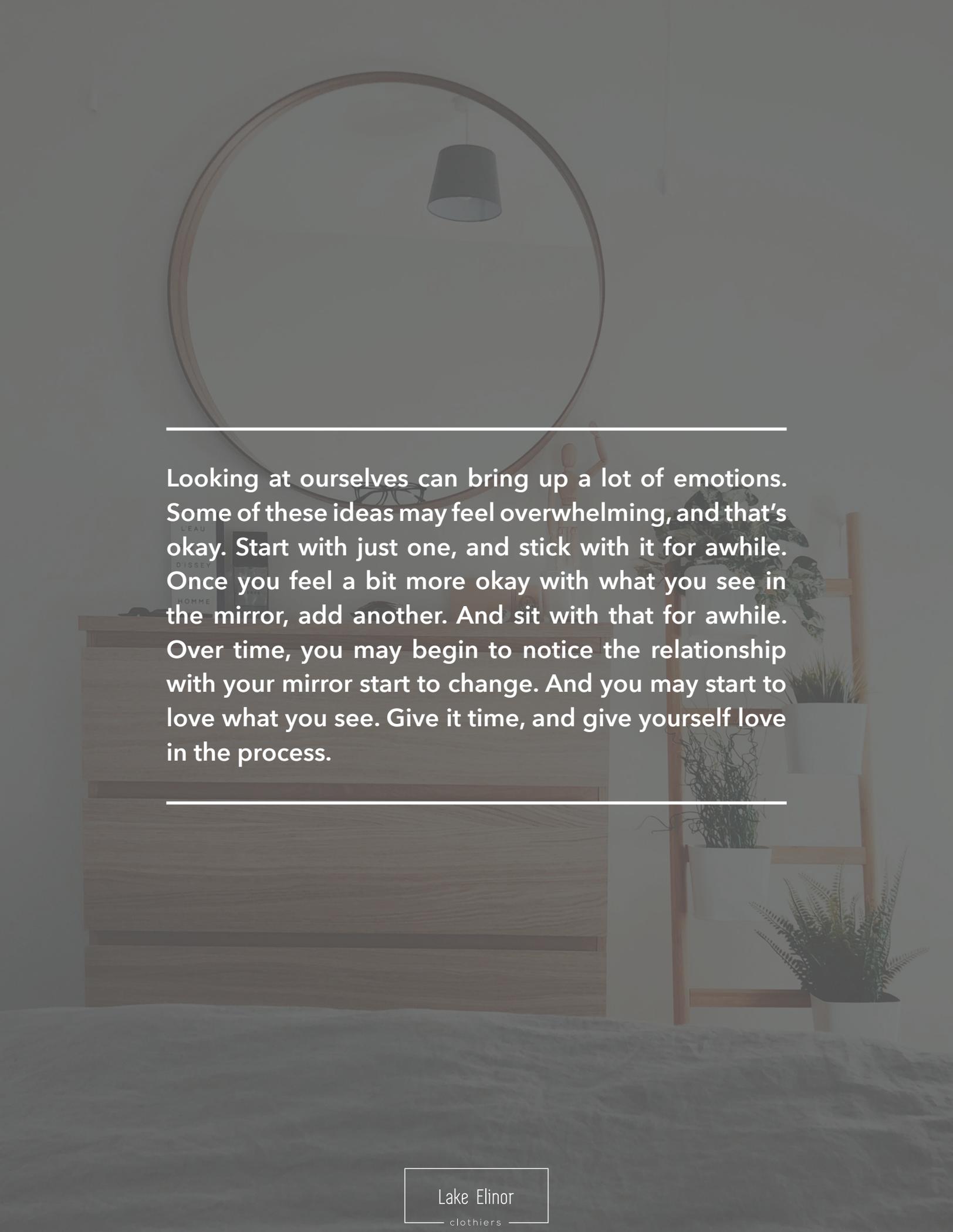
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Maybe you want to feel comfortable, maybe you “don’t want to look as fat as you might feel.” But what else? Maybe you don’t think it’s possible to feel elegant in a larger body. When you put on a beautiful, high quality piece of clothing, you just feel different. You might look at yourself with surprise. You stand taller, poised, confident. You remember your worth.

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Looking at ourselves can bring up a lot of emotions. Some of these ideas may feel overwhelming, and that's okay. Start with just one, and stick with it for awhile. Once you feel a bit more okay with what you see in the mirror, add another. And sit with that for awhile. Over time, you may begin to notice the relationship with your mirror start to change. And you may start to love what you see. Give it time, and give yourself love in the process.