



False Bodies, True Selves: Moving Beyond Appearance-Focused Identity Struggles and Returning to the True Self

Nicole Schnackenberg

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False Bodies, True Selves explores the phenomenon of growing numbers of people in western society and beyond completely embedding their sense of identity in their appearance. Unlike other books which address either theoretical models of appearance-focused identity struggles or explore lived experiences of appearance-based battles, False Bodies delves into both. Importantly, the spiritual aspects of what it is to become enemies with one's body are given centre stage in the context of Donald Winnicott's theory of the true Self and the false Self. The book begins by looking at some of the myths, superstitions and fairy tales related to mirrors before moving on to western society's current obsession with appearance, which seems to have been compounded by the mass media. After looking at some of the most common manifestations of appearance-focused anguish including eating disorders and body dysmorphia, it begins to unpick the possible underlying meanings beneath such struggles with a particular emphasis on issues of a systemic nature. The latter part of the book then moves on to the spiritual element of such psychological distress including the benefits of addressing appearance-based disturbances through a transpersonal lens.

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