

WHEN THE MIRROR TALKS BACK

SELF-IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

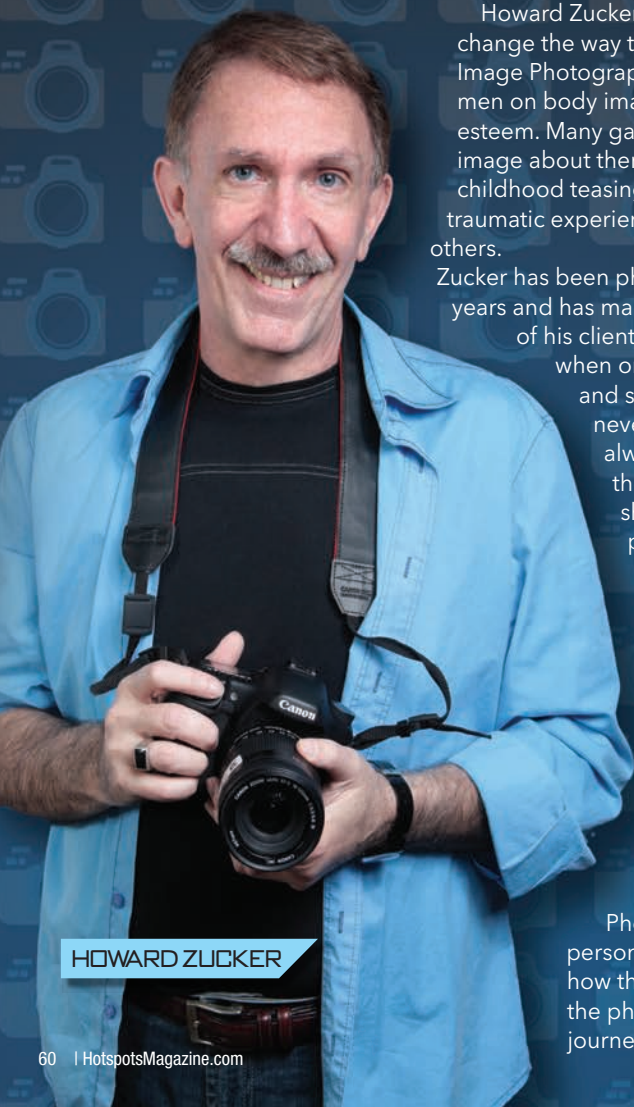
Think of yourself facing a mirror and looking into the reflection. Are you seeing your true self in the mirror or are you once again seeing the negative image you believe to be in that mirror? What if you saw what you truly look like right now, without old preconceptions, and it really looked great?

Howard Zucker's photography is helping people change the way they see themselves. He calls it Self-Image Photography and focuses on working with gay men on body image issues and improving self-esteem. Many gay men carry some type of negative image about themselves; whether originating from childhood teasing and bullying, repeated criticism, a traumatic experience, or comparison with idealized others.

Zucker has been photographing men for twenty-five years and has made a significant difference with many of his clients. He started photographing men when online dating required posting photos and saw that the men reacted in a way he never expected. Zucker says: "It was always a very impactful experience for the guys and most of them were shocked at how they looked in the pictures." That started him to develop his unique type of therapeutic photography. He worked with a psychologist to help develop the process.

Zucker's clients are not models so he directs them into various poses that highlight the different positive aspects of their faces and bodies. Zucker says: "A negative body image develops over the course of one's life and change can take time. Self-Image

Photography can often bring a shift in a person's understanding of themselves and how they view their body. The images from the photo shoot can start someone on a journey to self-discovery and can be



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extremely healing."

The photo shoot is meant to show the subject how he appears in all different types of clothing, from all different angles, and with various expressions. The session begins with talking about the clients' hesitations and concerns and making them as comfortable as possible. The more comfortable the person feels the better he will look in the photos. People are often astonished at how great they look in the pictures. Once they connect with the person in the photos, it becomes a very empowering experience as they see themselves in a different way than ever before.

"Howard is very intuitive," said Mike, after his photo session. "The experience had a significant impact on my life. Howard was very patient as I was concerned about how I would look. I'm in my sixties and don't have the six-pack young gay guys often show. Howard put me at ease, and I was stunned that he made me look vibrant and sexy. The shoot gave me the confidence to begin acting with the local theater."

Another client, Greg, in his fifties, was very overweight and always hid from the camera. "It took me a few months of talking with Howard to get comfortable enough to do a photo shoot. I was very nervous the day of the shoot, but Howard knew how to alleviate my concerns." After seeing the photos, Greg realized, "Even with my extra weight I look happy and sexy." For the first time, Greg was able to put photos on a couple of the online dating apps with confidence and is meeting men like never before.

Anthony, 46, was in a terrible car accident four years ago. He shattered ten teeth and required a few operations to fix the damage over time. "Having been in an accident that changed my appearance, I have a hard time seeing myself in photos. Howard gave me the opportunity to see myself through his lens and I couldn't be more pleased." Anthony realized, "Now that so much time has passed, the scars



are barely visible at all, and the photos look great. Shooting with Howard was an amazing and emotional experience."

Frank was always the skinny gay kid growing up in rural Michigan. After years of bullying it took a toll on his self-esteem. He is forty-nine and works with a trainer and has developed great biceps and a good physique. Whenever he looked in the mirror, he still saw the remnants of the thin, beaten-up child. The photos that we took showed him all the progress he has made and how muscular he has become. "I was shocked at what I was seeing. I started to well up with tears as I finally saw myself as a sexy muscular gay man. It's changed the way I feel about myself and how I carry myself out in the world."

When Jeff came for his photo shoot, he explained he was always self-conscious about how he looked in photos. He felt he was always making a strange face with an uncomfortable-looking smile. "Howard made me relax and let go of my fears. He showed me how to make subtle changes in how I was holding my head and smiling, and I looked great! Now I smile proudly in all my photos. It was a terrific experience."

Zucker's Self-Image Photography has helped countless individuals with issues ranging from weight, aging, hair loss, and severe body dysmorphia.

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See Yourself Through my Eyes



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For more information about Howard's Self-Image Photography, contact Zucker at 954-599-7579 or visit his website at www.HowardZucker.net. And to see his more sensual work with gay men visit his other website at www.SylvesterQ.com.