

Few of us can accurately judge our outward appearance; yet our self-concept helps determine the kind of persons we are

Do You Really Know What

by John T. Harris

YOU LOOK at yourself in the mirror every day when you comb your hair or powder your nose. But is your mirror telling you the truth? Do you *really* know how you look to others?

Many of us kid ourselves all our lives. We never fully succeed in seeing ourselves as others do. Experts say our emotions and egos get in our way.

Your cheeks may have a sallow city pallor, for instance, while you picture yourself as a healthy outdoor girl. Diet and golf have slimmed your figure, you tell yourself, but to passers-by you're quite probably just another fat man.

Want to get an idea of what you *really* look like? Take a good peek at yourself in a three-way mirror next time you're in a clothing store. If you can't wait, set up two mirrors at home, so that you can gaze into one without seeing your direct reflection. The stranger you see is you!

Or you might accidentally stumble on your true image as a New York society matron did recently when she took the subway home. Approaching the change booth, she flung a dollar bill on the counter. When she didn't receive change immediately, she snarled, "Hurry up, I haven't got all night!" Looking up, she saw a twisted face glaring at her. Suddenly it dawned on her—she was staring at her own image, reflected in the glass front of an empty booth!

"That sourpuss had become my standard expression to the world," she confessed later, "and I had to come face to face with myself to find it out."

Few of us are able to judge our outward appearances accurately. Handsome men frequently consider themselves nondescript-looking, and many an ugly-duckling woman mistakes herself for a swan.

This self-delusion about our looks usually begins in childhood and persists long after we are adults. Early in life, each of us creates a special "body image" of what we look like, and we carry this stereotype with us through the years.

A psychiatrist, the late Dr. Paul Schilder, trail-blazed the self-concept theory which holds that your picture of yourself is a significant factor in your behavior. Dr. Victor C. Raimy, University of Colorado psychologist, explains: "We perceive ourselves just as we perceive a chair or another person. What we

