

INSPIRE

● *Marriage is the triumph of imagination over intelligence. Second marriage is the triumph of hope over experience.* ●

OSCAR WILDE

My 'beauty anxiety' is so bad I check my reflection 57 times a day – even in puddles on the street

And here's how I'm battling the pressures women face in today's Instagram age...



Picture: NATASHA PSZENICKI

Fighting back: Beauty journalist Anita Bhagwandas today

FRIENDS are waiting for me in a restaurant. I'm late – it's taken me a very long time to get ready to come out – but even as I finally make it, even as I see them waving to me from the table, I can't help myself. I wave back, then point to the corner of the room where the loos are. Before I have even greeted them or apologised for

my lateness, I am in the loo, in front of the mirror, checking my appearance. I do this on dates too. I *have* to see how I look before relaxing and enjoying the evening. Beauty anxiety is like that – it creeps up on you silently and slowly, but

when it has you in its grip, you're powerless to resist it. Some other ways in which it manifests. I've bought a mirrored phone case to be able to see how I look all the time. I even do it in public on the street. Nothing even

vaguely reflective is off-limits when it comes to checking my appearance: shop windows, pools of water, the wing mirrors of cars. When I'm in the grip of an anxiety episode, I'm constantly looking at my face, not because I'm vain, nor to confirm that I look great, but because I'm anxious that there is something wrong with it. My hair. My make-up. My skin. Looking in

by Anita Bhagwandas

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