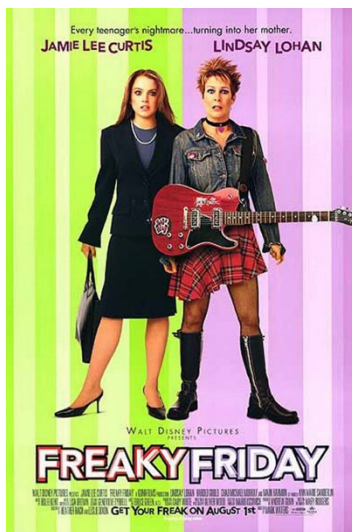


Identity: Who Are You?

Imagine a future where **brain transplants** are real. **Joe**, a paraplegic who has been dreaming of walking again, finally gets a phone call from his doctor that there is a donor body waiting for him. Joe rushes to the hospital and undergoes the surgery. His brain wakes up 2 days later in the body of **Ben**, his 22-year-old body donor.
Who just woke up?



The real question is... What makes you, you?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qob6chpkvwl>

You cannot eat fast food!

Why not?

Because! It will go down your throat and drop instantly to my thighs!

Who's who?

In the movie, even Tess (mom), in the body of Anna (daughter), can't keep her identity clear! Look at this line again...

*"It will go down **your** throat and drop instantly to **my** thighs!"*

Have you ever had someone say, "**Oh my gosh, you're just like your mom/dad/brother/sister**"? What made them say that? Does that detail actually make you "just like your mom/dad/brother/sister"?

There are **three** basic components of someone's **identity**:



Judaism teaches us about each of these components in different ways. Let's explore the first component, **the body**, by examining the following idea:

The commandment to take care of one's body (Leviticus Rabba 34:3)

זו הלל הגדול, שבשעה שהיה נפטר מתלמידיו היה מהלך והולך עמם, אמרו לו תלמידיו רבנו להיכן אתה הולך אמר להם לעשות מצוה, אמרו לו וכי מה מצוה זו, אמר להן לרחץ בבית המרחץ, אמרו לו וכי זו מצוה היא, אמר להם, הן. מה אם איקונין של מלכים שמעמידים אותן בבתי טרטיאות ובבתי קרקסיות, מי שנתמנה עליהם הוא מורקן ושופך והן מעלין לו מזונות, ולא עוד אלא שהוא מתגדל עם גדולי מלכות, **אני שנגרתי בצלם ובדמות**, דכתיב (בראשית ט, ו): כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם, על אחת כמה וכמה.

Hillel the Elder who, when he took leave of his students, used to walk with them a little way. His students asked him: Rabbi, where are you walking to? He answered: To do a mitzvah. They asked, What mitzvah? He replied, to take a bath in the bathhouse. They said to him: Is that really a mitzvah? He replied, Certainly! If the statues built to kings in the theaters and circuses are washed and scrubbed by those in charge of them...how much more should I, **who have been created in God's image and likeness**, [wash and scrub my body], as it is written: "For in the image of God he made man (Genesis 9:6)."

**Hillel's students were surprised by his response. Were you surprised?
How is scrubbing the statues of the King analogous to scrubbing a person's body?**

Let's learn about the second component, **the soul**, with the following idea:

The moment when G-d creates the human soul (Genesis 2:7)

וייצר ה' אלהים את האדם עפר מן האדמה וינפח באפו נשמת חיים ויהי האדם לנפש חיה:

And G-d formed man from the dust of the earth. **He blew a soul of life into his nostrils**, and man became a living being.

**Was the way that G-d created body and soul different? If so, how?
What do you think this signifies?**

Let's learn about the third component, **the self**, with the following idea:

The Morning Blessing of "Elokai Neshama"

אלהי. נשמה שנתת לי טהורה היא. אתה בראתה. אתה יצרתה. אתה נפחתה בי. ואתה משמרה בקרבי. ואתה עתיד לטלה ממני. ולהחזירה בי לעתיד לבוא. כל זמן שהנשמה בקרבי מודה אני לפניך ה' אלהי ואלהי אבותי. רבון כל המעשים אדון כל הנשמות: ברוך אתה ה' המחזיר נשמות לפגרים מתים:

My God, the soul which you have placed **within me** is pure. You have created it; You have formed it; You have breathed it into me. You preserve it within me; You will take it from me and restore it to me in the hereafter. So long as the soul is within me, I offer thanks before You, Lord my God and God of my fathers, Master of all creatures, Lord of all souls. Blessed are You, Lord, who restores souls to the dead.

**Who is the "me" in this paragraph?
Which part of the self sounds more essential in this paragraph?**

Which of the three components do you identify with most?



Let's try something... **Take out a piece of paper and a pen and write 5 words from the list of adjectives below that describe you best. Then, out of these, choose 1.**

Personality test:

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| able | coarse | fair | hopeless | pleasant | sly |
| active | concerned | faithful | humorous | polite | smart |
| adventurous | confident | fearless | ignorant | poor | sneaky |
| affectionate | confused | fierce | imaginative | popular | spoiled |
| afraid | considerate | foolish | impatient | positive | stingy |
| alert | cooperative | fortunate | independent | precise | strange |
| ambitious | courageous | foul | industrious | proper | strict |
| angry | curious | fresh | innocent | proud | stubborn |
| anxious | dangerous | friendly | intelligent | quick | sweet |
| apologetic | daring | frustrated | jealous | quiet | talented |
| arrogant | decisive | funny | kindly | rational | tall |
| average | demanding | gentle | lazy | reliable | thankful |
| bad | dependable | giving | leader | religious | thoughtful |
| bold | depressed | glamorous | lively | responsible | tired |
| bored | determined | gloomy | lonely | restless | tolerant |
| bossy | discouraged | good | loving | rich | touchy |
| brainy | dishonest | graceful | loyal | rough | trusting |
| brave | doubtful | grateful | lucky | rowdy | trustworthy |
| bright | dull | greedy | mature | sad | unfriendly |
| brilliant | dutiful | grouchy | mean | satisfied | unhappy |
| busy | eager | grumpy | messy | scared | upset |
| calm | easygoing | guilty | mysterious | secretive | useful |
| careful | efficient | happy | naughty | selfish | warm |
| cautious | embarrassed | harsh | nervous | serious | weak |
| charming | encouraging | hateful | nice | sharp | wicked |
| cheerful | energetic | healthy | noisy | short | wise |
| childish | evil | helpful | obedient | shy | worried |
| clever | excited | honest | peaceful | silly | wrong |
| clumsy | expert | hopeful | picky | skillful | young |

Which component did your final adjective describe?

Is that the component that you find yourself focusing on the most?

If this is the focus, how should we relate to the other component?

What is the nature of the relationship between body and soul?



Point to Ponder: We have discussed the components of **body** and **soul**, and we've also discussed how, only together, do we have a **whole self**. However, there are two possible perspectives from which we can identify ourselves that will have tremendous ramifications on the way we live our lives:

The first perspective is as a body that has a soul inside it; that is to say, one primarily identifies with the body, but knows that there happens to also be a soul inside. The second perspective is as a soul covered with a garment called the body. One identifies with the soul, but knows that it is covered with a garment called "the body" ... If we consider ourselves as clothed souls, the identification is vastly different from that of a body with a soul inside it.

*Rabbi Itamar Schwartz, **Getting to Know Your Self***

Which perspective do we have?

What would be an example of a way that these perspectives could affect the way one conducts themselves?

What can we do to transform our perspective?

Bonus Idea:
Rabbi Moshe Isserles

ועוד יש לפרש ש'מפליא לעשות' במה **ששומר רח האדם בקרבו וקושר דבר רחני בדבר גשמי** והכל הוא ע"י שהוא רופא כל בשר כי אז האדם בקו הבריאות ונשמתו משתמרת בקרבו

There are those who explain that the "miraculous action" that G-d does is that He keeps the soul of a person without his body [and it doesn't escape from any of the holes in the body, like air would escape from a balloon with a hole]. **G-d connects our completely spiritual soul with our completely physical body in a way that fuses them together**, even though they are opposites and should repel one another.

