

Name: _____, Per. _____

Harkness Discussion:

Identity: How do we become who we are?

-Nature vs Nurture

-Is true authenticity even possible?

- Environment & Choices

-Do we make conscious decisions about who we want to be?

-Your environment has the biggest impact on who you become.

-You are who you are when you are born.

-You are a blank slate when you are born.

-Enlightenment is stripping “the self” away and having no attachment to definitions, labels, or sense of individual identity.

-Even though your environment and genetics influence who you are, your choices to be what and who you want to be are the greatest determining factor.

-You only have the language that has been given your to describe and understand what you feel or what you perceive as reality.

-Are we always impersonating something in society even if we don't know it?



Text A is a series of quotations about self-actualization from well-known philosophers and writers.

"You can try to change but that's just the top layer. Man you was who you was before you got here."

-Jay Z

Heroes need monsters to establish their heroic credentials. You need something scary to overcome. -

Margaret Atwood

It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.

-E. E. Cummings

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.

Henry David Thoreau

**I think;
therefore,
I am.**

-Rene Descartes

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.

Maya Angelou

"Be yourself – no your idea of what you think somebody else's idea of you should be"

– Henry David Thoreau

"Identity is a prison you can never escape, but the way to redeem your past is not to run from it, but to try to understand it, and use it As a foundation to grow."

-Jay Z

We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think.

-Buddha

It is paradoxical, yet true, to say, that the more we know, the more ignorant we become in the absolute sense, for it is only through enlightenment that we become conscious of our limitations. Precisely one of the most gratifying results of intellectual evolution is the continuous opening up of new and greater prospects.

- Nikola Tesla

Text B. The following is an excerpt from *The Great Gatsby* and explains the transformation from James Gatz to James Gatsby.

Chapter 6, pp 98--100

James Gatz—that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen and at the specific moment that witnessed the beginning of his career—when he saw Dan Cody’s yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior. It was James Gatz who had been loafing along the beach that afternoon in a torn green jersey and a pair of canvas pants, but it was already Jay Gatsby who borrowed a rowboat, pulled out to the *Tuolomee*, and informed Cody that a wind might catch him and break him up in half an hour.

I suppose he’d had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was the Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father’s business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.

For over a year he had been beating his way along the south shore of Lake Superior as a clam-digger and a salmon-fisher or in any other capacity that brought him food and bed. His brown, hardening body lived naturally through the half-fierce, half-lazy work of the bracing days. He knew women early, and since they spoiled him he became contemptuous of them, of young virgins because they were ignorant, of the others because they were hysterical about things which in his overwhelming self-absorption he took for granted.



But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the washstand and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his

fancies
until
rowsiness
closed
down
upon
some
vivid



scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy’s wing.

An instinct toward his future glory had led him, some months before, to the small Lutheran college of St. Olaf’s in southern Minnesota. He stayed there two weeks, dismayed at its ferocious indifference to the drums of his destiny, to destiny itself, and despising the janitor’s work with which he was to pay his way through. Then he drifted back to Lake Superior, and he was still searching for something to do on the day that Dan Cody’s yacht dropped anchor in the shallows alongshore.

Cody was fifty-years old then, a product of the Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since seventy-five. The transactions in Montanan copper that made him many times a millionaire found him physically robust but on the verge of soft-mindedness, and, suspecting, an infinite number of women tried to separate him from his money....He had been coasting along all too hospitable shores for five years when he turned up as James Gatz’s destiny in Little Girl Bay.

To young Gatz, resting on his oars and looking up at the railed deck, that yacht represented all the beauty and glamour in the world. I suppose he smiled at Cody—had had probably discovered that people liked him when he smiled. At any rate Cody asked him a few questions (one of them elicited the brand new name) and found that he was quick and extravagantly ambitious. A few days later he took him to Duluth and bought him a blue coat, six pairs of white duck trousers, and a yachting cap. And when the *Tuolomee* left for the West Indies and the Barbary Coast Gatsby left too.

Text C. The following article was written by John Tierney, a reporter for *The New York Times*.

Why You Won't Be the Person You Expect to Be

Self-Perception, Past and Future: The Times's John Tierney discusses new research showing that people tend to "underestimate how much they will change in the future."

By JOHN TIERNEY

Published: January 3, 2013

When we remember our past selves, they seem quite different. We know how much our personalities and tastes have changed over the years. But when we look ahead, somehow we expect ourselves to stay the same, a team of psychologists said Thursday, describing research they conducted of people's self-perceptions.

They called this phenomenon the "end of history illusion," in which people tend to "underestimate how much they will change in the future." According to their research, which involved more than 19,000 people ages 18 to 68, the illusion persists from teenage years into retirement.

"Middle-aged people — like me — often look back on our teenage selves with some mixture of amusement and chagrin," said one of the authors, Daniel T. Gilbert, a psychologist at Harvard. "What we never seem to realize is that our future selves will look back and think the very same thing about us. At every age we think we're having the last laugh, and at every age we're wrong."

Other psychologists said they were intrigued by the findings, published Thursday in the journal *Science*, and were impressed with the amount of supporting evidence. Participants were asked about their personality traits and preferences — their favorite foods, vacations, hobbies and bands — in years past and present, and then asked to make predictions for the future. Not surprisingly, the younger people in the study reported more change in the previous decade than did the older respondents.

But when asked to predict what their personalities and tastes would be like in 10 years, people of all ages consistently played down the potential changes ahead.

Thus, the typical 20-year-old woman's predictions for her next decade were not nearly as radical as the typical 30-year-old woman's recollection of how much she had changed in her 20s. This sort of discrepancy persisted among respondents all the way into their 60s.

And the discrepancy did not seem to be because of faulty memories, because the personality changes recalled by people jibed quite well with independent research charting how personality traits shift with age. People seemed to be much better at recalling their former selves than at imagining how much they would change in the future.

Why? Dr. Gilbert and his collaborators, Jordi Quoidbach of Harvard and Timothy D. Wilson of the University of Virginia, had a few theories, starting with the well-documented tendency of people to overestimate their own wonderfulness.

“Believing that we just reached the peak of our personal evolution makes us feel good,” Dr. Quoidbach said. “The ‘I wish that I knew then what I know now’ experience might give us a sense of satisfaction and meaning, whereas realizing how transient our preferences and values are might lead us to doubt every decision and generate anxiety.”

Or maybe the explanation has more to do with mental energy: predicting the future requires more work than simply recalling the past. “People may confuse the difficulty of imagining personal change with the unlikelihood of change itself,” the authors wrote in *Science*.

The phenomenon does have its downsides, the authors said. For instance, people make decisions in their youth — about getting a tattoo, say, or a choice of spouse — that they sometimes come to regret.

And that illusion of stability could lead to dubious financial expectations, as the researchers showed in an experiment asking people how much they would pay to see their favorite bands.

When asked about their favorite band from a decade ago, respondents were typically willing to shell out \$80 to attend a concert of the band today. But when they were asked about their current favorite band and how much they would be willing to spend to see the band’s concert in 10 years, the price went up to \$129. Even though they realized that favorites from a decade ago like Creed or the Dixie Chicks have lost some of their luster, they apparently expect Coldplay and Rihanna to blaze on forever.

“The end-of-history effect may represent a failure in personal imagination,” said Dan P. McAdams, a psychologist at Northwestern who has done separate research into the stories people construct about their past and future lives. He has often heard people tell complex, dynamic stories about the past but then make vague, prosaic projections of a future in which things stay pretty much the same.

Dr. McAdams was reminded of a conversation with his 4-year-old daughter during the craze for Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles in the 1980s. When he told her they might not be her favorite thing one day, she refused to acknowledge the possibility. But later, in her 20s, she confessed to him that some part of her 4-year-old mind had realized he might be right.

“She resisted the idea of change, as it dawned on her at age 4, because she could not imagine what else she would ever substitute for the Turtles,” Dr. McAdams said. “She had a sneaking suspicion that she would change, but she couldn’t quite imagine how, so she stood with her assertion of continuity. Maybe something like this goes on with all of us.”

Text D is a poem by the famous 20th-century American poet, Robert Frost.

The Road Not Taken

by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

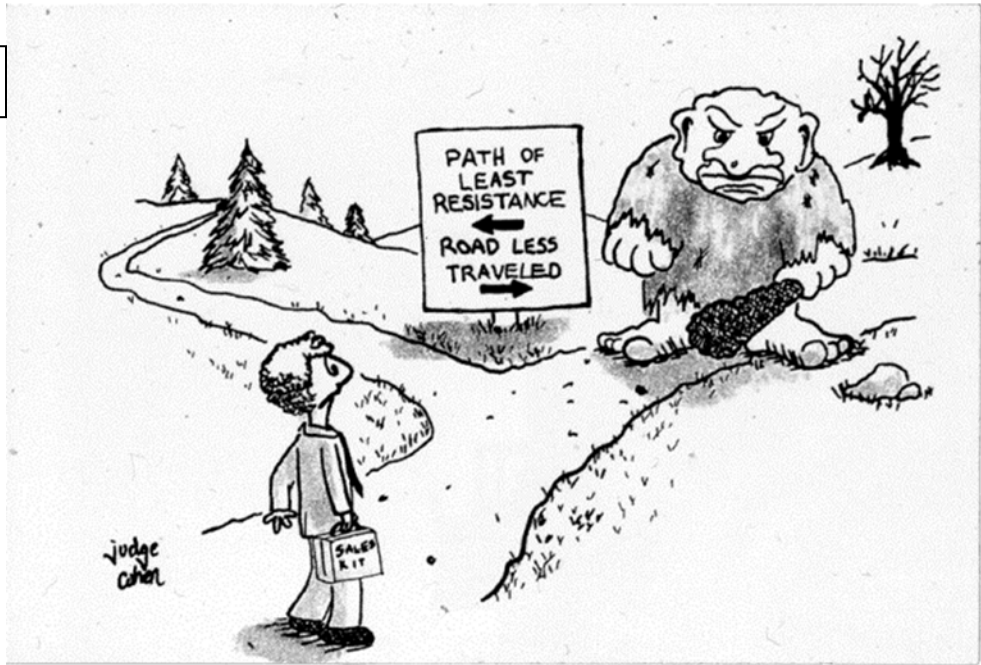
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Texts E and F are cartoons about choice and individuality.

Text E



Text F



Text G is from a monthly magazine called *The Atlantic*, that describes itself as a magazine focusing on "foreign affairs, politics, and the economy [as well as] cultural trends",

Faking It

WHEN TO BE YOURSELF, AND WHEN NOT TO BE

By **Julie Beck**

If the ancient Greek aphorism *gnóthi sautón*—"know thyself"—is any indication, people have been obsessed with being themselves for a very long time. And no wonder: acting like yourself generally goes hand in hand with a sense of well-being—studies have found that people who believe they're behaving authentically are less distressed and have higher self-esteem **[1]**.

The benefits of being yourself seem especially strong in the context of personal relationships: research has shown that feeling inauthentic in one's dealings with other people correlates with symptoms of depression **[2]**. A study of adolescents found the connection between inauthenticity and depressive symptoms to be particularly evident in teens' relationships with their parents **[3]**.

And yet, for certain people, in certain situations, "being yourself" is easier said than done. In some contexts, women have the edge. They report much greater feelings of personal authenticity in their romantic relationships than men do **[4]**, and as teens, they're more likely than boys to say that they can be themselves with their best friends. On the other hand, teen boys report feeling more authentic with their dads than teen girls do—and young men say they feel more authentic around professors than their female classmates do **[5]**.

Men and women are united on at least one thing, however: the feeling that work is alienating. When adults in the United States, England, and Russia were asked how authentic they felt in the presence of various people, work colleagues came in dead last. It makes sense that people would feel more comfortable with loved ones than with colleagues (not that you can't love your co-workers). What's more surprising is that for Americans and Brits, being inauthentic at work didn't significantly impact overall well-being **[6]**. (The Russians were a little more bummed out about it.)

One more wrinkle: psychologists from Wake Forest University found that subjects sometimes reported feeling more authentic when they acted "out of character" during activities in the lab, such as playing Twister or debating medical ethics. Introverts felt "truer to themselves" when they were acting like extroverts; ditto disagreeable people who were acting agreeable, and careless people who were acting conscientiously. The study concluded that, by actively trying to adopt these traits, individuals might be able to "improve their mental health" **[7]**. Curiously, the researchers maintained that subjects who did this—say, introverts who behaved like extroverts—were not "faking it."

Could it be that none of us are who we think we are?

The Studies:

[1] Kernis and Goldman, "[A Multicomponent Conceptualization of Authenticity](#)" (*Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, May 2006)

[2] Tolman and Porche, "[The Adolescent Femininity Ideology Scale](#)" (*Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Dec. 2000)

[3] Theran, "[Authenticity in Relationships and Depressive Symptoms](#)" (*Personality and Individual Differences*, May 2011)

[4] Lopez and Rice, "[Preliminary Development and Validation of a Measure of Relationship Authenticity](#)" (*Journal of Counseling Psychology*, March 2006)

[5] Smolak and Munstertieger, "[The Relationship of Gender and Voice to Depression and Eating Disorders](#)" (*Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Dec. 2002)

[6] Robinson et al., "[Authenticity, Social Context, and Well-Being in the United States, England, and Russia](#)" (*Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Nov. 2012)

[7] Fleeson and Wilt, "[The Relevance of Big-Five Trait Content in Behavior to Subjective Authenticity](#)" (*Journal of Personality*, June 2010)

Text H. The following is from BuzzFeed, a website that calls itself an Internet news site. It was posted on July 26, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. by the following BuzzFeed Staff: Julie Gerstein, Peggy Wang, Katherine Nevitt, Alanna Okun, Anne Helen Petersen, Jessica Probus

What Your Favorite Mall Store Says About You

Express

"I hate to drop this in so early, but B A S I C."

"Express is for women who wear very serious business wear for a somewhat unserious job."

"Express is a place you shop when you are post-breakup and 'getting back out there.'"

"Their editor pants were for people who would never be editors."

"I totally had a pair of editor pants."

Claire's

"You have shoplifted."

"You are shoplifting right now."

"You have an old-school Caboodle."

"You have 10 ear piercings. On each ear."

"You write your letters with a purple pen with a feather poof on top."

"You loved milk pens."

Banana Republic

"You use a lot of evening cream."

"You call pants 'a pant.'"

"You enjoy a good cowl neck."

"The highest compliment to you is 'tasteful.'"

Brookstone

"You have a 'back massager.'"

"You earnestly love life hacks."

"You have a Droid."

"You've bought something special from Skymall."

Sunglass Hut

"You're definitely mysterious."

"Your favorite drinks are daiquiris."

"You probably want to go to Mexico real bad."

"You date a guy with a beeper."

"You are a guy with a beeper."

"You're a beeper."

Gamestop

"You're a teenage boy."

"I hear 'Game Stop' and I may as well just hear 'fap fap.'"

"Case closed."

Dick's Sporting Goods

"Solid. Upstanding. Mad boring."

"Basic, but decent."

Radio Shack

"Dad jeans."

"I would say YOUR DAD, but then, three times a year, this is me because I lose a cord."

"And beepers. Beeper guy is here."

"You are the human equivalent of those things that keep your sunglasses securely around your neck."

"You're a guy who has a cell phone holster."

"You're a 30-year-old guy who puts together remote control helicopters for fun."

"That's literally my dad."

"Fiscal conservatives, social liberals."

Hot Topic

"You're a disgruntled teen."

"Nobody understands you."

"You are Tumblr famous."

"You dated people you met in chat rooms."

"You were once ~kind of~ internet kidnapped."

"Linear relationship between amount of eyeliner worn and amount of Evanescence listened to."

Body Shop

"You're a future yoga enthusiast."

"You actually enjoyed working retail."

"You care about women and the environment, but not so much that you're actually going to make your own beauty products."

"You've been using Mason jars since before Pinterest."

"You talk about 'me time' a lot."

"You love a good chai tea, especially if it's Oprah-approved."

Bath & Body Works

"You make a lot of gift baskets."

"You have products in your bathroom that are 'just for show.'"

"You definitely have a 'signature scent' except it's the signature scent of literally millions of your fellow American human women."

"You like Colbie Caillat."

"You ARE Colbie Caillat."

"You make it your business to regularly view The Notebook."

"People stopped inviting you to birthday parties because you only gave people lotion."

Bebe

"You are playing the Kardashian video game right this minute."

"You are the mistress of an upper-middle-class man."

"All your dresses are bandage."

"You tried vajazzling."

"You sleep in your makeup."

"You have ruched pants."

"You want a guy with a nice ride."

New York & Company.

"Oh, this store is just Express after the apocalypse."

Victoria's Secret

"You're into scrunchies."

"Your room has thick carpet."

"You love vanilla-scented things."

"You make terrible life decisions and then you're like, 'Well, at least I'm OWNING IT.'"

Delia's

"Little shirt, big pants."

"You want blow-up furniture."

"And socks that have little pizzas on them."

"You teach yourself the dances from music videos."

"You are still proportioned like a child."

"You're trying to replicate what it might be like to live inside the internet."

"You're sad you weren't a teen in the '90s."

"You WERE a teen in the '90s."

Hickory Farms

"You love a good cheese log."

"You just like a cheese ball, IDK."

"You love dips."

"Everything is a vehicle for dips to you."

"You like fake farm houses a lot."

Gap

"You probs had an OC marathon w/ your BFFs last night."

"You're still having it."

"You're JUST getting into normcore."

"You are terrified of picking out your outfit every morning."

"You still want to just dress like your mom."

"You'd honestly rather spend your weekends babysitting."

Hollister

"You're a suspiciously tan 16-year-old."

"I always look at a Hollister and am afraid the same way I used to be afraid of the haunted house at the carnival."

"You refer to your friends as your bros. And you girlfriend as 'my girl' or 'bro'."

"If they made graphic tees with collars you could pop, you would buy one."

"One Tree Hill is like soooooooooo the story of your life."

Zumiez

"Deep cut."

"You're a teen boy just discovering his sexuality."

"You spend a lot of time googling free porn."

"You own a T-shirt with the word 'Compton' on it but have no idea where that's geographically located or the sociopolitical history of it."

"Your life goal is to look like Jennifer Love Hewitt in Can't Hardly Wait."

"You wear Vans to middle school gym class bcz ur 2 cool."

"*DID THAT*"

PacSun

"You love roadtrips."

"Most Friendly Award."

"You are Dawn from The Babysitters Club."

Spencer's

"The ratio of novelty tees to regular tees in your closet is off the charts."

"You're working on the pilot for a dramedy."

"But you're writing it in your LiveJournal."

"All your furniture is inflatable."

"You've tried to dismantle a lava lamp before."

Forever 21

"You are either 13 or 31 trying to look 13."

"You live in the moment — that moment being the one right before your polyurethane dress falls apart."

"You wear a ponytail, but the kind where you loop the hair out and just kinda leave it so it's like a little teardrop."

"You don't mind shopping in a place that is disturbing to ALL OF YOUR SENSES AT ONCE."

"You're spiritual but not religious."

"You have caked on makeup that gets on everything you try on outside of the fitting rooms because you're too impatient to wait on the line."

Aeropostale

"You were never popular but you were never NOT popular."

"Like the popular kids let you sit at their table, but you wouldn't necessarily get invited to ride in their cars."

"You had boat shoes."

"You are boat shoes."

"When people ask you what your favorite music is, you're like, 'I dunno, whatever's on the radio.'"

Chicos

"You are Bea Arthur."

"You DGAF and you LOVE IT."

"You love prepping for kaftan season."

"You are everyone's favorite grandma."

"You own jean vests in perfect middle denim."

Eddie Bauer

"You have a center part."

"You like fake camping."

"You are a weekend warrior."

"You think that chinos solve any outfit crisis."

"You have a lot of carabiners and coozies."

"A golf shirt = 'dressed up.'"

"You have one of those stickers on your Suburban with all of your family on it, like little stick figures."

"You think Hawaiian shirts are so zany!"