

## Study Guide – The Philosophy of Personal Identity

Shown below are details about some of the theories we covered on the topic of personal identity. Personal Identity can be defined as what makes us who we are apart from who others around us are. It is about our personality and what shapes it.

With all things in nature and the universe beyond, it is possible to debate about what exactly is it that allows us to call a thing the thing that it is.

In Philosophy, some have argued that all things have essential properties; a guiding principle or necessary condition something needs so that we are able to call it what we call it. For example, is a pen a pen without its ink? Essential properties are a quality a thing must have to meet its name definition.

With human beings, this isn't as easy. What makes you, you?

### Theories of Personal Identity we covered:

- **The Memory Theory**
  - Our memories are the essential property that make us who we are.
- **The Body Theory**
  - The body we have with us for our lives is an essential property to being who we are.
- **The Bundle Theory**
  - No essential properties! There isn't a single thing that makes you who you are. You are a person constantly changing to fit the setting and people you interact with. Some call this the "no-self" view.
- **The Narrative Theory**
  - We form our personalities around "an internal story" that we tell ourselves and which gives us a sense of purpose in life. Our life is like a novel—a tale we tell others to give us a personal direction. It's not about essential properties; ultimately this theory is about your personal experience with the world. It's not meant to be logical in the metaphysics sense.

**Each theory has a problem. On the next page you'll find the arguments we covered against each one.**

## Arguments against each theory:

Shown below are the reasons that are AGAINST each theory.

### Memory Theory

- False memories and Memory Reliability
- Amnesia (Alzheimers, Brain Damage, etc).
- The Breakfast Problem/ Brave Officer Problem/ Logic
- The Psychology Memory; many types of memory (example: Muscle Memory).

### Body Theory

- Teleporter thought experiment (The Bundle Theory's Response).
- Human biological change/the body can change.

### Bundle Theory

- Feeling of Continuity – *"I still feel like me...?"*
- Genetics/ Shared Inheritances.

### Narrative Theory

- Not a metaphysical argument. Identity seems to be "whatever you want it to be". Forget talk of essential/accidental properties. Some might be okay with this isn't cool with traditional Philosophy.