

Joe Bruner  
Who Am I?  
CRWR Non-Fiction I

Some argue that we are our physical bodies, that when we push our bodies to the limits... when we can't run any farther, we can eat any more, we can't keep our eyes open a second longer, that we push ourselves to our limits.

Others say that we are our personality and how we react to the surrounding world. In this case, people are defined by their actions and their choices, their interactions with other people and their perceptions of the world. Identification as personality is non-physical and fully subjective to the individual experience of that person.

Finally there are those who choose to identify through their memories and experiences. Another non-physical approach, this theory relies on the person's memory and that the person is a comprehensive collection of everything they remember doing. Flaws of course include amnesia, alcoholic blackouts and other memory inhibiting effects.

I personally identify as a cross between personality and memory theories. I think our experiences shape us, creating memories that stand out in our mind. In turn, memories and experiences influence the way we make choices, and that you can learn more about a person, the way they think, feel, act (personality) through the choices they make.

Applying this to yourself gives you a better understanding of who you are and where you're going. Some of my significant choices to date have included making 2010 the year I would pursue my Eagle Scout rank, coming up with the funds to travel to Europe over May Term and joining my high school's music department in touring Australia and the Sydney Opera House.

To take the first example, it is easy to cut off the decision to the evening where I was talking to my brother over Skype (he was in college at the time) and decided that I wanted to earn the Eagle Rank by the end of December in 2010. The picture becomes way more complex when you take into account the next 10 months, where I was confronted with a bureaucracy dealing with personnel problems and an overworked Scoutmaster, causing delays that encouraged me to want to put off the conclusion until January or February and make life more relaxed.

Examining my determination in that case to keep pushing forward and not let up on my goal paints a picture to how I approach my goals now. The memory of those frustrations, and the sense of success at the end of that goal influences how strongly I push myself in college.

Looking at my past and my memories (memory theory) reveals the behavior and choices I make (personality theory), which tells someone else how I act now and why, giving a more well-rounded picture of who I am.