

Personal identity. you
are the same person
now as you were ten
years ago

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Firstly, I will show, through describing the limits of acceptable physical change, that bodily continuity alone is not enough to say I am the same person I was a decade ago. Some philosophers, such as Eric Olson, have claimed that the physical body is the basis of the identity (Olson 2003, pp. 337-338). This view claims that as long as one keeps the same body throughout their life, they remain the same person. For example, if someone commits a crime, as long as their body committed the crime, we can punish them for it. Therefore, as I am in the same body as I was ten years ago, I am the same person.

However, there is opposition to the view that our identity refers only to our physical body as our bodies are constantly regenerating so how much of our body must stay the same in order for us to be classed as the same person? An example of this is the Ship of Theseus (Leibniz as cited by Gallois 2016). Many people believe that, at some point, the Ship of Theseus stops being the same ship. I could then also say I am not the same person I was ten years ago, as I have a completely different set of cells. But, with no detectable changes in appearance or attitude how could I prove I am a different person?

Not everyone agrees that our regeneration makes us a different person, believing that the gradual change involved in the previous examples enables them to keep their identity, i. e. the gradual change of the Ship of Theseus.