

# Your Body: Does it Have a Purpose?

## Proxe Station Instructions

**Your Body: Does it Have a Purpose?**

**Stress and Your Body**  
How many all-stallies do you pull per year?  
How many hours of sleep do you get per night, on average?

**Damage to Your Body?**  
Which injury do you think costs the most?  
Cornea blind, Brain Aids, Damaged eye sight, Lung cancer, Bad fracture

**What Would You Change About Your Body?**  
Place a dot on the nose of the body

**Love, Sex, and Your Body**  
What are all of us but soft, reproducing tubes? We have organs and functions for our genes and what we do is, even the world looking for a way to make ourselves and ultimately produce another, related self.  
- Bruce D. Clouston  
Love is just a chemical combination on inside your body.  
- A Facebook post

**Who Has a Legit Claim on Your Body?**  
The poor, My God, My significant other

**What's the Destiny of Your Body?**  
Death, Reincarnation

**Stress and Your Body**  
How many days do you spend sick per year?  
How many cigarettes do you get per year?

**Substances and Your Body**  
Have you ingested any of the following?  
Alcohol, Nicotine, Marijuana, Cocaine, Heroin, Prescription (drugs, pills), Birth control pills, Caffeine, Sugar

**Would You Sell Your Body?**  
A pint of blood, A kidney, A sperm or egg, An eye

**Who Has a Legit Claim on Your Body?**  
My future children, My parents, My country

**What is Your Body?**  
A person: "The soul is a religious principle, spiritual essence, immortal spirit and seat of the body."  
- Plato (Phaedo, 85B)  
"Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you must honor, since you are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you."  
- 1st Corinthians 6:19  
Our bodies are merely chemicals wrapped in skin.

**Your Body, Others' Bodies**  
With which they would you most align?

	STEM 1	STEM 2	STEM 3
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE?	Science	Science & health	Health
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?	Health research	Researcher	Death
WHY IS A HEALTHY BODY SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?	Healthy to lead	UPON & good	Social connection
WHY IS IT OK FOR PEOPLE TO USE YOUR BODY?	Not really	After death	Always

### Purpose:

The proxe station serves the purpose of engaging people evangelistically on the topic of the human body.

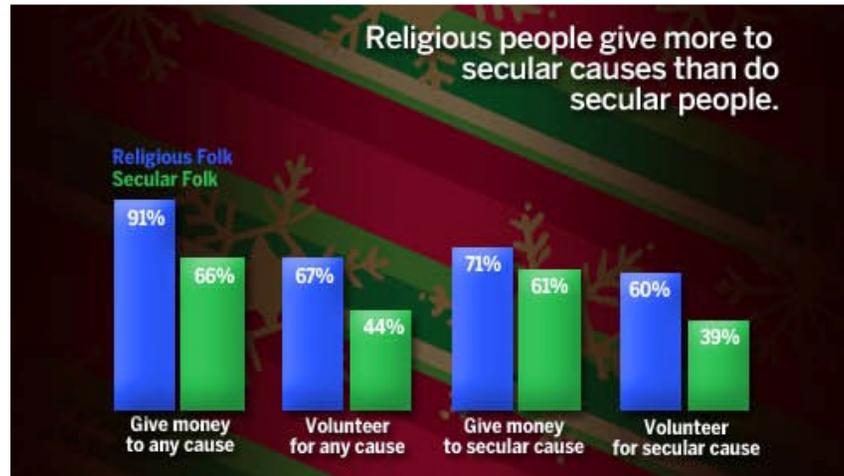
### Starting Personally:

1. What slides interested you the most?
2. How does the way you treat your body reflect what you think about the purpose of your body?
3. What do you think about your body's destiny (column 6, row 2)? How does that affect what you do with your body now?

### The Big Picture Conversations

1. *The Consistency Question:* Some people think that our bodies are just chemicals, so they don't matter (death is the end). Humans and animals are on the same level of importance. But if you want sex to matter (and maybe you want marriage to matter, too), how do you do that if your body really doesn't matter? If you want to believe that caring for the poor matters, how can you say that if their bodies are just chemicals wrapped in skin? If your body doesn't really matter, and if other people's bodies don't really matter, then why does sex matter, and why care for the poor?
  - a. 'Can't Hindus care for the poor? What about Gandhi?' How do we explain that? Actually, Gandhi fought for national independence from the British, which is an aspect of 'social justice' but not the whole thing. He became a soft Hindu nationalist. Later in his life, he fasted to preserve the Hindu caste system, even though his political rival Ambedkar denounced it and called out to abolish it. Gandhi was from a high caste, and Ambedkar was from a low caste. Gandhi also opposed other religions: he persecuted Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims. When Indian Christian V.S. Azariah helped thousands of dalits (untouchables) become Christians, offering Gandhi a sincere, non-Western witness to Jesus, Gandhi denounced it (see Susan Billington Harper, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*). His variation on Tolstoy's Christian non-violent resistance model involved telling the poor they should stay poor. So Gandhi wasn't a nice guy in the latter part of his life. The Greeks did not care for their poor. The Hindus have a terrifying caste system with millions of poor. Ever seen *Slumdog Millionaire*?

- b. 'Are you saying that Hindus think sex and marriage are neutral to bad? Who would say that those things are bad?' Well, Gandhi did. He stopped having sex with his wife in his later life because of his view of the body. The Greek Stoics also viewed sex and marriage as dirty, evil things. The Greek Epicureans went the other direction and said that you could have sex with whoever you want. So in their case, sex and marriage were neutral. But that was also rooted in the view that the body didn't matter.
- c. 'Are you saying that atheists don't care for the poor?' What I'm saying is that if atheists do care for the poor, they don't have an underlying reason to do it. And, here are a few things to consider:
  - i. Religious people give more to secular causes than secular people (source: Charity Navigator, National Center for Charitable Statistics, The Center on Philanthropy, [www.mint.com/blog](http://www.mint.com/blog), [www.wallstats.com](http://www.wallstats.com)). Since this is a study about U.S. philanthropy, it's fair to assume that 'religious people' predominantly means 'Christian.'



- ii. Only relatively recently have atheists cared for the poor in a general sense.
  1. Consider 'Social Darwinism' (a term that appeared in 1877 by sociologists opposed to the concept): Darwin himself said, 'Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed. The aid which we feel impelled to give to the helpless is mainly an incidental result of the instinct of sympathy, which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts, but subsequently rendered, in the manner previously indicated, more tender and more widely diffused. Nor could we check our sympathy, even at the urging of hard reason, without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature. The surgeon may harden himself whilst performing an operation, for he knows that he is acting for the good of his patient; but if we were intentionally to neglect the weak and helpless, it could only be for a contingent benefit, with an overwhelming present evil. ... We must therefore bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviving and propagating their kind; but there appears to be at least one check in steady action, namely that the weaker and inferior members of society do not marry so freely as the sound; and this check might be indefinitely increased by the weak in body or mind refraining from marriage, though this is more to be hoped for than expected.' (*The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 1882, p.134) Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton, in 1865 and 1869, 'argued that just as physical traits were clearly inherited among generations of people, so could be said for mental qualities (genius and talent). Galton argued that social morals needed to change so that heredity was a conscious decision, in order to avoid over-breeding by less fit members of society and the under-breeding of the more fit ones. In Galton's view, social institutions such as welfare and insane asylums were allowing inferior humans to survive and reproduce at levels faster than the more "superior" humans in respectable society, and if corrections were not soon taken, society would be awash with 'inferiors.'" ('Social Darwinism,' Wikipedia).
  2. Consider the Eugenics Movement, which was started by Francis Galton. Eugenics was the idea that hereditary traits could and should be intentionally bred through selective human mating. Galton said, 'I propose to show in this book that a man's natural abilities are derived by

inheritance, under exactly the same limitations as are the form and physical features of the whole organic world. Consequently, as it is easy, notwithstanding those limitations, to obtain by careful selection a permanent breed of dogs or horses gifted with peculiar powers of running, or of doing anything else, so it would be quite practicable to produce a highly-gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several consecutive generations.' (*Hereditary Genius*, p.1) During the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, eugenics was practiced around the world, and promoted by governments, through: genetic screening, birth control, promoting differential birth rates, marriage restrictions, segregation (both racial segregation as well as segregation of the mentally ill from the rest of the population), compulsory sterilization, forced abortions or forced pregnancies and genocide. British Christian journalist G. K. Chesterton was an early critic of the philosophy of eugenics, expressing this opinion in his book, *Eugenics and Other Evils* (1917). Nevertheless, eugenics became an academic discipline at many colleges and universities, and received funding from many sources. This movement was hugely popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and quickly died out after World War II after the realization that Adolf Hitler had been a major proponent of it. Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan developed ideas of racial hygiene, human experimentation, and the extermination of 'unwanted' people groups.

- d. If people bring up Christian sexuality (heterosexual, monogamous, lifelong) being arbitrary, just raise the larger question: 'The larger question is, if there is a God who created us and has a purpose for our bodies and for our relationships, what if He has a particular vision for human relationships?'
2. *The Personal Rights Question*: 'Are you telling me how to use my own body?' People usually object to the Christian idea that 'your body is a Temple of the Spirit of God, and you are not your own.' The objection is raised on the grounds that it is invasive. 'How can someone else, even God, and especially other Christians, tell us what to do with our bodies?' Yet most people would acknowledge that other people have a legitimate claim on our bodies. When we think about it, though, our bodies are clearly NOT just our own. The slides on 'Who has a legit claim to your body' will probably show that. The scenarios below show how we today acknowledge that your body is not just *your* body.
    - a. (1) The first scenario: *A married couple regularly gets into a fight. She tells him to exercise more. He tells her to take more calcium. They say, 'Why are you telling me what to do with my body?'* This has some reality. My wife and I are tied to each other's bodies. She tells me to exercise, and I tell her to make sure she's getting enough calcium. Why? What gives us the right to tell each other what to do with our personal bodies? The fact that we'll have to care for each other when we get older. It really matters to her that I stay healthy, especially since her dad had a heart attack just a couple of years before we were married. It really matters to me that she gets enough calcium because women are at risk for osteoporosis. Because we are going to care for each other, she has a say in what I do with my body, and I have a say in what she does with hers.
    - b. (2) Second, let me take that up a notch. *A wife who feels uncomfortable that her husband watches pornography and masturbates to it. He says, 'Look, it's my body.'* Imagine a woman who catches her husband watching pornography. She feels betrayed. But why? Isn't that just him using his own eyes? Do his eyes belong to her? If we're going on the superficial assumptions of our culture, then the answer is no. She doesn't own his eyes so her feelings are invalid and there is nothing she can say. And yet something about that doesn't quite feel right, does it? What if he masturbates to pictures of other women, is there something wrong with that? Isn't his penis his own? Does it somehow belong to her? Or take it a step further. What's wrong exactly with Tiger Woods cheating on Elin Nordgren? Or Jesse James cheating on Sandra Bullock? Tiger's body is his body, isn't it? Jesse's body is his body, isn't it? As long as they're not catching some disease? But something about that doesn't quite feel right, does it? There is a sense in which a husband's eyes, a husband's penis, and even his mind actually belong in a secondary sense to his wife. Marriage creates a bond where their bodies belong to each other in an appropriate way. Something in us tells us that. But how can we explain that?
    - c. (3) *One day, a 55 year old immigrant woman who cleans other people's houses, is sexually harassed. One of her employers, an older man, fondles her breast. The woman comes home and tells her son, a 25 year old young man. Feeling angry and protective over his mom's body, he decides to confront this older man.* This is based on reality. When my mom, who does domestic work cleaning rich people's condominiums, told me that one of the older men she worked for grabbed her breast, I was incensed. If I was living in Los Angeles near my mom, I would have gone to have a few choice words with that old pervert. Clearly, there is something about my mom's body that I take responsibility for, which I defend. It is *her* body, yes, no question, and yet *I* am tied to her body, too. I feel the same way about the bodies of my sister, my wife, my daughter, and my female friends. Why do men take responsibility for the bodies of the women in their lives? I'm willing to bet that every man has felt that way. But why? How do we explain that?
    - d. (4) Fourth, consider abortion, that hot button issue. *Two young women have unwanted pregnancies. One gives birth to her baby and throws the baby into the dorm room toilet. The other has a late term abortion at 7.5 months.* Some people, and perhaps you think this way, believe that abortion should be okay under any circumstances, during any part of the pregnancy. The rationale is, 'My body, my choice.' But do you think it's wrong for a woman to flush her newborn baby down the toilet? You probably do think it's wrong. Incidentally, according to one estimate, 30,000 babies are abandoned every year in the U.S. But if it's wrong to kill a newborn baby, then is it wrong to kill that baby 1 week before it's born? What difference does 1 week make exactly? What difference does it

make whether that baby is inside or outside the mother's womb? I understand that these questions are hard to answer, but that's why I raise them. Perhaps there are legitimate circumstances to get an abortion, but I don't think it's as simple as saying, 'My body, my choice.'

- e. (5) And then there the responsibilities parents owe their children with their bodies. *Two couples with newborns are handed a short booklet about how infants need loving, physical touch for their brains and body to develop well. (Touch helps develop the brain's emotional wiring, increases the baby's heart and lung strength, and helps the baby's digestion.) One couple reads it; they make concrete changes to how they care for their baby. The other couple throws it away and does nothing differently; they are definitely less affectionate towards their baby than the first couple.* There's something wrong with that second couple. Children need touch and love in order to develop. It's fairly well known now that breast feeding has more benefits to the baby than bottle, that affection helps brains and bodies develop. It's funny that in the Bay Area, in liberal Berkeley, one blogger said that people come out and tell other people what to do. You should get a better children's bike helmet. You shouldn't mess with the animals. You shouldn't litter. (*In Bay Area, Free Speech Means Scolding Strangers*, by Michelle Quinn, <http://bayarea.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/03/the-societal-police-take-on-insect-displays/>)
  - f. (6) You go from the U.S. to another country on a vacation. In a crowded restaurant, you ask a couple sitting next to you if they would put out their cigarettes because you're affected by the smoke. They look at you in disbelief. They say, 'Smoking is legal here. Why don't you Americans stop telling the rest of the world what to do?' Well, that's certainly a culture clash, isn't it?
  - g. (7) Seventh, consider the connections in families. *A 22 year old young man is about to graduate from college. He is killed by a random shooter. His hard working parents are 55 and 60 years old and were hoping to afford their retirement with help from their son.* That child was obviously the parents' beloved child. But let's also say that that child was their retirement plan. They scrimped and saved all their lives for that child to make it through school, have those opportunities, go to college, and get a respectable job. That child was about to enter the working world and help his parents. The person who fired that bullet has robbed them. The son's body was not just his own. And what about friendships? If that person was a friend of yours, you are also robbed. Perhaps not as deeply as his parents, but you are robbed nonetheless. We miss their smiles and hugs. Our friends hold our hand and hold us up. We are invested in their bodies.
  - h. (8) Eighth, consider the military draft. *The U.S. government imposes a military draft, telling young men and women what to do with their bodies.* The government can call up able-bodied men and women into the armed services through the draft. The government can tell you to kill and die – to do things with your body that you probably would not do otherwise. A few people would say no to the draft, but some would say yes for the right cause. But, in any case, when those same men and women come back with a limb missing, or their nerves shattered from post-traumatic stress, do we have an obligation to their bodies? Do we have a responsibility to care for them? I think we would all say yes to that. We are invested in their bodies, because they risked their bodies for us.
  - i. (9) *A veteran of the Iraq War returns home with a leg missing. One war protester points at him and says, 'I don't want my tax dollars going to support him!'* I think most of us would say that the veteran's body exerts a claim on our bodies. When veterans come back with shattered nerves or broken bodies, we feel a claim on our bodies. Because of their sacrifice, even if we disagreed with the Iraq War, we make a sacrifice: in paying taxes to support their recovery.
  - j. *So how is it possible to keep saying that you are the only owner of your body when in reality, we don't live like that at all?* When we think about loving others, when we think about our duty to them, when we think about our commitments to people, when we think about our most important relationships, we are not the only people who have a claim to our own bodies. Other people do, too. That is clear. So is it so unreasonable to say that Jesus makes a claim on our bodies, too?
  - k. *Finally, in the same way that I would be concerned for level of stress and damage you put on your body because of what your life will be like later, I am concerned that if we are all going to be resurrected, that there are things that you can do now to your body that will affect what your life will be like later.*
3. *The Resurrection Question:* Some people will ask, 'Why do you think that you/we will be resurrected?'
- a. Some Christians believe that our end goal is for our souls to fly off to heaven. They haven't put together the teaching of resurrection: first Jesus was raised, then we will be raised. See 1 Corinthians 15.
  - b. Some Jews and Muslims acknowledge resurrection. For them, we can ask the question, 'Have you considered that Jesus' resurrection is needed first to bring about a cleansed, healed, and transformed human nature? You acknowledge in your texts that human nature has become corrupted and unclean. How can you resolve that problem in yourself?'
  - c. Some people will ask about Jesus' resurrection.
    - i. The meaning of Jesus' resurrection: It's important because he emerged from death as a new kind of human being. During his birth, life, and death, he was struggling victoriously against the corruption of sin in the human nature that he had taken on. He put the corrupted human nature to death by dying on the cross. In his resurrection, he emerged as a cleansed, purified, transformed, and healed human being – a radically new human being. Ask, 'Do you believe that human nature itself needs to be healed and transformed?'

- ii. The historicity of Jesus' resurrection: See the proxe on *Is Religion Just a Cultural Thing?* for more guidance on this. Perhaps have the brochure version of that proxe station in your pocket. Look at these two slides in particular:

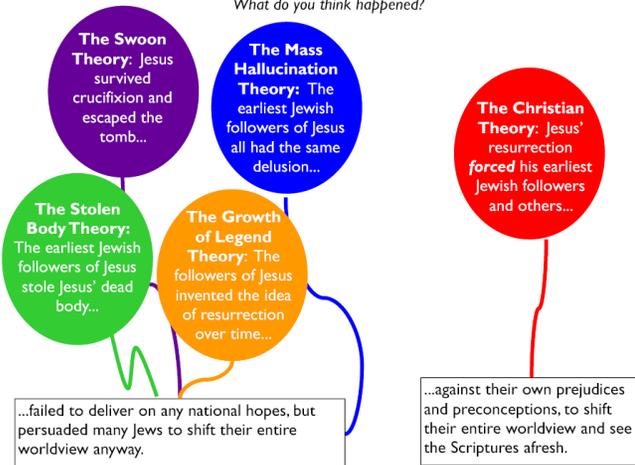
### A HUMAN INVENTION?

*The period 163 BCE – 135 CE was filled with military, revolutionary movements as Jews struggled against Greek, then Roman oppression. For 300 years, the uniform view was: the Jewish Messiah would oust the foreigners and recapture Jerusalem. Below is a greatly shortened list of such movements:*

163 BCE Judas Maccabeus recaptures Jerusalem, cleanses the Temple, and sets a pattern	40 BCE Hezekiah leads skirmishes, revolts	3 BCE Judas leads a revolt	6 CE Judas the Galilean leads a Jewish independence movement	28 CE Pilate puts down a revolt in Jerusalem	40's CE Jacob and Simon, sons of Judas, lead a rebellion	66 CE Menahem, son or grandson of Judas, seized the Temple and burned the records	67-70 CE John of Gischala leads revolts in the Jewish-Roman War	130 CE Bar-Kochba leads the Jewish rebellion
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### JESUS' RESURRECTION: A JEWISH INVENTION?

What do you think happened?



- d. For help with answering the questions related to hell, read Mako's document on *Hell and the Justice of the Triune God* beforehand.