

## **They Say**

James Lynn Smith

(4-4.5 min)

1 Jack

2 Doctor June

1 They say, “Change your mind, you change your life.” Positive thinking experts are certain about this. Also scientists say your mind is inside your brain.

Strange, because when I see a red rose out there, it doesn’t feel like a neural surge inside my head. Seems my mind is where the rose is.

Nevertheless, they say brain and mind are a package. So I started looking for a mind-changing expert in the on-line Yellow Pages, but all I found were neurosurgeons. I called, saying I needed to replace my errant brain. They were indignant and suggested I was not well.

Weeks later I found the right doctor.

2 Haaayy.

1 June Shapiro, DMR graduated from the on-line Esoteric Institute of Mind Replacement Arts.

2 Training takes a full weekend and fees are remitted through PayPal.

1 I understood nothing the site said about energy medians, chakras, or surgery.

2 My assistant and I assured him of the validity.

1 Plausible, I concluded, because that’s what they said...The doctor sat me in something like a barber’s chair.

2 My male assistant shaved his head and drew a circle around it barely above his ears.

1 Soon I had misgivings. “Where do you put my old brain?”

2 “It goes in that jar, the one half-filled with fluid.”

1 “If my mind is in my brain and it goes into the jar, where will *I* be?”

2 (Impatiently) “Why presume *you* are in the mind inside your brain? That’s pseudo-medical nonsense. The mind is just a tool. We’ll give you a better one.”

1 I began to doubt my decision to be here and became desperate. “But where is the *me* part of my mind?”

2 “The basic *you* is your individual awareness. It’s *not* thoughts, sensations or memory. But it’s what is *aware* of these things. Simpler to call it your *soul*. I perform a brainectomy, leaving the soul intact. Then a new brain is sutured to your soul fibers.”

1 “Of course, I see. Thank you, that really puts me...at *ease*?” I saw her grin.

2 “You’ll have new ideas, new mental history and still be you. Conventional doctors don’t understand this. MDs are simple mechanics who fix breakdowns in slushy matter.”

1 She motioned to her assistant. He placed an electric saber saw, drill and hammer on a nearby tray. I wondered if the hammer was their knockout drug.

2 “Now relax while we administer a mild sedative.”

1 I broke into a sweat and wondered about the brain I would receive. Did it accidentally have another person’s soul attached? It might get strange if two souls occupied the same mind. Would they ever know, or would it be like two popcorn eaters in a dark theater, looking at the same movie and not knowing about the other?

But there could be conflict if souls had some memory and urges in *addition* to those in the *brain's* mind...I might want to move my foot but my hand jerks because the other soul wants something different. I would never know why.

The doctor brought the anesthesia mask to my nose, looked at her assistant and nodded toward the hammer.

2     “May need backup.” (loud whisper)

1     I bolted from the chair, pushing the mask away before taking a breath. “Sorry, I’m leaving.” She was stunned.

2     “What? No replacement?”

1     “I’ve changed my mind. I’ll work to improve what I have.”

Determined, I walked out onto a street flooded with sunlight.

Yes, I changed my mind...finally. And it changed my life. Just like they say.

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