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**RECONSTRUCTIONIST CONGREGATION BETH EMETH
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JUST FORGET ABOUT IT

Elliot Skiddell

In the film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, the character played by Jim Carrey has his memory “erased” after a bad break-up with his girlfriend, played by Kate Winslet. The erasure procedure is carried out by a company called Lacuna, Inc., whose chief scientist has developed a process for wiping out a person’s unwanted memories. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to erase our bad memories and go happily about our lives, our minds filled only with good memories? We all have experienced that feeling of having done something that we would like to just forget and there is indeed a medical phenomenon known as Lacunar Amnesia in which a specific event cannot be remembered because of a *lacuna*, a gap, in one’s memory. However, the procedure carried out in the film is the product of the screenwriter’s fertile imagination. Memories, even of unpleasant moments in our lives, serve an important purpose. They can warn us when we are about to repeat the behavior that led to the unpleasant moment we would rather forget and help us avoid making the same mistake over again. This idea is summed up in the well known aphorism of the philosopher George Santayana, “*Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*” Remembering our faults and our mistakes is one of the most effective mechanisms we have for self-improvement. When we take the time to reflect on our human capacity for error, we strengthen our ability to grow and change for the better. Rather than seek a procedure for erasing our unpleasant memories, we should reflect on them and learn from them in order to create even more good memories as life unfolds.

Elliot Skiddell is rabbi of Reconstructionist Congregation Beth Emeth, located at 36 Franklin Ave. in Hewlett. Friday Evening Services begin at 8:00 PM. Saturday morning services at 9:30 AM. Please join us!

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On Wednesday October 1, the Second Day of Rosh HaShanah, a Family Service, open to the community without charge, will be held at 12 noon.

High Holiday tickets are available; for information, please call 374-9220.