

“Arrogance and Imperfections”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

A Rabbi is speaking with a Doctor, who says, “You know Rabbi, I often treat patients without asking them to pay.” The Rabbi responds, “I do that too.” The Doctor, perplexed, persists: “You know, I often write prescriptions and cover the cost myself.” The Rabbi muses, “Yes, I do that too.” The Doctor, frustrated, says “I even do surgery and forgo my normal fee!” The Rabbi nods, and says, “Yes, I do that too.”

“Wait a minute,” exclaims the Doctor. “You aren’t a Doctor — you don’t write prescriptions, do surgery and examine patients!” The Rabbi is startled “Oh no, I didn’t mean that. I just meant yes, I say good things about myself too.”

When I conduct job interviews and ask people to name a fault, they often answer with a disguised merit: “Well, I can’t stand it if things aren’t perfect.” But we all have real flaws, actual wounds, genuine deficiencies that are hard to admit. If we present perfection we can never be loved, because no one will know who we are. Our disfigurements and imperfections are part of us. They need not be all we show, or the first thing we show, but to deny them is to hide from ourselves and from each other. God exists; the job description for perfection is already filled. What a relief.