

Making Myself Known: An Exercise in External Identification

In Rabbinic tradition two separate commentaries suggest that the Jews were redeemed from slavery in Egypt because of four identifying practices. The Chatam Sofer, an 18th Century commentator singled out only three on the list: They called their children Hebrew names, wore traditional clothes, and spoke their native language.

What is so significant about these three features? What is it about these three things that are crucial for maintaining Jewish survival?

One explanation is that these are all changeable features, but the Jews chose to preserve them. They could have assimilated by changing their appearance and speaking Egyptian, but they chose to stick with these external signifiers that indicate to anyone that they are Jewish.

In this exercise, analyze if and how your name, appearance, and communication style reflect where you come from, what you stand for and who you are. As these are all changeable to a degree, to what extent do you choose to preserve them? What other features would you choose to best reflect yourself?

After completing the exercises on the following pages, return to this final prompt: **As you think about how your inheritance and tradition define you, what do you choose to preserve? What other identifiable features have you chosen to hold onto that express your identity to others?**

What's in A Name?

Parents/guardians carry the tremendous responsibility to name their children. Whether a name is chosen to carry on the legacy of a loved one, to capture a moment in time, or to serve as a blessed metaphor for a good life, names carry significance. This is a great opportunity to capture the story of your name and investigate its significance, so interview anybody who may have new information or insight.

Naming Certificate

Legal Name:

Nickname:

How do you introduce yourself to others?

What is the story of your name?



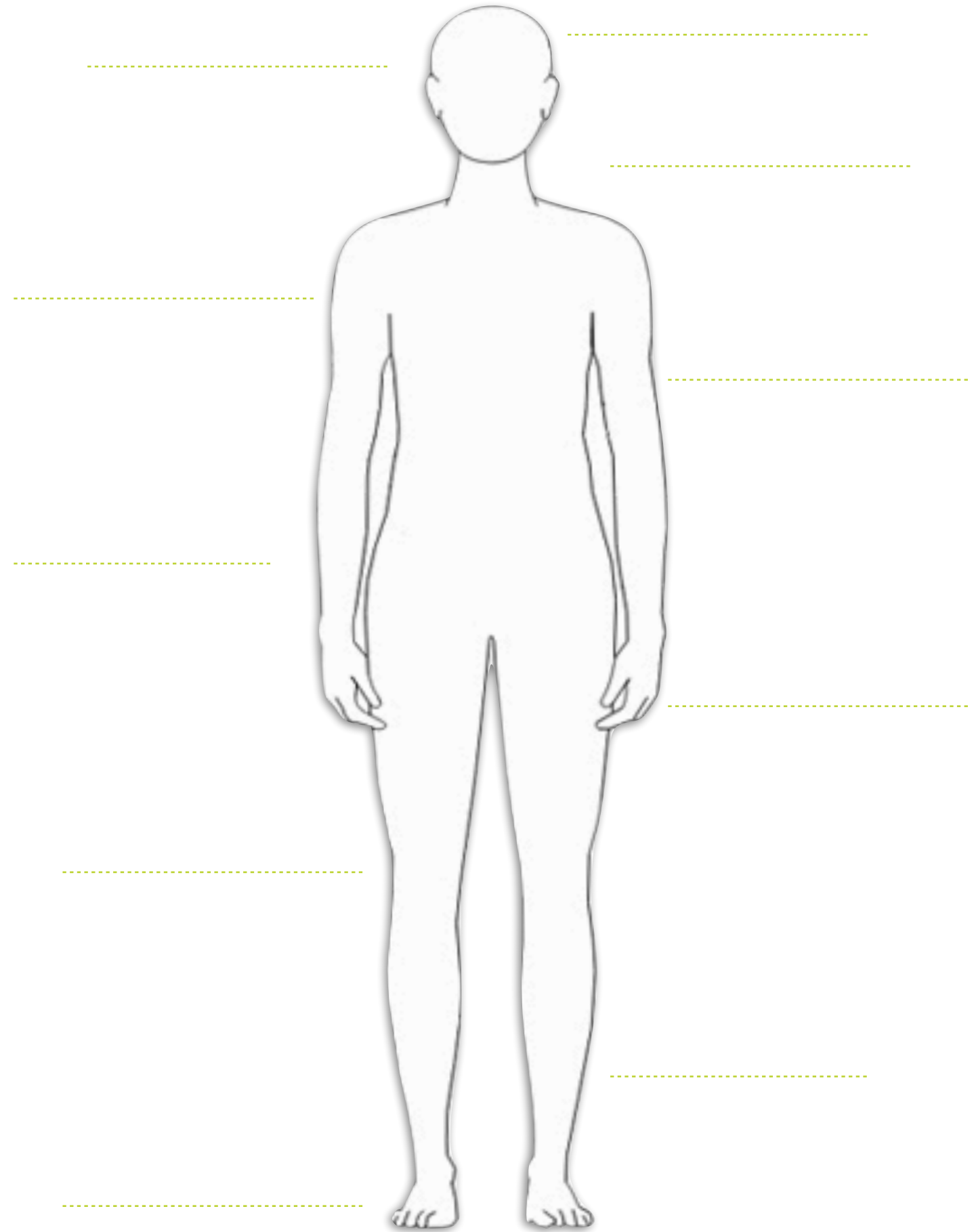
Appearance

One of the most discernible ways that we present ourselves is through appearance, including our choice in clothing, hairstyle, makeup, fragrances and jewelry, among others. **To an outsider, the way that you express yourself portrays a snapshot of who you are, in the way that you want to be seen.**

What about your style have you inherited, both literally and figuratively? Who are your influencers? What does your appearance convey about who you are?

On this figure, draw the core features that capture how you present yourself.

In this space, offer an explanation of what message you send through your appearance.

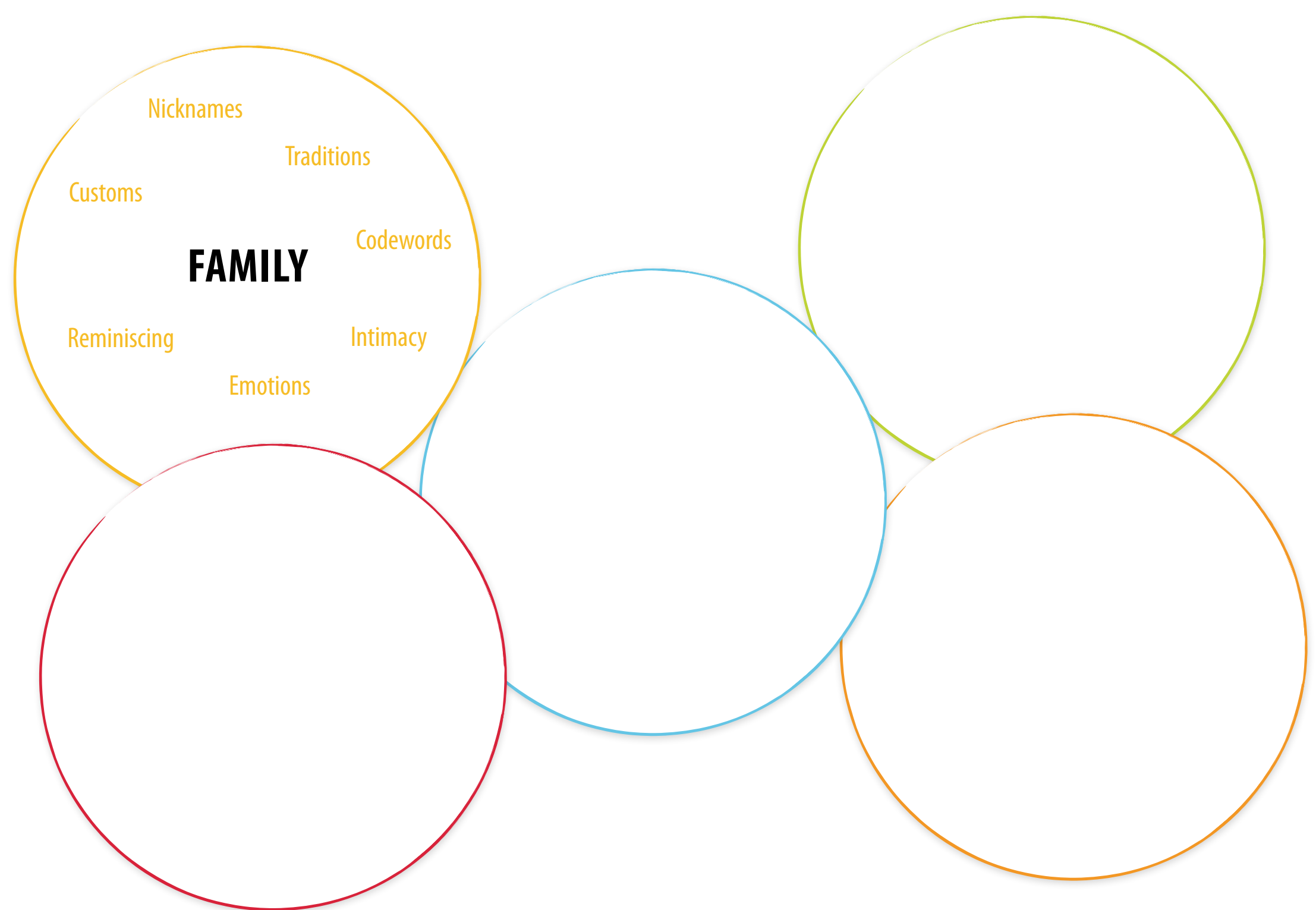


Language

Both verbal and body language define our circles of belonging, as the way we communicate with others changes based on circumstance. Close friends share inside jokes, families share stories of the past, geographic communities speak the same dialect and religious groups often speak about tradition. And some circles are defined by the premeditated caution that is taken in being careful about what is said.

We are each part of multiple circles, and language becomes a defining feature.

Map out 4 circles that you belong to and identify how language is particular to that group.



In this space, focus on one circle and consider how that language defines that group, to both insiders and outsiders.