The Knowns Not Known
Rabbi Dan Moskovitz – September 20, 2014

1. Donald Rumsfeld, the US Sec Def during the 9/11 famously said: "As we know, there are known knowns; there are things that we know that we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know."

2. Rabbi David Wolpe points out that there is one category that is missing from Rumsfeld's List. As great Jewish teachers of teshuva have taught for generations, there are also **knowns that we choose not to know**.
    a. Maybe I have a temper that wounds those around me. But if you ask me I will tell you I am calm, even though on some level I realize that it is not true.
    b. Maybe I have a compulsion that has a power over me I can't control, but I will go through any length to hide it from myself and others.
    c. Maybe I have a power and attention that can suck the air out of a room but if you ask me I think I'm the greatest friend, partner, parent in the world.

3. Part of teshuva is bringing to awareness flaws we would rather not face. They exist, and when pushed we recognize it, but too often choose to keep our knowledge beneath the level of awareness.

4. During Elul, and particularly these last few days before Rosh Hashanah we seek to explore our character honestly through prayer, dialogue and introspection. Faults come out of hiding; we look at ourselves without evasion or pretense. The beginning of change is to **know** what we know. We have 15 day till we must stand before God and make a final accounting for who we are and have been this past year. Now is the time, get to know yourself.