

NOTICE YOUR HAND EXERCISE

Adapted from Russ Harris

Set aside a few minutes to do this experiential exercise. As you read it, DO the observations it recommends. It'll take a minute because you have to read the instruction, and then focus on observing. Read the next instruction, then focus on observing again. But it's worth the effort here. Then be honest in your reflection questions at the end. Ready? Let's notice our hands!

WHAT CAN YOU NOTICE?

In a moment, I'm going to ask you to notice your hand. And I mean really notice it, as if you've never seen one before. And I'm going to ask you to look at it for 5 minutes. But before we do that, what's your mind predicting about the next 5 minutes?

Okay, so let's check it out and see if that's the case.

I invite you to get into a comfortable position. And just turn one of your hands palm upward, and hold it a comfortable distance from your face. And tap into a sense of curiosity. For the next few minutes, the aim is to observe your hand as if you're a curious child who has never seen a hand before.

Let's start with the shape of it. Mentally trace the outline of your hand, starting at the base of the thumb, and tracing around all the fingers...and notice the shapes of the spaces in between the fingers...and notice where your hand tapers in at the wrist.

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And now, notice the color of your skin... notice it's not just one color... there are different tones and shades, and dappled areas... and ever so slowly, stretch your fingers out, and push them as far back as they will go, and notice how the color changes in your skin... and then slowly release the tension, and notice how the color returns... and do that once more, ever so slowly, noticing the color disappear... and then return...

And now, notice the large lines in your palm... notice the shapes they make where they come together or diverge or intersect... and zoom in on one of those lines and notice how there are many smaller lines feeding into it and branching out of it...

And now shift your attention to one of your fingertips... and notice the spiral pattern there... the pattern that you always see on fingerprints... and notice how the pattern doesn't stop in your fingertip... it carries on down your finger... and trace it right on down and notice how it continues into your palm...

And now, ever so slowly, bring your little finger toward your thumb... and notice how the flesh in your palm scrunched up... and now slowly release... and notice the flesh resumes its normal contours...

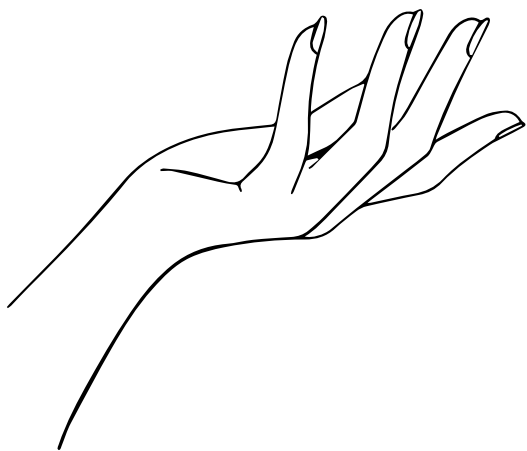
And now turn your hand to the karate chop position... and notice the difference between the skin on the palm and the skin on the back... and look at your index finger, and notice there's a sort of dividing line, where those two types of skin meet each other...

And ever so slowly, turn your hand over... and notice the skin on the back... and notice any criticisms or judgments your mind makes... notice any scars, sunspots, blemishes... and notice the different colors in the skin... where it passes over a vein... or over your knuckles...

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And ever so slowly, curl your hand into a gentle fist... and notice notice how the texture of your skin changes... and notice any comments your mind makes about that... and focus in on your knuckles... and gently rotate your fist, and notice the contours and valleys of your knuckles...

And now tighten your fist, and notice what happens to the knuckles... to their color and their prominence... and then ever so slowly open your hand up, straighten your fingers, and notice how your knuckles just disappear...



And now bring your attention to one of your fingernails... and notice the texture of the nail... and the different shades of color... and notice where it disappears under the skin... and the cuticle that seals it in there... and now ever so slowly, ever so gently, wiggle your fingers up and down... and notice the tendons moving under the skin...pumping up and down like pistons and rods...

And that brings us to the end of _____ minutes.

NOTICE YOUR HAND EXERCISE REFLECTIONS



What did you discover about your hand that was new or interesting?

Did your attitude toward your hand change in any positive way?

Did you get hooked by any negative judgments about your hand? If so, how did it affect your attitude?

When was the last time you noticed something specific about your child?

What would happen if you looked at your child for a few minutes the way you did your hand today?



NOTICE YOUR HAND APPLICATION

Next time you are feeling stressed, anxious, or otherwise caught up in your head, would you be willing to really engage in whatever it is you're doing, like you just did with your hand, and notice what happens?