

## CHECKS AGAINST THE BARNUM EFFECT



By Lloyd Hamilton

Because we, as palmists, spend much of our time telling people things about them that are positive it is easy for them to believe we are right in our pronouncements. People like to believe good things about themselves. This can give us a false confidence in our readings. How can we be sure that our readings are valid and not just a pile of statements that people would like to believe? Palmistry indices can solve this.

The Barnum Effect is the tendency for people to accept very general or vague characterisations of themselves, and take them to be accurate. This phenomenon is named after P.T. Barnum, who believed that a good circus had "a little something for everybody." Even though the descriptive terms used in the readings can apply equally well to other people, some individuals are gullible enough to believe these are unique to themselves. Of course, this can easily happen with palm reading, crystal ball gazing and other forms of divination.

One way to overcome the Barnum Effect is to compare the palms of two or more people and show that one has a greater degree of a certain trait than the other has. When comparing ranges of personality traits among people the Barnum Effect does not apply. For example, if we say that Joe is more fanciful than Bill, Joe may feel less inclined to believe it whereas Bill might be happier with the finding, but over a number of traits Bill and Joe might feel that they are not being flattered and they are likely to see that the readings are genuine and realistic. The following indices can be used for demonstrating the validity of palmistry with a group of clients.

INDEX

RANGE

Palm length

degree of emotional volatility

Finger length

degree of thought processing

### Heart line

start high to low	degree of intensity of feeling
straight to curved	degree of passion versus idealistic emotion
length	degree of trust and emotional attachment

### Head line

degree of tie to life line	degree of caution and sensitivity
curvature	degree of linear to creative thinking
length	degree of concentrated thinking
high to low ending	degree of fanciful to practical thinking
proximity to heart line	degree of separation of feeling and thinking

### Life Line

start thumb or index finger	degree of ambition
breadth across palm	degree of energy and vitality

### Fate line

proximity to life line	degree independence from parents
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### Apollo line

length	degree of time being happy with arts
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### Fingerprints

high set to low set loops	degree of idealistic thinking
high set to low set whorls	degree of idealistic individualism ?
high set to low set arches	degree of skilfulness

### Jupiter tri-radius

to left or right	degree of risk taking
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### Fingers

Lengths

- Jupiter	degree of ego
- Saturn	degree of seriousness
- Apollo	degree of artistic appreciation
- Mercury	degree of communication
Jupiter/Apollo	degree of testosterone/oestrogen
<b>Thumb</b>	
length	degree of executive will power
width	degree of resistant will power
second/nail phalange	degree of thinking to action
wedged-ness	degree of diplomacy
stiffness	degree of obstinacy
opening	degree of uncertainty to confidence
rotation	degree of sway-ability
Campbell's A/V hands	degree of pent-up energy to exhaustion
<b>Nails</b>	
length	critical to accepting

Using these indices the differences between people can be shown in a way that is not flattering but hopefully is still acceptable to the clients.