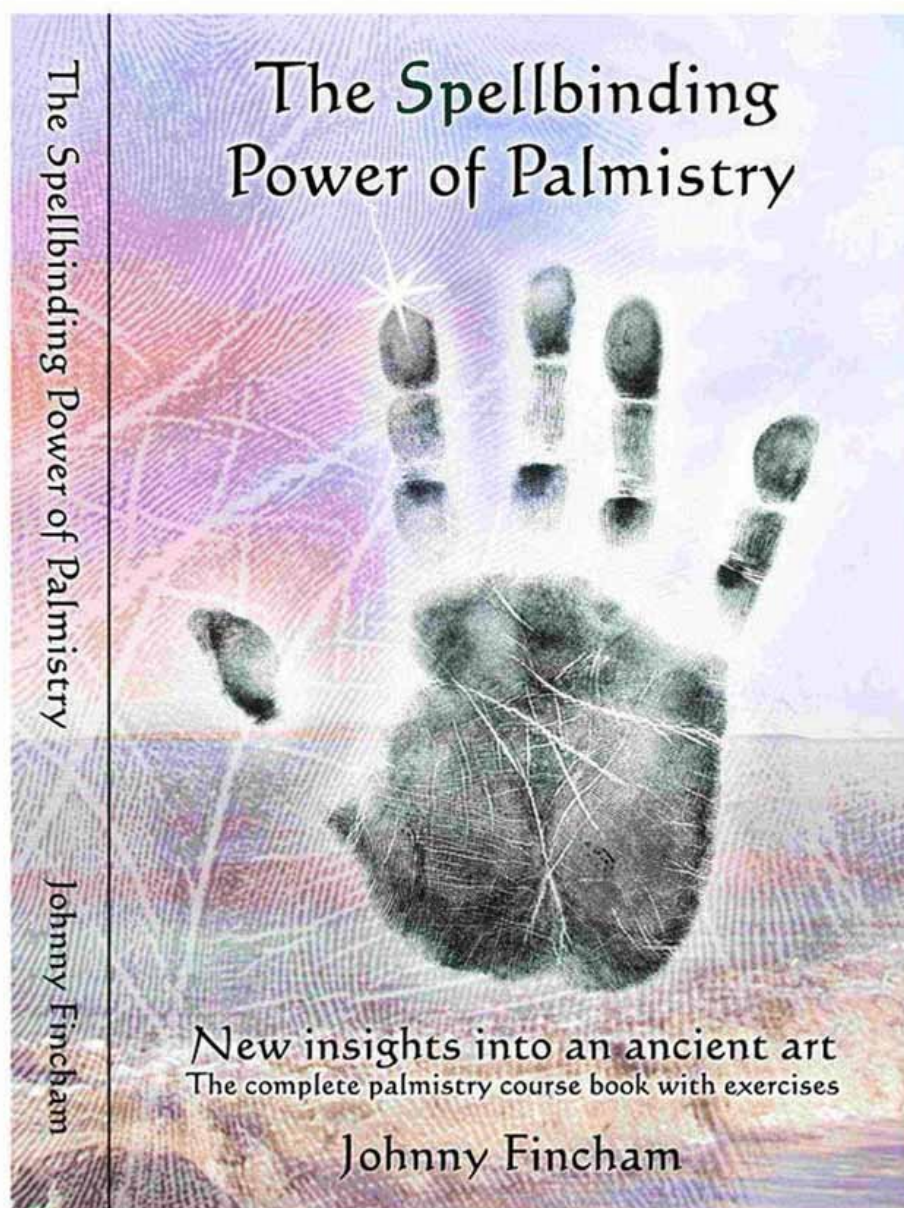


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Chapter 3

Thick or Thin Skinned?



Now we get down to the 'touchy-feely' side of giving a reading. Palmistry is about refining the perceptions you pick up from another person and making informed judgments about them. Once you've studied this chapter, you'll develop a 'feel' for the skin quality. Then you'll have a good understanding of how a person responds to their environment.

Palm skin quality is all about a person's overall receptivity - how sensitive they are to their surroundings. If no clear distinction emerges from the shape of the palm (from the previous chapter) the skin texture is the starting point of hand analysis.

When you touch the skin on the hand, you pick up a host of impressions. Firstly, check the moisture level. Is the skin damp and clammy? Where the palmer skin is moist on a warm day, or in a very warm room, this is natural and of no consequence. However, in normal circumstances, damp skin denotes anxiety or heightened sensitivity. It's likely the moist-palmed person is going through an emotional roller-coaster and is worked up about something; the emotions are close to the surface. You need to be particularly cautious, diplomatic and sensitive to the person's needs if this is the case.

Softness of the palm tissue is a sign of lack of muscular development and firmness the opposite; strength and vitality are marked by firm, springy, palms.

The palmer skin texture is very important as it acts like a filter between the individual and the exterior world. The skin on the palms is extraordinarily dense with nerve endings and its complex cellular structure is actually an elaboration of the central nervous system. The skin establishes what one responds to in one's surroundings. The expressions 'thick-skinned' or 'thin-skinned' are totally valid here. The skin quality tells us what's screened out.

Manual labor will of course develop calluses and make the skin thicken over much of the palm's surface. However, the natural skin ridge density won't change. Our palm skin inclines us to particular activities and to a particular environment.

As a general rule, fine skin is most frequently found on women's hands and the coarser patterns on men's. Coarser skin also tends to be found on broad hands, where there's a more physical connection to the world. Nothing must be taken for granted, however. Contradictions are everywhere apparent. The skin type must be established carefully.

To ascertain the skin quality, you need to feel the skin ridges. These are a series of very fine, grain-like lines all over the surface of the palm. They can only easily be seen with a magnifying glass and may well be invisible to the naked eye. The skin properties are discovered by touch.



Close-up of the skin ridges

As previously stated, the skin ridges are infused with a vast complex of various nerve endings. The finer the skin, the closer packed and more numerous the ridges present and thus the greater sensory perception and receptivity. The coarser the skin, the less refined the central nervous system. Someone with lots of fine skin ridges is acutely sensitive to moods, temperature, pain, atmosphere and touch; also physically, to foodstuffs and toxins. Someone with widely-spaced skin ridges is hardy and less responsive to their environment.

You'll need to ensure you have experience of all the various shades of skin ridge density. Find the skin type by stroking your fingertip softly over the centre of the palm (or an area where there are no calluses).

Silk skin

If the skin feels fragile, silky smooth and ultra thin, so you can't feel the skin ridges at all, you have the finest skin type – 'silk' skin. This is at the most extreme end of the spectrum of sensitivity, and is more common on women's hands than men's.

People with silk skin are highly receptive, sensitive and intuitive. They respond to 'vibes' and atmospheres, tuning in to the subtle inference of their surroundings.

They avoid conflict, and prefer gentle, harmonious situations. Usually they're pale-skinned and avoid the sun as much as possible. It's almost as if there's no barrier between them and whatever they come into contact with. 'No defense' as the poet Anne Sexton put it, 'between myself and the world, nothing but a welter of blood-raw intimacy' (from 'A Self Portrait in Letters').

Silk-skinned people can be fastidious, hating anything tawdry, grubby and base. Men with silk skin are much more prone to sexual insecurities through their acute sensibility.

This type of skin is common on religious devotees, artists, alternative therapists and care workers. They're oversensitive to alcohol and stimulants. Whenever silk skin is found, it's essential that the person is advised to avoid toxins and harsh environments, and to value and make use of their sensitivity.

Paper skin

Skin that is fine and dry and often slightly yellowish, where you can only just feel the ridges, is 'paper' skin.

This skin ridge density is very common, found on around 45% of hands in the modern Western city milieu.

This pattern, though sensitive, isn't fine enough for purely intuitive perceptions, but responds to visual, verbal and information-based stimuli. They thrive in an environment where there's an exchange of ideas. Communication is important; people with this palmer skin are responsive to sound and images, words and pictures. However powerful the passions, on first meeting they're likely to appear a little difficult to discern and a touch 'cool'.

Paper skin type is common, and found on those who are surrounded by words, images, paper, phones and computers, as so much of the modern world is – lawyers, teachers, salespeople, office workers, students, writers, and all the media exemplify the paper skin person.

Grainy skin

The next level in our skin gradient is 'grainy' skin. This is where the skin ridges are clearly visible and easily felt. The skin is firm and just slightly rough, with well defined lines; the palmer flesh often feels compact.

This skin pattern indicates a need for activity and stimulus. This is found on busy people, those with quick responses who are easily bored and not prone to navel gazing. They have good reflexes and a sense of timing and thus potentially make good sportspeople.

These characters need to be active and are not really of sufficient sensitivity to enjoy passive–receptive activities, e.g. poetry, for very long. They would find it much easier to relax with a round of golf or an aerobics class.

Coarse skin

Coarse' skin is easy to ascertain. The skin is particularly thick, hard and rough to the touch – almost abrasive. There are very few palmer lines and it's found almost exclusively on men.



Coarse skin - note the skin ridges are clearly visible

Here is a person who responds to the physical world. They have a tactile orientation and need to be in the great outdoors; they're unhappy if confined by the walls of an office. This skin induces a rapport with nature, they're likely to be very hardy and almost indifferent to pain and temperature.

The broad furrow-like skin ridges make the person perhaps a touch insensitive and definitely 'thick-skinned'. They may be lacking somewhat in the subtlety department!

Coarse palmed people are impervious to hardship, often preferring a more rigorous, un-pampered lifestyle. This is common on farmers, fisherman, builders, manual workers, carpenters, potters, mechanics and window cleaners. They often have a good rapport with nature and distrust words themselves, preferring action to conversation.

Further points

In old age, the skin becomes finer, thinner and more fragile – effectively more silk-like in quality. Hence we tend to become intolerant of noise, disturbance and toxins as we age.

You may well have only the skin quality to go on so far, but this is sufficient to begin to define the personality.

Remember, our analysis is still painting the personality in large brush strokes, still at the level of basic traits and general qualities.

On this canvas we will draw in much greater detail later, but I would implore you to familiarize yourself with the fundamentals of skin type and hand shape before you proceed to the next chapters.

With very little practice you'll be able to spot, for example, an Air hand from across a room or on the TV (a great place for hand study incidentally), and to establish skin ridge density from a quick touch.

Hand reading is a practice, not a theory. You need to reinforce what you learn as soon as possible. Try to start now. Just like learning a language, palmistry is very much an idiom of signs and indications which requires regular reinforcement.

People love to have their hands read – but you aren't sufficiently advanced to analyze them quite yet. Proceed at this early stage merely by asking questions to confirm your speculations. Ask: 'Are you a sensitive person?'; 'What do you pick up on when you enter a room?' If you proceed by asking, rather than telling, you will learn much and make your art easier, rather than find yourself under pressure to 'tell the future.'

Many budding hand readers give up because they find themselves too soon under pressure to make blindingly perceptive comments; try to resist this temptation.

Take it slowly. Learn the basics first – it won't take long. Then the somewhat easier layers (lines, fingerprints and so on) are contextualized to that particular individual's fundamental characteristics. You will then be assured of great accuracy in your readings and your clients will recognize you as a person worthy of their trust.

You've begun the process of narrowing down the personality, homing in on the individual's properties and potentials. As you go deeper, you'll pick up the outstanding conflicts, contradictions and qualities that make up any normal human being.

EXERCISES

Now find an example of the four different skin types for yourself, so you learn to assess skin texture quickly. Ask the people whose palms you examine about what they respond to. Ask them about their sensitivity and preferred environment to test out your assumptions. Continuously take people's handprints to build up your collection.

Put your observations in your journal and write the skin quality on any prints you take.