

# **Hand on the Back**

## **An Exercise in Intimacy for Couples and Friends**

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In this exercise, couples (or friends) are asked to choose quiet and peaceful location in which to practice. Allow for plenty of time so that each person gets to have satisfying internal study of their own physical and emotional experience during the exercise and that you both get to study your experience with each other. This is a great exercise to do when you are feeling loving and open toward your partner and want to enhance trust and closeness.

### **Hand on the Back**

1. Partner A and B sit near one another in a way that makes it easy for Partner A to keep their hand on Partner B's back, i.e. to the side and slightly behind Partner B.
2. Partner A invites Partner B to quietly turn their attention into their own body experience and sense into where on their back they would most enjoy having a hand placed.
3. Partner A then gently and slowly places his/her/ their hand on that spot and asks B to verbally guide them in terms of hand position and the amount of pressure desired so that the touch is just right.
4. If the hand is in the right spot with the right amount of pressure, Partner B should show signs of relief and relaxation. Partner A supports this relaxation by encouraging Partner B to just enjoy the sensations, offering to make any adjustments needed to make it even more enjoyable. Partner A should feel free to be relaxed as well. Be sure to

support your hand with a knee, pillow or furniture so that your arm does not get tired or begin to shake.

5. Partner B may experience deep relaxation and even emotions such as sadness, grief or deep relief. Partner A simply acknowledges and supports Partner B's experience.
6. After a few minutes, Partner A asks Partner B to sense into the words that seem to go with this kind of touch by saying, "What words go with my hand?" or "What does my hand seem to be saying to your back?" (*Partner B might hear words like, "You can rest" or "I'm here for you"*)
7. When Partner A has clearly heard what words Partner B is feeling, she/he/they then form(s) a statement to say to Partner B that includes those very words. Partner A **gently and slowly** says to Partner B, "Notice what happens when you hear me say.....'I'm here for you' (*or whatever words arose for Partner B.*)
8. Partner A observes and supports Partner B's response which might include more emotion, deeper relaxation and maybe even some reporting about his/her/their experience with that kind of statement such as , "It's hard to believe" or "I've been waiting to hear that for so long".
9. Remember to emphasize present experience over discussion. The objective is to support Partner B's comfort level and their own self-exploration while you are also learning more about him/her/them and their deeper feelings and longings. If it looks like more discussion wants to happen, redirect Partner B to feeling your hand and maybe say the words again.
10. When it feels like enough time and awareness has passed, Partner A asks Partner B how s/he/they would like Partner A to remove their hand. (*i.e. slowly, more pressure first and then pull away, etc.*) Partner A then removes his/her/they're hand in the way requested. *Leaving well can be just as important as connecting well.*
11. Both people take a few breaths, attend to any body needs and then switch places with Partner B now taking the lead.

- *The Hakomi Institute offers many exercises like this to study interpersonal relationships. For more information on our Comprehensive Trainings, Professional Skills Trainings and Experiential Couples Therapists Listings in your area, please go to : **[www.Hakomiinstitute.com](http://www.Hakomiinstitute.com)***
- *For more ideas about somatic approaches to Couples Therapy please check out: **Experiential Psychotherapy with Couples: A Guide for the Creative Pragmatist** by Rob Fisher.*
- *For more information about Experiential and Somatic Approaches to Building Trust with your Partner, contact me at **[jacihull@yahoo.com](mailto:jacihull@yahoo.com)**.*