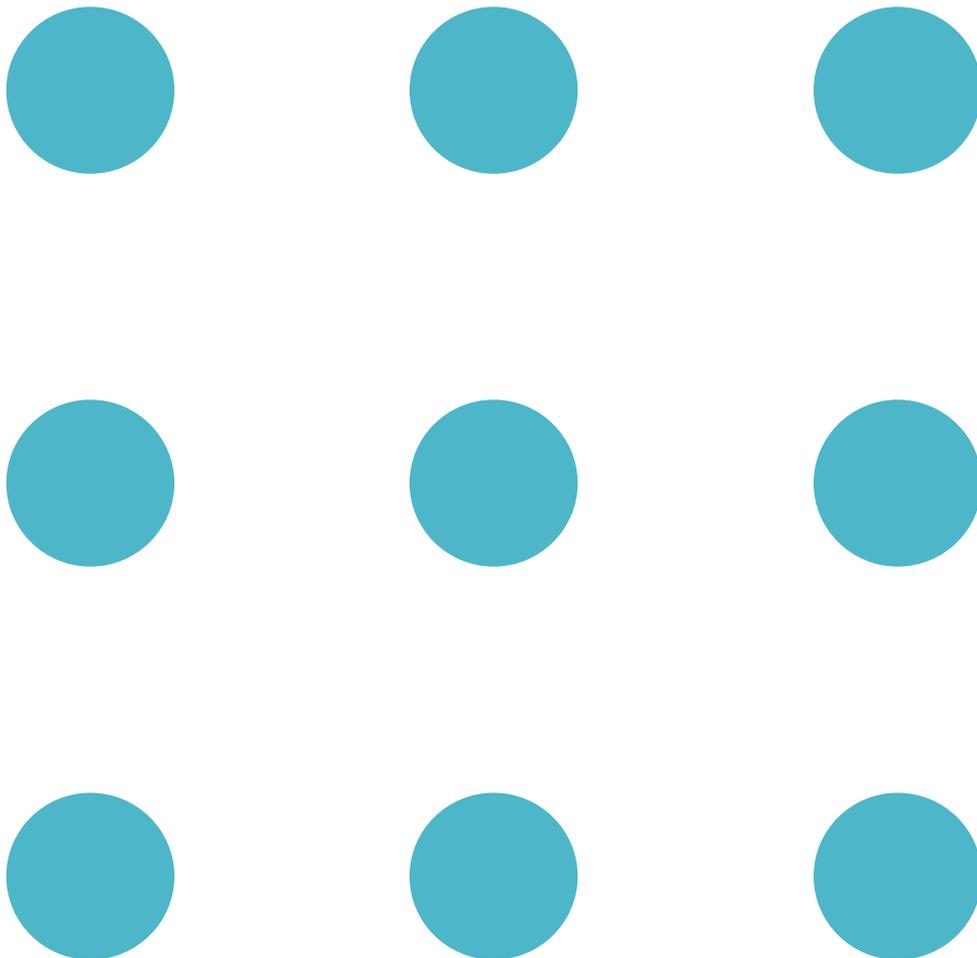


The 9-Dot Exercise

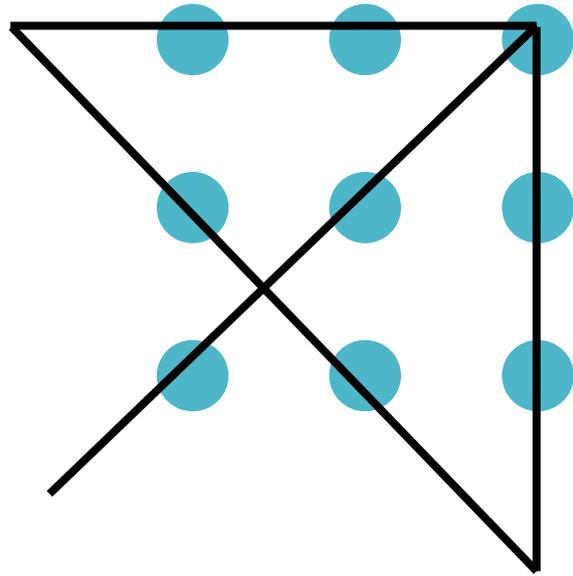
Can you connect all the dots using four lines or fewer, without lifting the pen from the paper?

As you work with this puzzle, notice what is happening:

- In the mind - what thoughts are around?
- What tone has the mind adopted
- Emotions - What feelings are arising?
- Are there any physical responses in the body?



The Solution



Notes & Observations

This exercise is not about whether you found the solution, but to reveal the process you went through; the thoughts that arose in response to it. These can be indicative of our usual or default patterns of thinking and reacting. These patterns may well be outside of awareness but can feel familiar when we deliberately bring attention to them.

In retrospect, many people report noticing the following, maybe some of these resonate with you?

- Doubts about being able to accomplish the task (“I will never be able to do this”)
- Fast-formed expectations about how easy or hard the task is going to be (“it’s impossible”)
- Anxiety or a fear of failure
- Memories of previous difficult tasks or situations
- Concerns over how their performance might compare with everyone else
- Criticisms or judgements “I should be able to do this”, or “if I look it up or ask for help, that’s cheating.”

Head back to the book to learn more about the power of mindful awareness.