EVENHANDEDNESS

Bet you can't make your fingers meet under a yardstick at any place but the center!

THE SETUP
Rest the ends of a yardstick on your index fingers. Slowly bring your fingers toward each other. They will meet at the exact center (the eighteen-inch mark) every time. Try to make them meet at some other place.

INSIDER INFORMATION
You prevent yourself from winning this trick. First of all, there is only one place under the yardstick where it will balance on a single support: the center of gravity. If your fingers meet anywhere else, the yardstick will be off balance and fall. Consciously, you are trying to make your hands meet at some other point. But these efforts are overridden by an unconscious sense called proprioception. This complicated feedback system coordinates your body movements to maintain the balance of the ruler. The hundreds of amazing adjustments in hand position always result in the same thing: a balanced ruler supported at its center of gravity.