

BE A TREE!: Draw Your Hidden Roots



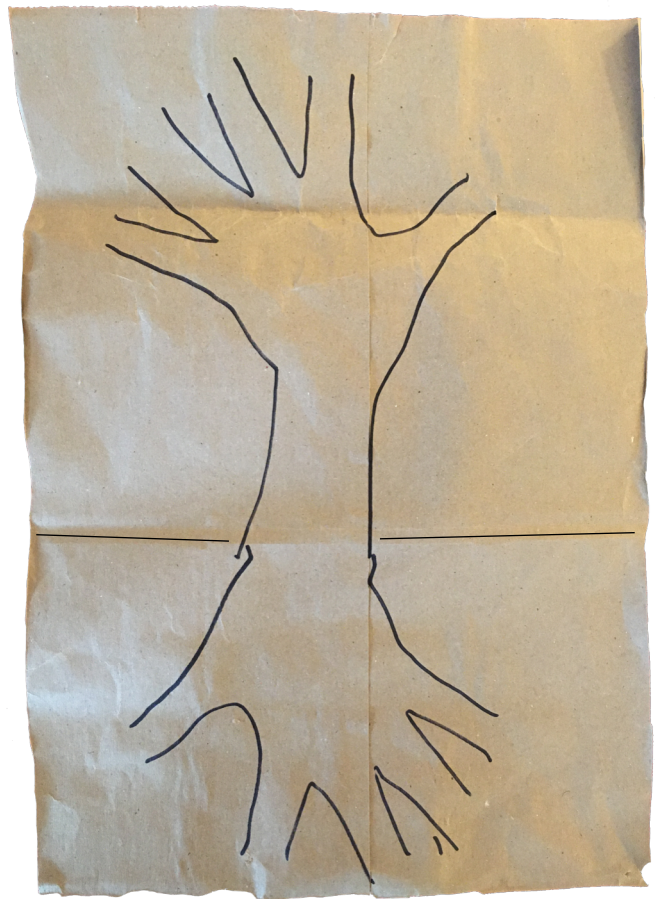
On the cover of the picture book **Be a Tree!** and in this illustration, Felicita Sala shows us the visible parts of the tree —the trunk and branches and the invisible parts of the tree—the roots and fungi. Like trees, we humans have parts of us that other people see and parts that they do not always see. Let's explore those parts of ourselves in this art project.

LOOK FOR

- Brown paper shopping bag (or a large piece of paper or cardboard)
- Safe scissors
- Any art supplies you have (even a pencil or pen is enough).

SKETCH OUT A TREE

- 1) Cut out the large front or back panel of the paper shopping bag (leaving 3 sides and the bottom of the bag behind).
- 2) There should be a natural crease in the paper. Spin the paper so that that smaller creased section is on the bottom of your paper.
- 3) Lay your arm above the crease and spread your fingers wide.



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SKETCH OUT A TREE (cont.)

4) Reach for a marker, crayon, or pencil and trace the outside of your arm and hand. Trace the v-shapes between your spread fingers. Don't trace your fingertips. *Does this look like the outline of a trunk and branches?*

5) Turn the paper around and place your wrist over the base of the "trunk." Spread your fingers wide.

6) Trace the outside of your wrist and hand. Trace the v-shapes between your spread fingers. Don't trace your fingertips. *Does this look like the roots of a tree?*

WRITE & DRAW YOUR HIDDEN ROOTS

Let's pretend this tree you have drawn rooted in the soil is you.

Let's pretend the tree's trunk and branches are the part of you that people see at school. Like the tree, this is the part of you that is in the sunshine, seen by all.

1) Pull out all of your art supplies and look at the trunk and branches. What words or pictures could you add onto the trunk and branches that tell us something about you? You could add things you are good at like "artist" or "soccer player" or things people think about you like "funny" or "quiet." Ask friends to describe you if you need help. Think about where you write or draw on your tree. For example, can the words become branches or twigs or leaves? Can words run up the trunk like bark?

Let's pretend the soil between and beneath the tree's roots could be the people, places, or things that nourish you or make you strong.

2) Now turn to the roots and soil beneath the ground. What words or pictures would you like to add there? Add into the soil the things that help you grow strong. Yes, that could be food, but think about what makes you strong as a person, which words, people, or objects give you the strength to go out into the world every day and stand tall in the sunshine.

Leave your words and pictures hidden or unhidden.

3) This is your piece of art about you. You may not want to show everything you have written or drawn. That is okay, trees roots are hidden below ground and its branches are partially hidden by crowns of leaves. How could you make your inner self less visible the way a tree does?

You could, for example, cut out leaf shapes from the paper bag and glue them on the branches. Consider gluing just a part of them, so you could peek beneath the leaves.

You can choose to hide your roots by folding the bottom of the paper up and making solid ground beneath the tree. If you do this, take out your art supplies again and show us what is happening on the ground around your tree.

Keep this piece of artwork to remind you to keep finding people and things that "feed you" or make you healthy and happy, growing taller and more beautiful under the blue sky.