This Palette contains two different rows of buttons. The first four are Shape Modes (basic shape interaction options) and the other six are Pathfinders (more advanced path interactions). To use this palette and any of the actions in it, you need to select two overlapping shapes. This Palette is all about shapes and how their paths interact with each other, so selecting one object and then clicking one of the pathfinder options will do nothing. You need to have at least 2 shapes selected to use this palette, and they need to be overlapping one another. Below are some short explanations of what each tool does, along with a visual representation in the graphic.

PATHFINDER TOOLS

1. Unite – Joins the two shapes together into one

2. Minus Front – Deletes the shape that is in front and leaves the back shape, minus the overlapping area.

3. Intersect – Keeps the overlapping area and deletes the back and front shapes.

4. Exclude – Keeps the front and back shapes and deletes the overlapping area.

5. Divide – Divides the shapes along the intersecting lines. Once you do this you then must ungroup the shapes so that

you can move them apart, which I have done in the image.

6. Trim – Keeps the front shape whole and keeps the back shape, minus the overlapping area.

7. Merge – Keeps the front shape whole and keeps the back shape, minus the overlapping area. This is similar to the trim tool, except if you had two similar shapes intersecting (for example if I added a pink circle over the pink rectangle) those two would merge and become one.
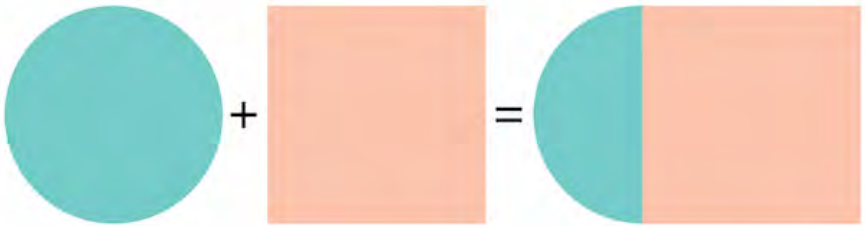
8. Crop – Crop the back shape to where it overlaps the front shape.

9. Outline – Keeps the outlines of the shapes and deletes the inside. These lines are all now separate, and if you ungroup them you can move them apart.

10. Minus Back – Deletes the shape that is in back and leaves the front shape, minus the overlapping area.

ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR
PATHFINDER PALETTE

1. UNITE

2. MINUS FRONT

3. INTERSECT

4. EXCLUDE

5. DIVIDE

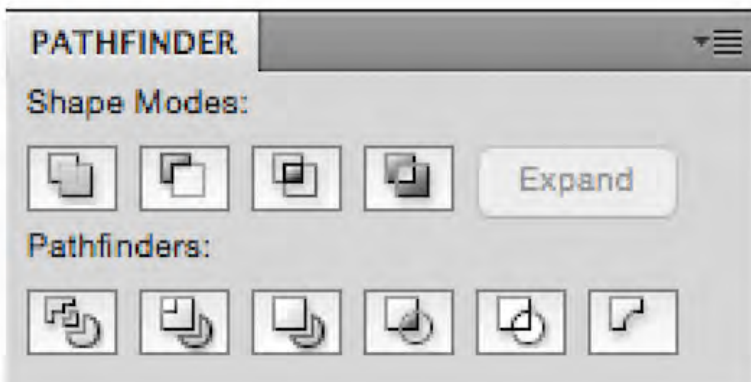## 6. TRIM

7. MERGE

8. CROP

9. OUTLINE

10. MINUS BACK

PATHFINDER

Shape Modes:

Expand

Pathfinders:

The pathfinder tool can be used to help you make any shape you need, from very simple to very intricate shapes. It also helps if you need to create something like a PNG file, where you want the background to be transparent. Below I've

created a short demo of how you can actually apply the pathfinder palette to create a very simple shape like a happy face. In this example, just placing the eyes and smile over the face is enough, though what if I wanted to use the happy face on my website as a png, with the background coming through the eyes and smile? The pathfinder palette helps me with this, as the final shape is just one circle, with cut outs where the eyes and smile are.
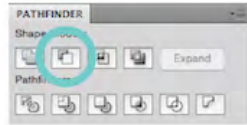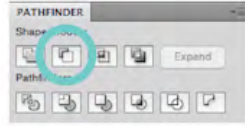

ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR
PATHFINDER PALETTE

If you know how to use the Pathfinder tool it can help a lot when creating difficult shapes, and can greatly improve your workflow. I remember the first time that I discovered the Palette years ago, I couldn't believe I hadn't been using it all along.

DO YOU USE THE PATHFINDER PALETTE IN YOUR ILLUSTRATIONS? WHAT DO YOU USE IT FOR MORE OFTEN?