

need some help with custom filter in Photoshop

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I keep running into these "custom" or kernel filters in Photoshop and other programs but, try as I might, I have been unable to find good tutorials as to how they work with some practical input values. I can play with inputting different values all night long, but I still have hardly a clue as to what's going on. Yet, I see a lot of potential here. Can anyone suggest some on-line decent tutorials with examples as to how it works? And, when an image is smoothed with this function, how is it different from a gaussian blur?

Thanks much,
Blaine