**Touch**

**It’s amazing what can happen if you just put your arm around somebody. It’s the truest and simplest thing that does the most good a lot of times. *(Actress Julia Roberts, who helped Hurricane Katrina evacuees at a shelter in Birmingham, Alabama)***

**Another theme that cropped up often during our research is the importance of touch. From babies in the crib to septuagenarians being massaged at a cancer treatment center, touch is mysteriously therapeutic. Studies have shown that babies who are touched grow better than babies who aren't. *(Bill Moyers, in USA Weekend)***

**Touching is a beautiful way of connecting. When your wife brushes her hand against yours, when your son places a hand on your shoulder, when you shake the hand of a friend, you can choose to let these be deep moments of connections. *(Thomas & Beverly Bien, in Mindful Recovery: A Spiritual Path to Healing From Addiction)***

**To touch a child's face, a dog's smooth coat, a petaled flower, the rough surface of a rock is to set up new orders of brain motion. To touch is to communicate. *(James W. Angell, in Yes Is a World)***

**What feeling is so nice as a child's hand in yours? So small, so soft and warm, like a kitten huddling in the shelter of your clasp. A child's hand in yours -- what a tenderness it arouses, what power it conjures up. You are instantly the very touchstone of wisdom and strength. *(Marjorie Holmes, in The Marjorie Holmes Calendar of Love and Inspiration)***

**In touching a flower I am touching infinity; through the flower I talk to the infinity. It is that still small voice that calls up the fairies. *(George Washington Carver)***

**Romantic couples were blindfolded. Individuals were asked to touch foreheads of one another. Sixty percent recognized their mates immediately. This, in a study at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University. Researchers couldn’t explain what made foreheads so readily identifiable to so many. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Billy asks his Mom: “Mommy, your goodnight hug wore off. Could I have another one? *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**My first grandchild was born four months ago under difficult circumstances (one lung failed to develop properly). He spent his first weeks of life in intensive care, hooked up to a variety of machines. He was separated from his mother, my wife's and my daughter-in-law, at birth and denied the warmth and cuddling of her body. Yet, when she went to the hospital and talked to him and caressed him, the grimace on his face changed. He knew; he reacted. There was what we interpreted as a smile, just from that touch. *(Bill Moyers, in USA Weekend)***

**Said With Feeling: In a remote African village lay a sick old man. A doctor from the government hospital said he must go immediately to the nearby hospital for treatment. The old man refused, saying he wanted to be sent to the little mission hospital. "Why?" asked the doctor. "The government hospital is closer and has very modern equipment that the mission hospital doesn't have. Why would you want to go to such an ill-equipped hospital?" "Because," answered the old man, "the hands there are different. There you are touched with hands that care." *(Martin Buxbaum)***

**Touching a houseplant can stunt its growth, but that’s not necessarily bad. Some growers touch them to get shorter, fuller plants or spray their leaves instead of only watering the roots. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Our granddaughter Vanessa was walking in the yard with her dad. He picked up a rather large leaf, and she asked him what kind it was. "It's a sycamore leaf," he said. To which she replied, "Will I get sick if I touch it?" *(Thelma Ortez, in Country magazine)***

**Among the Wodaabe of Niger, this rule is strict: A nursing mother may not even be touched by any man, including her husband. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Ivory piano keys are cool to the touch. Plastic keys aren’t. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. *(Leo Buscaglia)***

**Touch is a primal need, as necessary for growth as food, clothing or shelter. From the nuzzles and caresses between mother and infant that form the foundation of the self, to the holding of hands between a son and his dying father that allows a final letting go, touch is our most intimate and powerful form of communication. Michelangelo knew this: when he painted God extending a hand toward Adam on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, he chose touch to depict the gift of life. *(George Howe Colt, in Life magazine)***

**It’s probably true that no human hand ever touches the rice we put in our mouths when said rice is purchased in packaged form in usual urban places. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The secret of sensitive hands: Most women have a more acute sense of touch than the average man. But the reason has nothing to do with gender, it turns out. Canadian researchers measured the fingertips of 100 volunteers, male and female, and gave them the tactile equivalent of an eye exam. The subjects were asked to touch surfaces containing parallel grooves; if they could feel the grooves, they were given progressively finer grooves to touch until the surfaces felt smooth. The scientists found that the subjects who could feel the narrowest grooves were those with the smallest fingertips. In most cases, those small fingertips belonged to women, but when men had small fingertips, their hands were just as sensitive. “We now understand that this sex difference is not actually a ‘sex effect’ but rather an effect of finger size,” neuroscientist Daniel Goldreich tells New Scientist. Small fingertips, researchers found, have more densely packed touch receptors, rendering them more sensitive. *(The Week magazine, January 15, 2010)***

**Seeing's Believing, but Feeling's the Truth. *(Thomas Fuller, 18th-century English physician)***

**When we grow older, our sense of touch degrades. At about age 20, we start to lose nerve endings in skin at a rate of about 1 percent each year. On average, an 80-year-old has just one-quarter of the touch receptors of a 20-year-old. The loss is so gradual that we might not even notice, but the muting of our sense of touch over time can take a corresponding toll on quality of life. The cruel irony, of course, is that as sensitivity fades, the more we need to be touched -- but the opportunity to experience touch often diminishes as well. "Aging people get touched less," says Tiffany Field, author of the book Touch and the founder and director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. "Their grandchildren aren't nearby; their spouses die. it's very unfortunate." *(David Linden and Martha Thomas, in AARP: The Magazine / Real Possibilities)***

**The skin is our largest sensory interface with the world. And it's always on. We can close our eyes or plug our ears to imagine losing sight or hearing, but it's hard to imagine losing the ability to feel. It's thought to be the first sense that we develop in the womb. Depriving newborns of touch is a disaster -- growth is slowed, and serious cognitive and behavioral disorders emerge that can persist into adulthood. Touch is crucial for forging that first emotional bond with a parent and for creating the unique human experience. *(David Linden and Martha Thomas, in AARP: The Magazine / Real Possibilities)***

**Why you’re not supposed to touch stalactites or stalagmites in a cave: the oil and sweat on human hands can stop the growth of these natural calcite formations forever. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 263)***

**Only two states touch eight other states. Can you name the two states? Tennessee and Missouri. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Therapeutic touch lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol and increases the amount of oxytocin, the so-called love hormone, which is credited with mother-and-child bonding, among other things. When we put our hands on each other, we're tapping into deep associations between touch and emotion that are kindled at the dawn of life. *(David Linden and Martha Thomas, in AARP: The Magazine / Real Possibilities)***

**The good news is that there are all kinds of ways to harness this power. Even just rubbing your own skin in the shower can be therapeutic, Tiffany Field says -- this increases activity along the vagus nerve that runs from the brain stem to the abdomen. Stimulating the nerve can offer benefits throughout the body, from improved digestion to a jolt of the mood-boosting neurotransmitter serotonin. Serotonin is "the body's natural antidepressant," she says. *(David Linden and Martha Thomas, in AARP: The Magazine / Real Possibilities)***

**One man to another: “If you ask me, I think women’s lib could use a feminine touch.” *(Morrie Brinkman, King Features)***

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