



Southern Ontario
Counselling Centre

Humans are touchy creatures

By Neil Lackey, M.Th.

Anna Gold
M.S.W., R.S.W.

Skin is our largest sense organ, alerting us to changes in temperature, pleasure and pain. The textures of food, touch of fabric, warmth of another's hand in our own; each communicates unique and special meaning.

Lee Horton-Carter
M.A.

Touch has been shown to be essential to healthy development of infants and when deprived of touch, baby mammals fail to thrive. Many of us like touching pets and our hands or bodies can linger over the pleasure, or recoil quickly from various textures.

Dr. Mavis Kerr
M.D.

Although sex includes touch, not all touch is sexual. Indeed, touch is vitally important to our health. Many men, unfortunately, reserve touching for specifically sexual encounters and miss out on the wide range of communication touch can provide. I remember, as a young university student, getting used to hugging my Dad - not something he nor I at first was comfortable with at all - though I observed that Dad would hug my girlfriends!

Neil Lackey
M.Th.

It is in our growing up families that we first, impressionably, learn what kind of touch is appropriate and what is not. My family was not a huggy one - no wonder I chose friends where hugs were common, starting with a variety of female friends based on my Dad's modelling!

Susan Rosenblum
M.S.W., R.S.W.

What do you notice in yourself as you see male friends hugging? When you see females hugging, would you notice something different in yourself? How did you come to make those meanings from your observation of others touching?

Teresa Wiebe
B.Ed., M.T.S.

As adults, we can be confined by our childhood learning and deprive ourselves of opportunities to be more fully human - in touch. I encourage you to make time to hold grandpa's hand or stroke Mom's hair or give Dad a bit of a shoulder massage. And if touch is an experience that you refrain from, a consultation with a registered Sex Therapist, or a Registered Family Therapist could be a wise choice to enhance your ability to experience life more fully.

**Stephanie
Schmidt**
B.Sc.(Hons.), N.D.

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