

Touch: The Power to Comfort and Heal

Myrna Lapres
August 3, 2022



[View this email in your browser](#)

Coach Myrna--August 3, 2022

www.coachmyrna.org

Touch: The Power to Comfort & Heal

More than half of the 40,000 people who participated in the BBC's Touch Test in January 2020, a survey conducted in 112 countries, said that they did not receive enough physical interaction—an arm around the shoulder, a sympathetic touch, or a long hug. And this was before COVID-related lockdowns had taken effect. This condition now has an official name: touch starvation.

It has been said that the sense of touch can be up to ten times stronger than our other senses. Some may think that touch starvation sounds too “touchy-feely.” But there is strong science that backs the biological need in all of us. Dr. Lina Velikova, a researcher in Bulgaria says that touch and cuddling increases our levels of oxytocin, the bonding hormone, and decreases levels of cortisol, the stress hormone. These very hormones effect our sleep, cardiovascular system and even our mental state.

Dr. Velikova says, “Cuddling activates our parasympathetic nervous system, bringing feelings of calm and ease while settling feelings of anxiety and sadness.” Since blood pressure is often linked to stress, reducing stress is

helpful to lower blood pressure. In addition, oxytocin has a protective effect on the heart.

Most of us do not realize how essential physical touch is in communicating our care and love to our family members. Part of the power of touch is that it does not involve any words. Body language is more genuine and harder to fake. Giving a hug implicitly communicates trust and safety in ways that we cannot speak.

The science also tells us that there is actual power connected to touch. People who get regular hugs are less likely to get colds. Reaching for someone's hand or holding them close can reduce physical pain. It also supports better sleep and digestion.

Think for a moment how often you touched or hugged your family members in the past week. Of course, not everyone appreciates a bear hug, so we need to be sensitive to the needs of others. Perhaps a gentle pat on the hand or arm accompanied by some loving words are what will be appreciated. Or maybe it is a back, head or even a foot rub. Offer to help apply lotion on someone's overworked hands.

There is even a National Hugging Day created in 1986 by Kevin Zaborney. The next one will be on January 21, 2023. You can find out more about it here: nationaltoday.com/national-hugging-day/ But I challenge you to get practicing with your own family members and friends now. Think of all the benefits and be creative.

To purchase my book on Amazon, click here:

tinyurl.com/7-Gifts-to-Give-Your-Child

If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: www.coachmyrna.org/ Find out more about Safe Conversations www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html.

