

Touch as Nutrition
Nutrition – John Tuite
Pathways #47, page 44



Talking Points

Are we getting enough physical contact? Are we underestimating the health benefits of touch?

“We mistakenly think that touch occurs on the periphery of our selves, a skin thing. But truthfully, each surface stimulus travels far into the most hidden interior landscapes of our selves, traversing long nerve cells right through the buried spinal core to enter and gather in the deep folds of our brain. It’s not by accident that our skin and brain are each generated from a single ectodermic substance, cascading outward and inward as we grow in the womb, because right at the very root of us, we are built to connect the inner and outer worlds.” (p. 45)

We seem to understand the importance of touch when it comes to babies. Children have spontaneous contact with each other throughout the day through play, sports, wrestling with friends and siblings, being carried, and the list goes on. However, as we grow older these types of interactions dwindle. Touch begins to be reserved for appropriate moments with appropriate people. Are we to believe that older children and adults don’t benefit from touch in the same way as babies?

Loneliness is a stand-in for the absence of touch. Lack of being touched or held is a main component of loneliness. It’s an emotional blight often seen in the elderly. Loneliness can kill.

When people turn to aggression and physical violence is it an ill-judged act of substitution for touch? Are these people being motivated by a desperate need for deep, meaningful contact?

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

“Loneliness: A Threat to Health,” <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/threat-to-health/>

“Loneliness Research,” <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research/>