

Touch: Second Edition

Tiffany Field

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A well-reasoned approach to an emotional topic brings strength to Field's conviction that physical touch is a biological need.

People are increasingly isolated from each other due to social media and other factors, and protection against inappropriate touching has eliminated some of the opportunities for healthy touching. The no-touch policies that begin practical legal measures designed to protect our schools and daycare facilities can even spread into the home “as parents become wary of touching their own children.” *Touch*, by Tiffany Field, is well-researched praise of the tactile sense.

For some, it seems that touch is just another one of the five senses, but Field shows that touch is a biological need—not an added bonus, but a human necessity. In fact, not enough touch leads to violence, sleeplessness, low immunity, delayed growth, and other adverse effects. Conversely, touch can show emotion, nurture growth and development, and help form relationships.

Field offers a studied and reasoned approach to an emotional topic. She examines touch through multidisciplinary lenses, from neurology to anthropology, and traces the variations of touch across culture, gender, and relationship type, and even from individual to individual. Throughout the book, her tone is warm but still in keeping with the professionalism and impartiality of academic writing.

Field's balance of qualitative and quantitative research highlights academic information, such as the roles of skin and the brain and practical, everyday means of therapeutic touch—from massage to tai chi to acupuncture. While much of the book focuses on babies and small children, Field also addresses touch in the teen, adult, and elderly years. By dedicating several chapters to massage techniques and their benefits to all age groups, she ensures that her research is actionable, with possibly life-changing results.

Field's work is particularly relevant for parents and child caregivers, as touch is particularly powerful in early years, but it's also relevant to eldercare and adult friendships—friendly or romantic. This second edition of *Touch* offers updated reasoning and research so it can continue to be a comprehensive, cutting-edge resource related to this fast-moving, highly impactful field.

MELISSA WUSKE (Spring 2015)

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