



# Marriage Rules<sup>©</sup>

## “TOUCH”

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People need people.

People need “touch”.

People need people to “touch” them and to “touch” back in return.

"Let's keep in touch" or "stay in contact" communicates this tremendous human need to “touch” and be touched.

Research has suggested that orphaned babies may become ill and die if they are insufficiently touched!

Other experimental studies have suggested that all sorts of maladaptive patterns of behavior result from either too little “touch” or the wrong kind of “touch”.

“Can you handle that” or is it “just out of arm's reach”?

To “touch”, to make contact with, to have and to hold and to get strokes from?

These are the phrases which convey the value and importance of "connecting".

Why then does it occur so infrequently?

In the beginning, a child is born. Typically, they are totally cared for.

This includes feeding, bathing, rocking, playing with and comforting.

Practically all of these interactions are direct, immediate and physical.

During the course of relating to the infant, various words, phrases, sounds and expressions (facial, gestural, postural, etc.) are paired with the physical contact.

In time, the directness of the stroking begins to take the form of indirect stroking through actions and implications by significant others to the developing child which connote attention, recognition or affections.

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The child's early conditioning to respond to a primary stimulus, “touch”, is now channeled to respond to a secondary stimulus, words, gestures, etc., which serve to meet their need in a less intense, less personal and less relevant fashion.

Thus, we can readily understand the over-achiever's probable motivation in doing what they do.

Hopefully, if they can accomplish the impossible, perhaps, they will, somehow or other, recreate their early infantilized experience of "perfect love".

Unfortunately, all the fame and fortune in the world cannot buy that back. So the vicious circle continues.

I am reminded of many people I have met throughout my the course of my life who stated they would forfeit their entire fortune for one genuine and lasting hug or kiss or “touch” from someone special.

To be touched, caressed and held.

A great, big bear-hug squeeze or just a playful tweak.

A pat on the back or a firm handshake would do.

Perhaps we have trained ourselves to distance our touching behaviors lest we are touched in return.

For if we are, maybe we won't be touched again in quite the same fashion.

And such a loss would be utterly unbearable!

Perhaps it is better to have touched and lost (the “touch”) then never to have been touched at all?

The challenge is to reach out into the hollow, uncertain vortex of our lives and to ask, if need be, again and again, for as long as is necessary, to “touch” and be touched.

Only then, can we even begin to approximate the experience of being safe and protected and loved.

And if that “touch” happened, it would certainly be most touching!

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