



Hugs for Health

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Wherever you are right this moment as you read this, pause and follow these simple steps...

1. Take your right hand and arm and wrap it around your front to the back of your left shoulder.
2. Take your left hand and arm and wrap it around your front to the back of your right shoulder.
3. Now squeeze!

Congratulations, you have just hugged yourself! It may have seemed simple and silly, but I bet it brought a smile to your face—maybe even a bit of a chuckle!

On a daily basis you're probably approached by those around you for a hug or warm embrace. We give and receive hugs when different occasions and circumstances call for them—when we need consoling, to express joy, when we reunite with someone we haven't seen in awhile—but why do we need hugs?

Hugging falls into the category of the basic human need to be touched. Hugs make us feel good because they release endorphins in the body—much in the same way when we eat a fabulous piece of chocolate or go for a run. They are natural pain-killers, boosting the immune system, and creating a fantastic, euphoric feeling unlike any other! Studies have been done involving children deprived of hugs during infancy... those that don't receive this vital act of nurturing tend to have difficulty showing love to others and in some severe cases, can later in life develop emotional or psychological disorders. Hugging can be associated with emotions, namely that of love. And whether it's the motherly, platonic, or romantic kind, a hug is one of the most common, visible, and physical ways to express love.

When you share a hug or embrace with someone, you share not only your feelings for them, but the high frequency at which that love and care vibrate, which is wonderfully contagious. Every feeling we have has an energetic vibration, or frequency. For example, when we are angry or depressed, we vibrate at a lower frequency, (think of how it feels physically and emotionally to harbor these feelings) and if other people are around you, they most likely will pick up on that frequency (think of how it feels to be around someone who is angry or depressed). Additionally, when expressing love through hugs, you also exchange this energy through the Heart Chakra—a main energy center in the chest area, which has to do with love for the self and others. Imagine how it feels when we are hugged by someone we love—we feel safe and nurtured, and we are engaged in one of the most powerful forms of non-verbal communication and connection, so powerful that it can even drive you to tears of joy and release. A smile may be worth a million words, but a hug says it all!

So when you give and receive hugs, you are giving and receiving a basic human need, both a natural drug and high that can heal, and an energetic message that strengthens your connection to others. Not bad for something that is completely free and accessible most any time! Go out and hug someone today, and take notice of the feelings and energy you are giving and receiving. Make an effort to hug those who may need some healing, and allow yourself the same in return. And if you need to, repeat steps one through three above. You'd be surprised at how much better you'll feel! In the words of Virginia Satir, a noted psychotherapist and family therapist... *"We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth."*

JANUARY 21ST IS NATIONAL HUGGING DAY!
Give some hugs for health!!!