

# The Relaxation That Can Come From Conscious Touch

by Rose Rouse

Whenever I've had an argument with my partner, I know that everything – all those judgments, fears and closing downs – can change with a cuddle. I often ask if we can have a cuddle at these times because I know that we can simply melt together when we touch and connect in this way. Often I just sigh and feel my heart opening and everything is suddenly different. It really is simple if you can actually allow yourselves to do it.

One place that I learnt – it certainly didn't come from my parents although I take touch to my 90 year old mum who has Alzheimer's and she loves it whether a hand massage or simple loving touch, I always hold hands with her these days – about this kind of non-sexual touch was through Jan Day's workshops. Of course, I also learnt more about sexual touch with her as well, and how boundaries can be instigated which create the space for touch that you really want and know that you want.

"A lot of the work we do in, for instance, my New Year workshop Passion, Power and Love (Dec 28th to Jan 2nd 2018) explores touch and our need for it, and getting clear about what we want and need. Often men and women haven't actually had the opportunity to experiment with boundaries in this way so it's very valuable as a tool of learning," she says. "Conscious touch creates such a great relaxation in the body and soul, participants often haven't experienced this depth of connection."

Men, for instance, might not be familiar with simple loving touch in this Conscious way, and once they discover it, they can be liberated from that sense of having to perform sexually all the time, and simply surrender to the experience in that moment. "We know intuitively how important touch is," says Jan, "if a child is hurt we touch them where it hurts. But it isn't just when we're in pain that we need touch. This kind of simple touch transmits a sense of well-being, of being loved, cared for and included. And we all need that. We are not solitary animals."

Touch is still taboo in Britain, we're not relaxed around it. Even if there is more kissing on the cheeks rather than shaking hands! We may not have had touch when we were growing up, or we may have had inappropriate touch at some time. "Most of us haven't been taught to truly listen to ourselves around touch and we don't know how to communicate around it," she says. "I do a lot of exercises around giving and receiving non-sexual touch so that participants understand what they want and are comfortable with. I also do work around saying No so that people learn what Yes means."

## ARTICLE

The benefits of touch are multiple. “If you have received touch that is personal, loving, nurturing, within our boundaries and what we want, we are likely to feel relaxed, calm, more present in our own body and happy. Touch lifts our mood,” she explains.

***There is one exercise she does where the participants take turns in groups of four to choose to receive touch or not from the other three. It is clothed and gives you the opportunity to feel safety and relaxation in touch as well as exhilaration and joy as you discover touch that you enjoy.***

Jan points out that touch is important for couples and singles. “It’s not just singles that lack touch,” she says, “the causes may be different but it’s an issue that seems to affect a lot of people.”

There are old patterns which can get in the way of giving and receiving touch. “It may be that our touch comes across as needy so others are turned off by it,” she says, “or sometimes men, for instance, touch with a sense of entitlement and then the woman might feel engulfed. Or we may be giving in order to receive. Or past experiences of inappropriate touch may still sit inside us and stop us being present for the other.”

Jan’s workshops encourage participants to feel all their feelings around touch in this way. “We tend to explore this in small groups so that you can have an opportunity to experience finding out and saying what you like and don’t like, and discovering the delight of being touched with conscious presence and playfulness.”

Learning to touch openly and freely and with awareness and also to receive this kind of touch is such a boon on so many well-being levels. “When we learn to relax into touch, it means our whole body surrenders and we become more embodied and more confident in every area of life.” Touch really is the antidote to the disconnected digital world.

More info on Jan’s workshops at [janday.com](http://janday.com)