

Vitamin T

Guidelines for Healthy Touch

Everyone has a very different personal touch history. The degree of caution or eagerness about touch is shaped by the touch experiences a person has encountered in the past. Permission is the key ingredient in all Vitamin T exchanges. Respect is demonstrated by waiting until permission to touch is granted either verbally or non-verbally through body language. The individual's right to choose whether or not to touch must be honored. Permission is also required before increasing the degree of intimacy. Any touch that comes as the result of pressure or coercion is not Vitamin T.

Sometimes it is hard to tell from a person's body language if they are receptive to touch. When there is any uncertainty, ask for clarification such as, "May I give you a hug?" Try not to second-guess another's touch wants. If you sense uneasiness or discomfort, remove uncertainty by asking.

Everyone has the right to protect their personal boundaries by maintaining a clear distinction between sensual and sexual touch. All Vitamin T exchanges require permission. The sensual/sexual boundary is only to be crossed by consenting adults.

The foundation of the Vitamin T philosophy is the principle of Leveling. Leveling is the process of establishing a mutually agreeable Vitamin T exchange. The contact depends on the comfort level and preferences of each person. The **R.I.T.**ual of touch establishes a balance between the type of **R**elationship, the degree of **I**ntimacy and the kind of **T**ouch shared by two people. Intimacy is the pivotal component of the exchange.

When a lack of balance exists, leveling is required to create a new balance. In general, the person wanting more intimacy adjusts to the level of the person wanting less. For example, if one person wants a hug and the other feels comfortable with a handshake, the two people would shake hands so that both feel comfortable. Touching without Leveling is not Vitamin T.

A Vitamin T deficiency results from a lack of contact with healthy sources of touch. Deficiencies may be caused by illness, stress, neglect or painful experiences with touch. Deficiency symptoms are physical or behavioral warnings that more nurturing touch is needed. Symptoms include feeling out of touch, lonely, isolated and grumpy. Minor deficiencies result when touch is not presently available. Major deficiencies occur when sources of healthy touch are available but a person is unreceptive to touch. The person's fear of touch usually reflects past experiences with scarcities, painful touches called **ouches** or **soul scars**. Soul scars are **ouches** so deep that the spirit is damaged. Regardless of degree, unhealed **ouches** create barriers against interpersonal contact. Vitamin T in a safe and supportive environment can heal **ouches**.

Space invaders are people who intentionally encroach upon another's personal space verbally, physically or sexually. Space invaders must be confronted assertively.

Each time you touch someone, you enter their personal space. When Vitamin T guidelines are followed, people feel that their personal space is respected.

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