

The Seven Dimensions of Touch - Part One

by David Lauterstein

The renaissance, they say, took place in the 15th and 16th centuries. We are, however, in another renaissance today, one of equal or greater importance. This renaissance was predicted by the futurist, John Naisbitt in his book *Megatrends*. Naisbitt spoke of the coming world as one of High Tech and High Touch. High tech and its spell-binding world of virtual reality is well documented. However, the rise of High Touch and its corresponding commitment to the heightened experience of actual reality is equally newsworthy and of equal or greater significance. The renaissance of seeing and hearing has given way to a renaissance of touch. The most vast of senses, the earliest to develop, touch is currently the repository of one of the most remarkable developments of our age. The discovery is that touch is quite possibly the leading edge for the next step in our cultural evolution.

There has been far more proliferation of touch therapies in the last twenty years than at any other time in world history. And it is not any particular brand of touch that is singularly powerful - be it Feldenkrais, Swedish massage, Zero Balancing, Reiki, Craniosacral Therapy, etc. - but these all constitute a realm pointing us back to the source of our power - ourselves and the life force we embody. For, setting aside the claims of the various therapeutic brands, what is most powerful here is the tender power of touch - to touch the truth of our aliveness, to restore our sense of deep enjoyment, to rise and praise with touch the beauty that is human being. Touch connects us with all this. Touch is the medium of actual reality. Touch wakes us up from the marketed but illusory world of happiness through virtual reality and the accumulation of goods, the kind of happiness that takes no inner work.

The hunger for the real in a culture of alienation is the greatest hunger of all. Being in touch is a fundamental way to satisfy this hunger. How is it that touch acquires this power? How can we empower it to help in our struggle for a world that values and cultivates real life? How can we assure the continued growth and cultural influence of the high art and science of touch?

My experience in teaching and giving and receiving bodywork has led to the realization that there are actually seven dimensions to touch. These seven dimensions are both objective and subjective, structural and energetic. They form the common elemental substrate to all body therapies. More importantly the seven dimensions of touch can help everyone share in the power inherent in our connecting with each other. They point us in the direction which will hopefully assure the continued flowering of touch as perhaps the most redemptive aspect of world culture today.

Contact - The First Dimension

Recall from geometry that a point is one dimensional. An ideal laying on of a hand creates an illuminated experience of a single sacred dimension, the wondrous experience of being a living place. Like the first application of paint to canvas, the first note of a song, or the first step onto a celestial body, there is something miraculous about form emerging from the void, imagination becoming reality, of something emanating out of nothing. When we truly touch, it is an archetypal experience similar to the feeling evoked by Michaelangelo's painting of God and Adam about to touch. In the simplest touch of a mother and child is imbedded the love that will heal.

In just this simple touch, after the long odyssey of the human race, after eons of evolution, we meet each other on this common conscious living ground. To optimize the co-creative meeting of humanity, we must make room in our educational system for an imaginative and exact experiential study of anatomy and physiology. Plato said that education should begin with the study of gymnastics and poetry. Self-exploration and expression through movement and word are indeed fundamental to the education of the soul. I want our education to include not just the Apollonian learning about reality through mere "facts" but as well this Dionysian learning about nature directly through experience. For our body is the largest, indeed the only direct experience we have of natural law. As the founder of Swedish massage, Pehr Henrik Ling said, "We consider the organs of the body not as lifeless masses, but as the living active instruments of the soul".

When we have a compassionate understanding of and feeling for the structures and functions of our bodies, even in our everyday encounters with each other, we are far more likely to evoke the incredible effect of feeling illuminated by the simplest touch. We can so much more appreciate the miracle of meeting. Together we become a living, active instrument of soul. Isn't that the central hope of humanity?

If we would include in our early and adult education, discussion and experience of the benefits of human connection, of touch as healing, and of the energy of relationship, we could begin to consciously organize our individual and collective psychophysical reality. For most of us, our education in emotions, for example, is random. Our emotional skill acquisition is basically the same as our movement skills' acquisition as described by Ida Rolf, Rolfing's founder. She noted that in our society when a child first walks first across the room if he or she succeeds in making it across without major injury we consider it a success! She observes that we take virtually no responsibility or pleasure in helping children move in an efficient and beautiful manner. Therefore, their movements and their structures become "randomly" organized.

In our society, there is virtually no education in organizing our emotions, mind, or spirit. Not surprisingly, we live in a society strikingly random in its psychic organization! We will still be living in this pre-history of conscious humanity until we include in our education exploration of how emotions, thoughts, and spirit are organized in the human, This will include a knowledge of some of the major theories of energy anatomy - the

various models as elaborated in Chinese Medicine, the chakras and nadis of Indian cosmology, the energy theories of Western psychotherapeutic pioneers such as Wilhelm Reich. These can contribute to an energy literacy without which our touching, the ways we connect, may be experienced merely as mechanical. These are part of the precious, often unclaimed, energetic heritage of world culture.

Let us note the relevance of this first dimension to people who utilize touch within their profession. The first dimension of touch brings long overdue attention to "psychomechanics". In massage trainings, for example, students are sometimes introduced to "bio-mechanics." However, rarely addressed is the issue - how shall we organize our thoughts, feelings, and spirit as we touch? To organize the psychic as well as physical self, notice that healthy, mindful touching partakes of the same spirit as meditation. In most forms of meditation, we center our awareness on something - a mantra, a breath, a prayer. In this way awareness shifts from being random in its organization to having a "home base" to which we can return. In mindful touch, the first dimension provides precisely this center. Our home base is the literal meeting place of two persons' structure and energy. In Deep Massage and Zero Balancing, this meeting place is called "interface".

For health practitioners, when touching consciously, as in meditation, there are moments when the attention naturally wanders to an anatomical insight or to the relevance of a certain feeling. Yet we can return again and again to interface, to the place where we meet. And certainly we periodically bring our awareness to our body movements, to the animal grace and balance that feels good to both parties. Then we return our awareness, our energy, to interface. And we access the spiritual realm, the sense that we are equal and, in some important senses, one, so that our interface includes the spirit as part of the content of our meeting. As we circulate with our awareness as called for, through our emotions, body, mind and spirit, we come to dwell with more and more clarity, more strength and more fullness of being together in this place where we miraculously meet.

For all of us, the conscious experience of the first dimension of touch can open a new world of being together. In the words of psychotherapist Steve Gilligan, "The thing that brings human value back to experience is the touching of it with human presence."

Movement - The Second Dimension

We experience the second dimension of touch when we are touched and then "moved" in body and soul by another. In the simplest sense this is a geometrical fact. A point is one-dimensional and a plane, such as that described by a hand moving across a body's surface, is two-dimensional. The deeper grandeur and creative power of the second dimension is evoked by the image of the spirit of God moving across the waters, creating life. Movement proceeds mysteriously out from stillness. As we know from physics, movement requires energy. Therefore, when we experience movement, we by definition are experiencing energy.

And, when we experience loving movement, we experience ec-stacy. Loving movement proceeding out of stillness is literally "ec-static" meaning, of course, "out from stillness!"

We are touched and moved not only from without, we are touched and moved from within as the wisdom of our life processes manifest themselves. The human animal is unique in being able to become conscious of how we have been created, of what forces are moving us. What a literal trip to exactly and imaginatively traverse the evolved routes of being, the continuing saga God writes in sinew and cell! The origin, insertion and action of each muscle, the unique curving shape of each bone, the undulating structure of the nervous system - each cell, tissue, organ and system can serve as an intelligent guide for our movements when we touch and move in our lives.

The sense with which we perceive and give touch is the "haptic" sense. Charles Moore and Kent Bloomer in *Body, Memory and Architecture* write, "Treated as a perceptual system the haptic incorporates all those sensations (pressure, warmth, cold, pain and kinesthetics) which previously divided up the sense of touch. For example, if you accidentally swallow a marble you may haptically sense it as it moves through your body, thus experiencing part of the environment within your body...No other sense deals as directly with the three-dimensional world or similarly carries with it the possibility of altering the environment in the process of perceiving it; no other sense engages in feeling and doing simultaneously (my emphasis)." Indeed what is touch? We say we are touched by a friend's hand, but would you say you are touched by the chair you sit on? Touch, we see, implies an energetic dimension. The second dimension of touch reveals the essential content of this dimension. What is touch? Movement with awareness. The moving of living beings into structural and energetic contact with each other is touch. Touch is living relationship. And as we move together, we change together.

The liberating potential of our movements and of our every touch is assured by the fluid nature of the connective tissues in the body. The connective tissue of the body, the "fascia", is thixotropic. Technically fascia is a liquid crystal. And, "thixotropic" means fascia has the property to, with any increase of activity from within or without, become more fluid. When we touch with both structure and energy, fascia changes from being solid to being more fluid. This property affords us the incredible opportunity that when we touch each other with love and clarity, our movements can reshape body, mind and spirit. The body is not solid, even if our tactile sense gives us that illusion. Through our thixotropic nature we are open to change. The fascia forms the physical basis for our hope. Our ability to let go and create ourselves anew is a function not only of this chemical property of fascia but also of the circulating intelligence of the nervous and endocrine systems. The paths our touching takes within us are not just in fascial planes but within the neural pathways of memory, emotion, and thought. For the body's movements and postures do not come from the muscles and connective tissues - they are rather initiated by the electrical stimulus and orienting messages from our nervous and endocrine systems. When we touch, when we move, with love and mindfulness, we are introducing clearer and stronger haptic impressions into the neuro-endocrine system than those that had previously existed. This second dimension of touch opens new opportunities to let go, to stand, to feel and think in freer ways, in ways more congruent

with our true nature. In this way, with anatomic and physiological rigor, we can say - love will set us free.

Breath - The Third Dimension

With breath we activate and stimulate the third dimension of touch. Most people ordinarily experience the body as having just a front and a back - that is, as two-dimensional. To experience oneself consciously as three-dimensional is for most people an altered and en-lightened state of being.

The first dimension of touch establishes a meeting place, the second, a fruitful path along the length and breadth of our being. With conscious breathing we add the physical and energetic experience of depth. Breathing fully we feel waving movement, space opening and closing within us. The continuous expansion and contraction that breathing involves is perhaps the primary way we sense that we are alive.

We take over 20,000 breaths each day! Fully breathing means fully alive. As we breathe more and more deeply, more energy is available for each and every living cell. We don't label it a nutrient only because it is so fundamental. Let us never forget - breath is the primary source for our energy.

While it is true that we touch structurally with our hands, since breath the primary source of our energy, our touch originates energetically in the breath. In a touch that feels alive the origin of that life is breath. Energetically when two people touch it is experientially rigorous to say it is breath touching breath.

Breath is the source not only for the quantity of our energy but plays a large role in determining its quality as well. Our brain stem at the base of the cranium keeps us breathing but we are free through higher brain centers (diencephalon and cerebrum) to modulate our breath amplitude and rate, and with it the spirit with which we meet our ever changing life. For breath is a primary modulator of the autonomic nervous system, the system which orients us toward fight or flight or rest and repose. The respiratory system responds continuously to the ever changing nature of inner and outer reality. As we breathe we use our breath to sedate or stimulate our entire organism. This is an incredible existential fulcrum we have been given! With this awareness become conscious, we can use breath intentionally to deeply amplify our life force and to finely tune the autonomic nervous system. In this way when we touch with breath, filled with more life and balance, we give each other living permission to heighten life and to restore more balance and flexibility to the autonomic nervous system - the way we respond to the "changes" of our life.

As the very root of the word reveals - re-spir-ation - breath is not merely an energy source in the physical sense but is the anatomical manifestation of spirit. Touch with breath is touch with spirit.

Hands, as the structural end points of our touch, in an incredibly beautiful way shape our breath, just as the voice shapes our breath through song. In India there are sacred hand positions known as mudras. With the breath/spirit active in our touch, living hands become dynamic mudras. From this standpoint mindful touching has then the structure and function of a sacred dialogue as conveyed through the hands modulating the spiritual power of breath.

It is said that eyes are the window to the soul. Even more dramatically we can see that breath is the window to the spirit. Through our senses, we so often unconsciously track the movement of each other's breathing. Sighs, yawns, shallower breaths, dreamy rhythms, each speak of the trajectory of the spirit. Mindfully noticing breath we can respond to each other, almost in a call and response manner, to the changing shape of the spirit. Understanding better the movement of the spirit within our relationships, we can touch each other with more understanding. Now relating with more assertion, now moving slowly or speeding up, our touch can appropriately add extra sweetness to moments of deep nourishment or surround extraordinary experience with stillness.

Breathing, we bring fresh air into our situation. Touch with conscious breath brings lightness, loosens our illusion of solidity, and unites us all living beings in the grandeur of planetary gas exchange. Right now all life is breathing. Touch with breath inevitably heightens the life of all.

In closing I would like to reach out and touch you with these sacred words from the Laguna Pueblo people. They evoke beautifully the redemption of our living in conscious touch with each other -

I add my breath to your breath, that our days may be long on the Earth, That the days of our people may be long, that we shall be as one person, that we may finish our road together.

The Seven Dimensions of Touch - Part Two

by David Lauterstein

In a "virtual" age, a time greatly affected by the pace of computers and their powerful yet imaginary realities, each individual's unmet hunger and the social need for the actual becomes more and more urgent. Touch is a medium of actual reality. Touch is a medium of living reality, just as light is a medium for physical reality. Touch implies not just physical contact - would you say are touched by the pen as you hold it? Touch does require at least three dimensions since the space we live in has, in its everyday aspect, three dimensions - length, height and depth. But the reason why we would not ordinarily say we are "touched" by a pen is that touch implies an active reaching out. The realm of intention and attention implies more dimensions than three. For intentional touch requires

not just contact of one structure to another, but also of one energy to another. To touch we need to look beyond just three dimensions - into energetic quality, into relationship, into love - very real things that certainly can not be explained by everyday geometry. Let us - right off the bat - help lessen the tendency to excessive mystify energy. Consider shaking hands. When you meet someone and shake his or her hand, you notice the structure of the hand, but also more than that. You get the feeling of their energy from how they grip. How they are relating to you is their energy as manifested through the way they are choosing to use their structure. In our "virtual" world, structure and energy are separated. In conventional medicine, for example, a diseased lung is viewed as a thing to be fixed. The energy dimension of the person - the feelings, their thoughts, some of which may have played a role in creating the disease, these are often ignored. And people feel disconnected today in many ways - from each other, from their own bodies, from their true selves, from nature. There is only one way to connect structure and energy - touch - because touch of course involves structure, physical contact, and it also requires energy, intentional contact. It is not possible to address the disconnection endemic within the modern world without touch. With a growing sense of wonder I keep rediscovering how touching is the only way to connect structure and energy. Martin Buber said, "It is not the educational intention which is fruitful, but it is the meeting which is educationally fruitful." Taking the statement one step higher, we might say that it is, by definition, meeting and perhaps only meeting which is fruitful. Until we meet, nothing new is born. And touch is perhaps the purest form of meeting. It is my contention that, beyond the usual three, there are four specific dimensions to meeting through touch. The growing science and art of truly meeting is the growing edge of humanity. The geometry of this meeting is the geometry of healing and of touch. As we explore each of these dimensions in turn we encounter lessons about being alive that augment the lives of each of us who want, who insist more and more loudly, on individual and collective lives of deeper meaning.

Graceful Verticality - The Fourth Dimension of Touch

Most structural models show humans supporting themselves in a largely vertical manner. All our major anatomical structures are vertical in their orientation - the skeleton, nervous system, lymph and blood flow, the muscles. And the rich traditions of energy theory as well have a startling level of agreement. The meridians of Chinese medicine, chakras, kundalini, the nadis of the Indian view, Western bioenergetic models of body-oriented psychotherapy - each speaks of energy as flowing vertically through the human body, between heaven and earth. So in exploring how being in touch comes to have power in the world, how we stand is essential. For, in balance, the more relaxedly vertical, the more free and upright we are, the more our structure and the energy flowing through it are enhanced. The American Indians ask a wonderful question referring to personal integrity, "How do you stand with respect the four directions?" Try this experiment - stand next to friend who is sitting in chair with his or her eyes closed. Standing rigidly vertical, at "attention", touch the person on the shoulder for ten seconds. Then disengage and discuss together how that felt. Now stand slumped over and repeat the experiment. Finally, stand gracefully erect, more a graceful reed than a rod, and repeat the experiment. In most cases touch from a rigid body feels mechanical, inhuman. In the case

of the slumped over body, it may feel hulking, de-energized or somewhat "creepy". In the case of the touch from a gracefully vertical body, the energy feels more available, less defended, freer. The experienced voltage of this touch is greater. This experiment reminds us that, though we may establish contact with our hands, we do not just touch with our hands, we touch with our whole self. We can see and cultivate our meeting each other by noticing this tender discovery. Touch acquires its maximum energy when we stand up and face each other as free, inquiring beings. A touch that arises from a body that has been allowed to grow, to ascend, to be free in the world, this touch is much higher in its transformative potential. Free, undefended touch is positively contagious. It lets those we touch know in a bodily felt way - there is more room for freedom, more room for love, more room for grace than we often imagine. With this high form of touch, we can stand up for each other and succeed together. Without it we stand apart filled with longings for a fuller life. The fulfillment of life requires this graceful stance and this touch that unites us with heaven, with earth and with each other. Touch with graceful verticality also conveys a sense of lightness of being since, appropriately aligned, we stand and move with less effort. Touch born of a lighter experience of self is enlightening for others. People suffer from treating themselves and other as mere things, just as structures. This gives rise to the experience of life being literally and figuratively too hard. Energetically potentiated touch dissolves the sense of life being too hard. The experience of energy dissolves the excessive solidity of the world. It opens us up to the essential softness and malleability of reality. So we see the enormous potential for standing by each other. Krishnamurti said that if two people could totally cooperate the world would be instantaneously transformed. This strong is our standing together face-to-face. Every time we stand together as free beings and touch, in some way our world is transformed in that very instant.

Heartful Touch - The Fifth Dimension

"The best and most beautiful things can not be seen or even touched but must be felt with the heart," said Helen Keller. However, it is true as well to say - when we touch with our hearts, it is a most beautiful thing. Emotion adds a new dimension to the realm of touch. The residence for the emotions from which we reach out is the realm of the heart. Anatomically this includes the sternum, ribs, the thoracic vertebrae, lungs, and thymus gland, a very important member of the immune system. So in this realm we encounter much movement - the breathing being, the pulses of life, the spinal cord waving in fluid within the vertebral canal. The realm of the heart is a moving one. It is no surprise that "e-motion", the intention to "move outward" from deep within is of its essence. When we feel the need, whether from real or imagined realities, to defend ourselves, one of the first manifestations of this defense is to tense up around the heart. Self-protection is a self-shielding. Chinese medicine even identifies an organ function called the "heart protector". We grow up in a culture and in families where we naturally develop habitually defended ways of being. As a culture, we just beginning to acknowledge the pervasiveness of abuse, both overt and covert. Within chronically abusive or confusing realities, we become chronically defended. Chronic tension around the heart and lungs becomes a life-limiting factor. And this in turn limits our capacity to touch and be touched. "Reach out and touch someone," - ironically, the slogan for the major American phone system (talk

about virtual reality misappropriating the hallmark of the actual!) - turns out to be the primary directive for addressing this tension. First we need to reach from deep inside and touch the tense or hurting places within us. This calls for bravery, another of the characteristics of the heart realm. For to reach out and touch all of ourselves or all of someone else - this is one of the bravest things a person can do. As we touch our chronic tensions, they begin, as if by magic, to dissolve - because the healing we seek involves the touching of it fully with human presence. The heart's participation in human touch is a natural process of our growth. As we mature, we move from early childhood survival issues associated with learning life fundamentals, how to consciously move, feed ourselves, sit, stand up, to the integration of our sexuality, associated with the second chakra, to forming our own identity as a young adult. The further ascent then into the heart realm brings in the unprecedented ability and desire to give to others out of a real and growing abundance. Into the spaciousness of the heart flows our energy like springs into a lake. And this energetic level generates not only a new quality of energy flow but a new direction as well. For our arms and hands enable us to move out with feeling from deep within us horizontally into the world around us. In this evolutionary movement we become sustaining not just to ourselves through the vertical energy flow, but as well to the whole world around us. Nourished by others and our own self-development, we attain escape velocity from the mere verticality of self-support. Our impulse to reach and touch with love grows, "our great love grows and grows." It is with reference to our feeling-filled movements that Pablo Neruda said, "Hands make the world each day." In the symbol of the cross this beautiful work of world-making is empowered. At the heart we encounter the living crossroads in each of us at which we decide each day whether to touch ourselves and others fully, wholeheartedly. Even the chakras speak to us of the power of our hearts as the meeting places for the horizontal flow of love which makes the world go 'round as well as their role in the vertical flow between heaven and earth. For underlying the heart are the three lower chakras associated with the base of the spine, the sacral area and the belly. Above the heart lie the throat, brow and crown. This places the heart at the precise energetic center of human life. In a Chinese classic it is said most profoundly, "Heaven and Earth meet in the heart. It is their destiny and place of rendezvous."

Mindful Touch - the Sixth Dimension

When we meet as equals, as free inquiring human beings, we notice that we touch with our whole selves. Since we are not divided, since each of us is a unity of body, mind and spirit, when we touch we do so with our minds and spirits as well as our bodies. How exactly do we touch with our minds? For it is the presence of understanding in touch that constitutes its sixth dimension. In the Bible it says that Adam "knew" Eve. This is usually taken to be a euphemism for making love. But let us step back and look at what this "knew" may mean? What if this means that Adam was close enough to Eve to really know how she felt? It is interesting to note here that the legal definition of sanity is the capacity to imagine how someone else feels. When I touch someone with a rational and intuitive knowledge regarding how they feel, then the touch communicates not just care, but understanding as well, fundamental sanity. To get to know someone takes time. Notice how good it feels to imagine the touch of someone who truly knows and loves us.

Knowing touch is a touch that happens when people care enough to take the time to get to know one another. The rhythm in which this touch comes to be is much slower than just the everyday bumping into one another which takes hardly any time. In the nature of knowing touch is given also the time required to get to know, time literally lives in this touch quality. For knowing is always a process. Understanding touch is one that learns, is curious, is a touch open to the mystery of another's being unfolding in time. Whether we touch as a friends, lovers, parent and child, therapist and client, there is a call and response form to the touch relationship. I touch my son on the shoulder and notice his response - it may be a freeze, a leaning into, reaching out, a pulling or pushing away, a watchful, waiting response. Notice how the archetypes of relationship are naked actions in this realm of touch - how do we meet? how does our relationship develop over time? How poignantly Carole King expressed it in the archetypal words of "But will You Love Me Tomorrow". Will we love each other today? Will we take the care to get to know one another slowly but surely so that we can more and more experience the connection we all yearn so much for? In the call and response of touching each other, we actively and vulnerably seek the ever-changing answer to this question. After each day of creation, it is said that God saw that it was good. In the call and response of touch, we similarly notice what touch has wrought. Very often, thank God, we notice that it is indeed good! It is important for us to see and to acknowledge the effects of reaching out and touching. Jung said that, if we do not celebrate our successes, we become sick. The experience of being touched with love and understanding translates into an experience of feeling beautiful and worthy. It is part of the healing process to see each other truly, to celebrate, to take in and be nourished by the acceptance of our touch and by the success of our efforts to connect with each other. In this way knowing touch fills our hearts and minds with joy.

The Alchemy of Touch - the Seventh Dimension

Touch acquires, mysteriously or perhaps by God's grace, a seventh dimension. Within this dimension we experience the presence of, in addition to you and me, a third energy, one which is in some sense created by our meeting. The poet Machado said, "Between waking dreaming, there is a third thing." Just so between you and me, there is a third thing. And we are now both touched by it. Shall we say it is Love? We can not make it happen. Even in the Bible it says that on the seventh day of creation God rested. Did he just take the day off? Take a bath? Perhaps he actually created football on the sixth day and watched the game all day Sunday! I never much considered the seventh day as a very big deal. But the more I have learned about the seventh dimension of touch, the more the seventh day imagery and essence has unfolded. Let us then consider the seventh day not as the rest period after the creation, but as its very pinnacle. How sweet to feel in our hearts that the rest, the letting go, the peaceful surrendering of the universe to itself is the ultimate act of creation! When we touch, we can not make anything extraordinary happen. We can not force grace with will. But if we touch with devotion and yet with an effortless letting go, we open a window through which the extraordinary is most free to enter. The presence of the extraordinary, whether we experience it as love, spirit, God, an "altered state", or any other of its infinite forms, is recognized by its alchemical power. The presence of the seventh dimension is, by definition, transformative. And the

recognition that, whether we will it or not, any touch could be transformational, makes our attitude toward touch inherently reverential. The embarrassment around touch that gives rise to so many jokes and ambivalent behaviors - this is a side effect of the inner knowledge that truly touching is always an invitation for God to touch us. As we rest in touch, we can feel the reaching out as a further opening inward to being deeply touched and healed inside. When we touch ultimately it is like awakening from a dream. In this dream we have imagined ourselves as separate, we have thought we were alone. With this touch we know we are not alone, we are an integral part of a wide world which includes us. It is our isolated self that is the illusion. Unity is our essence, not separation. In this experience of unity through touch, the seven dimensions are alive. Then we experience the true, the redemptive character of touch. We experience ourselves as part of " the secret one slowly growing a body." How extraordinary! May all the heavens rejoice! As Nietzsche wrote almost shouting in the days of his life, "My Maestro Pietro, sing me a new song! The earth is transfigured and all the heavens rejoice!" The seven dimensions of touch beget each other. Initial contact leads to movement together, movement calls for breath. From breath, human life arises and stands up on earth. As we stand face-to face, we can now begin to touch heart to heart. and the honest experience of each other leads to understanding, to knowledge of oneself and the other. Knowledge leads beyond itself, to a letting go into mystery, into the unknown and the unwilled. Through the alchemy of touch we experience the gift of being, in every bit of space and time within us, a living part of God's body.