



Comfort, 2009

“My mother passed away on September 18, 2008, after a year and a half of fighting cancer. During her time of sickness, I would regularly give her hand and foot massages. The act of touching gave us comfort at a time when nothing was left to be said.”

The artist will be giving massages to willing participants. You may choose to receive either a hand or foot massage, or both. If you would like a foot massage, please remove your shoes, wipe your feet with wet wipes and put on the slippers provided. The artist will motion you to enter when she is ready. She will remain silent during the massage, and will tap your shoulder when she is finished.

You are welcome to leave comments in the notebook provided.

The artist is in Tuesday to Sunday, 5-6pm.

COMMENTS

I first walked in and read the passage and instantly felt uncomfortable but thought it was weird how a comforting act could create discomfort. My own discomfort is the reason I thought I had to come back.

Waiting – I feel... hospital? The sanitation, the white/pastel color of the walls/curtain. Waiting to be healed, loved, comforted. All the sudden I am convincing myself that I am more tense than I thought. The anticipation is crippling.

After – thank you...

I've heard of people with psoriasis going for years without being touched, even by people in their families. Not having touch is one of the things that's most difficult to me about being apart from family and friends. I feel an awkward space between me and those around me that I think is fairly common in our culture or at least mine. Talking with someone is often enough of a breach. I don't have much understanding for touch, but it was a powerful experience. It's powerful to think of touch as connecting and worthwhile and human – something not only in addition to words but even alone.

Touch is such a profound way to connect with loved ones, particularly in times of grief and loss. On his deathbed, my dad could no longer speak. I kissed him, forehead to toes, to communicate my love for him. He exhaled his last breath hours later. I have a deep emotional memory of those kisses. Sometimes I think I can still feel them on my lips.

Touch heals, comforts, gives peace. It also releases oxytocin – a bonding chemical – which increases attachment between two people. All primates use touch to comfort and feel close. Humans don't take it seriously enough. You've really tapped into something universal. Thank you. I needed this today. I'm pregnant, I've been sick all day, I just returned from a long trip to India where I got sick, I have a lot of tension, etc. a stranger's touch changed everything. Thank you 😊

This way of communicating and interacting was a strange duality of intimacy and distance, and I found it both comforting and surreal. It was a truly beautiful piece and I feel privileged to have been a participant.

Very relaxing. The touch was soothing. Thanks. Sorry about the passing of your mother.

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Thank you for making the world an ok place

I have been on many tables – for “beauty” treatments, examinations of health, therapy. But never for comfort alone.

Babies and small children are comforted. Is it because we are aware of the journey they most travel? Do we Shepard them through the ragged and desolate terrain which lies ahead?

I thought about your mother and her life and her passing, and thought about my mother, my life, her life and the chain link we form through time. I thought of my life and its passing – as it will. The luxury of comfort that is as fleeting as is a lifetime.

Thank you.

My mother has cancer. I have many friends I could talk to if there was anything to be said, but the most profound emotions are unnameable and unspeakable. Thank you.

Both of my parents are ill, my father has cancer. You are not here right now. I think I will come back.

When I was a little kid my mom made me learn piano but I refused to practice. Eventually she bribed me with hand massages...

Dear Wendy,

I'm so sorry to read of your mother's passing, and to learn of this – this way, but perhaps some things are better only said through art. Wish you were here – this is a piece of great magnitude and healing.

I stopped massage therapy after finding out how addictive it is, but I fantasize about it still –

Be strong

Wendy –

As I said, a great massage. You've got talent!

I thought of my mother continuously through the experience. Sweet nostalgia. Nothing really troubling. Wish she were still here 'tho I know that's not possible. She did love her massages and I see why. It's a transportive experience –

With soothing, comfort –