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*Touched* by Carl E Beyer

Have you been *touched*? No I am not talking about being *touched* physically but about something much deeper. I am talking about a *touch* that shapes your character. A *touch* that leaves an imprint on your soul. A *touch* that with its gentleness can turn your life around. Most of us have been *touched* and have *touched* others. Hopefully, most of these *touches* have been positive with the negative ones having been discarded.

Why, you may ask, am I using the word *touched*? *Touch* by definition implies something gentle. Most of us have all been lectured, scolded, instructed, prodded, pleaded with, forced and shaped by other means. But a *touch*, by its very gentleness, leaves an imprint never to be forgotten.

The people most likely to *touch* us first are our parents. My mother had a poem she wrote called, "Bed of Life." The gist of the poem is that, in life, we make decisions that can affect us for life. These decisions "make our bed" and that is "the bed we lie in". Try to keep your "Bed of Life" clean, so you can sleep comfortably. This is an important lesson to learn early on so you can decide what you want your character to be, regardless of your circumstances.

Who has not been *touched* by that one special teacher? That teacher whose sees something good in you and nurtures that goodness. My special teacher was Mrs. Hunter. Coming from a small town where K-12 consisted of 800 students in the same building everyone was "known." By eighth grade I was known as the troubled kid from a troubled family. But Mrs. Hunter came in from the outside and did not care about any of that. She *touched* me by simply saying, "Carl, I know you are smart but being smart will only take you so far. You need to start combining that smartness with hard work so you can have solid high school grades and go onto college." She did not speak these words in a harsh scolding manner but in all gentleness and concern. Her science class was the first time I studied to get better grades. Her gentle *touch* prompted me to realize that I had been skating by on brains alone and that was not enough. I am not sure what classes I would have taken in high school without her *touch*. With that *touch* I went on to take all the hard science classes and college.

Then there are our bosses. We can all forget those bad bosses whose only *touch* is to show us what not to do. I am talking about those great bosses that lead by example and have genuine concern about your well-being. Tom Sweredoski, God Rest His Soul, will always be remembered by me. But one particular statement he made stayed with me. During one of our conversations he *touched* me by saying, “The way I see it, by the time a man is thirty he should either have accomplished something or have all the blocks in place to accomplish something.” He went on to explain that many times people in their young twenties may not know what they want to do. So that is the time to explore and seek out the profession you want, but by your later twenties you better be making some decisions. Those words stuck with me and I used his time frame as both a challenge and a yardstick. I never knew or respected a better man. His *touch* will always be with me.

Now we come to the most powerful *touch* of all; the touch of God. Our Lord’s *touch* can take many forms but I like to write about one that *touched* me. I am uncertain when this touch happened, which in of itself is quite remarkable since it has so affected my life, but this *touch* will remain with me till my death. I was kneeling and praying after receiving the Holy Eucharist and for some reason I asked God, “How old will I live to be?” There was an instant clear reply of only two words: “Very Old.” I have had many conversations in my head but these two words were different. First, I was not wishing to be old because I have always figured I would die relatively young. My father died at 32, his father at 46, my other grandparents in their mid-fifties. So I thought I would just march in line with them. Those two words messed up my plans of not worrying about my general health. You see, God did not say, “You will live to be very old and be healthy, wealthy, and wise”. Very old could mean a long term of bad health. So I have tried to start down a road to better health. The next question could be what is considered to be very old? Only time will tell. If I drop dead tomorrow then 49 is very old. In the mean time I figure God has plans for me and I had better try and hold up my end of the bargain.

Here is where I would like to tell you to go forth and *touch* someone but I cannot. You could go out there and start throwing around words of wisdom and try, I suppose, to *touch* someone. But I do not believe that is how it is done. I believe to have the honor of *touching* someone positively

you have to first be respectable and available. Few of us listen to people we do not respect. Even fewer of us can listen to someone who is not available. So in parting I say.... God Bless You. Lead your life respectfully and honor our Lord. Make yourself available by participating in positive activities and listening to your fellow man. May our Dear Lord bless you with the honor of *touching* someone's life in a positive manner.

P.S. If someone has *touched* your life, give them the honor of letting them know.