



Ourselves We're Helping, Ourselves We're Healing, by James Carse

I am touched by another when the distance between us is reduced to zero. I am touched only if I respond from my own center -- that is, spontaneously, originally. But you do not touch me except from your own center, out of your own genius. Touching is always reciprocal. You cannot touch me unless I touch you in response. The opposite of touching is MOVING. You move me by pressing me from without toward a place you have already foreseen and perhaps prepared. It is a staged action that succeeds only if in moving me you remain unmoved yourself. I can be moved to tears by skilled performances and heart-rending newspaper accounts, or moved to passion by political manifestos and narratives of heroic achievement -- but in each case I am moved according to a formula or design to which the actor or agent is immune. When actors bring themselves to tears BY their performance, and not AS their performance, they have failed their craft; they have become theatrically inept. When I am touched, I am touched only as the person I am behind all the theatrical masks, but at the same time I am changed from within -- and whoever touches me is touched as well. [...] If to be touched is to respond from one's center, it is also to respond as a whole person. To be whole is to be hale, or healthy. In sum, whoever is touched is healed. [...] When I am healed I am restored to my center in a way that my freedom as a person is not compromised by my loss of functions. This means that the illness need not be eliminated before I can be healed. I am not free to the degree I can be healed. I am not free to the degree that I can overcome my infirmities, but only to the degree that I can put my infirmities into play. I am cured of my illness; I am healed with my illness. Healing, of course, has all the reciprocity of touching ... But healing requires no specialists, only those who can come to us out of their own center, and who are prepared to be healed themselves. --James Carse