

“HAVE A HUG”
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I heard on the radio that the first week of June has been designated national "Give-Someone-a-hug-Week".

At first this sounds like it should be a good idea. Hugs are warm, fuzzy, touchy-feely things that allow us to break through inhibitory social barriers. However, upon further reflection, it becomes clear that indiscriminate hugging is not necessarily good. For example, an employer hugging an employee could be interpreted as sexual harassment and lead to a lawsuit. Hugging in the workplace could distract employees and decrease productivity.

Hugging someone who doesn't want to be hugged can be a daunting proposition. He or she may be hard to catch, and may require a surprise hug. Certainly there are people who will take hugging to extremes.....hugging the mailman, the garbage man and so forth. Suppose Safeway (our local “friendly” grocery store) were to get wind of the hug craze? Can you imagine being asked "Paper, plastic, or a hug?" Others may stand in line without a purchase just to get the hug. I foresee signs in stores stating: “No Hug without a Purchase”, or “No Shoes, No Shirt, No Hug”.

Suppose someone with body odor or lice wants to hug you? You'd have to discover tactful ways to avoid such hugs. Emily Post could have a field day on hug etiquette. Seriously, giving a hug takes a certain amount of social grace. The timing, the amount of pressure applied, the placement of each arm all require coordination and consideration. A "How-To" manual* is available for those who feel a bit rusty about their hugging skills.

Hugs can be dangerous. Some people hug too hard, and this can result in injury. I'm definitely staying away from the weight room at my gym that week.

My husband was recently hugged by a female acquaintance who gave him a firm, full body-contact hug that seemed to go on for an eternity. I did not like that. I was surprised, in fact, at how much I did not like that. (As I said, hugs can be dangerous.)

How about chiropractors and massage therapists? Will they charge for their hugs?

What if some deranged individual goes on a hug rampage? Can charges be brought against gangs who rove about giving group hugs to unwilling recipients?

Whoever thought of "Give-Someone-A-Hug-Week" clearly did not consider all the possible ramifications. At this very moment that person must be realizing that this idea is foolish, inappropriate and downright dangerous. He must feel terrible. He is probably sitting alone, hanging his head and regretting ever having been born. Sounds like he needs a hug.

*To order the manual please send \$150.00 to E. Dalton, 2800 Harris St. Eureka, 95503

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Editor's note:

Can you imagine the government bureaucracy that would spring up? Whole new volumes of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Hug Act) regulations would have to be written. Eventually, hugs would be licensed and taxed: “A Hug without a license, go to jail.” The Kafkaesque ramifications are endless.