

The Healing Peace of Reiki

BY JACQUELINE RAMSEY



The class was small, about ten, and a combination of men and women. The ages ranged from a teenaged boy to a lady in her seventies. Sitting through the first evening of description and discussion was physically painful, but I left feeling very excited about Reiki and its possibilities. Could I really heal myself? The next day we practiced in pairs. I lay on the massage table, face up and fully clothed. My partner laid her hands on my face and then in a series of positions around my head and body, ending at my feet. She stayed in each position, without movement, for five minutes. Her hands were warm and the whole session was very relaxing.

When it was my turn to practice, I found that my hands tingled a lot and were very warm on her body, but my

“OH GOD, I’M PARALYZED,” MY MIND SCREAMED.

I lay in bed unable to move. I had awoken and tried to get out of bed when the pain in my upper body hit. It had been so sharp and so severe that I just lay there trying to calm myself and manage my rising panic. Eventually I was assisted out of bed and taken to the doctor by my husband.

I was not paralyzed, though I was diagnosed with a herniated disc in my neck. I lived in pain, every hour of every day after that, for almost four years. Weeks after my diagnosis, a friend suggested I take a Reiki class along with the pain medication and physiotherapy. Listening to her describe it, I got really excited. This first level was primarily for self-healing though I would be able to use it for others. At this point I was most interested in it for me, but I figured I would practice on family and friends, too.

I learned that Reiki, pronounced ray-key, promotes overall balance—balance of the mind, body, and spirit. It is a very simple healing practice where the practitioner lays her hands on the body to be treated. It is a painless, non-invasive treatment that can be used in conjunction with any other medical treatment. As told to me then, the reported benefits of Reiki included relaxation, less anxiety, less depression, and even pain management. I was not aware of the research available on Reiki but the belief was (and is) that if you are relaxed then the physical body is better able to heal. It sounded promising so I took the Reiki Level I class shortly after my initial diagnosis.

own physical pain made it difficult for me to give her a session. Happily, our last class discussion was all about self-Reiki, with the instruction to practice on yourself everyday.

I didn’t use Reiki for long. I found it difficult to understand how this simple act of placing hands on the body could help with healing, and it didn’t seem to be working on me. As someone with an accounting background, one plus one must equal two, and this did not equal anything I understood. Three years later, and willing to try just about anything to ease my now chronic pain, I took a second level class.

If Level I was all about hands on me and hands on you, the second level taught me how to use Reiki for someone not in my presence. I wasn’t sure I would use that feature much but it brought Reiki back into focus for me.

The class was in May and my friend, Tracy, was having thyroid surgery in July. I asked if I could practice by giving her one session a week for eight weeks leading up to surgery. She agreed. Her surgery was very successful, and the doctor was so pleased that he discharged her early. My sessions with Tracy had been fun. She often chatted through the session as I moved from one position to another. Other than the usual warmth, I never felt anything significant in my hands so I was pleased to hear the comments from her doctor.

Tracy called me six months later to say she needed more treatments. Her periodic pain which usually required medication had been almost nil since her first Reiki session. The only thing different was Reiki.

Just after finishing Tracy's treatments, I had decided to practice Reiki on myself, in conjunction with chiropractic sessions. After each session with the chiropractor, I went home, lay down, and gave myself thirty minutes of Reiki. This was in addition to the Reiki I gave myself every night before I went to sleep. I was very diligent, though I discontinued seeing the chiropractor after eight months. Four months from my first application of self-Reiki, I noticed pain-free breaks in the day—short ones, at first, but the hours became days, which then became weeks.

To me, being pain-free was like a breath of fresh air, and I wanted to share this joy. I was now seriously considering how I could help others. Between what I was feeling, and Tracy's experience, I reasoned there had to be something to this Reiki. It was now over four years since my diagnosis; I was almost pain-free and continuing daily self-Reiki when I decided to take the third level class. This class was all about teaching Reiki. At this point, I was not really interested in teaching but I was also still uncomfortable explaining Reiki, and I was hoping this class would change that. It did. My confidence soared, and I set up a room in my house where I could offer sessions to the public for a small fee.

Bob was one of my first "public" clients. I had heard Bob had stomach cancer, and I had never worked on anyone with a serious medical condition. Bob agreed to come for some sessions. He told me his cancer was in remission, and we never spoke of it again. Bob, a large man, filled the small room. Near the end of the first session, he started to mumble incoherently. Slowly his voice rose and the mumble became words.

I realized he was not speaking to me, he was dreaming. His words grew into sentences, and I became aware that in his dream, he was a soldier and his unit was trapped. His voice rose and displayed panic, as he ordered their movements and called for help. I worried he might think I was the enemy and attack me. Suddenly, he sat upright and I jumped back.

It took a moment for him to get his bearings and calm down. Me, too!

About three sessions later, with no recollection of dreaming in my presence, he was amazed at the detail I could relate to him. It was, in fact, a real incident in his life. Since it had hap-

pened, three years before, he had not slept more than two or three hours a night because of the nightmares. Over a period of three months, Bob had twelve sessions of Reiki. At the last one, he said he was now sleeping about five to six hours a night and had very few nightmares. He said it had changed his life and told me how grateful he was, but after that day, I never heard from him again.

I understood that somehow Reiki imbued a sense of peace. Bob needed to quiet the nightmares so that he could sleep. I needed the quiet, too. By slowing down and giving myself regular sessions of Reiki, my physical pain diminished, and people started to comment on my calming presence. This peaceful aspect of Reiki was really amplified for me through Glen.

Glen's wife approached me to ask if I could help Glen's psoriasis, which was aggravated by stress. I had seen psoriasis before and knew it was a skin disorder in which the skin dries and flakes off in small patches. The man who arrived at my door horrified me. He hobbled in, bent over and smelling like rotting flesh. I had to put two blankets on him to stop his shivering despite the heat of the small room, and when he left I had to sweep the flakes of skin off the floor. He came consistently three times a week for four months but I saw no change and felt despondent. I finally asked him why he kept coming back.

"Because when I leave here, I have such a feeling of peace that I'm able to get through the day," he replied.

A year after beginning the Reiki sessions with me, Glen had no more flaking skin. He stood up straight and walked normally. The stress that had induced the psoriasis was gone, and he had learned to take regular "time-outs."

Everyone, including me, continued following medical recommendations, but added Reiki. In the end, that feeling of peace was the number one effect that clients reported as the benefit of Reiki. It seems to me that Reiki doesn't heal in itself but that the body's nervous system appears to respond to Reiki and relax. When one is relaxed, centered in peace, miracles happen and healing begins. I cannot ignore the miracles I have seen while using Reiki, though truthfully, in my accounting brain, it still doesn't add up. But I can live with that. 

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