

Reiki Can Improve the Work of Healthcare Practitioners

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WHY WOULD YOU WANT your healthcare practitioner to practice Reiki? That's a good question, and it is one I faced several years ago. It is my opinion that by being a Reiki Master, I am a better physical therapist. Here are some ways that Reiki has assisted me in promoting the wellness of others as well as myself and how Reiki has changed how I practice healthcare.

In 2010 I picked up a book on Reiki, skimmed through it briefly and decided to take a class. Before registering, I called the instructor, Karen Harrison, listed as a Reiki Master. In my head, I thought, "What is a Reiki Master?" It all sounded so foreign to me. I explained to Karen that I wanted to take her class to learn another healing technique to help my patients, as some were so ill. I wanted to learn something that might help them to heal quicker and that I had read that I might be able to "put out" an electromagnetic field with my hands.

Karen explained to me that during the class, I would learn how to channel Reiki and be a conduit for life energy. The energy would pass through me, not come from me, and I was very curious about this. I had no idea what Reiki was, but I thought that if I

could put out an electromagnetic field—what I imagined channeling to be—why would I need all those machines that we use in physical therapy? I was intrigued, and so I registered for the class.

In my class, after an introduction about Reiki, we all sat down to meditate. I had never meditated before in my life. My first thought was, "What are we doing?" My next thought was, "I can't sit here that long." My thoughts went along to something like, "Oh well, you paid for this course, now sit here, be quiet and learn something." I was making myself wrong for not knowing how to meditate. I sat there for the 15 or 20-minute meditation, wondering what was going on. When completed, I was relaxed. I was amazed by the stories around the room from the other participants. Many had the most amazing visions during this meditation. I thought to myself, "Maybe there is something to the Reiki session."

Throughout the weekend, I did learn how to channel. I was amazed at how truly relaxed I was. I was relaxed, and at the same time, I had more energy than I had ever had before. I felt like the energizer bunny having a Zen moment. During the Reiki I&II class, as I learned how to channel and receive Reiki at the same time, I saw some incredible outcomes with my classmates as well. We all were calm. However, I will never forget one participant who was having issues with a bladder infection. She told us that she was not sure if she would be able to complete the course as the symptoms of the infection had just started. Two of us channeled Reiki above the surface of her bladder. Suddenly, there was an odor in the room which we felt originated from our classmate, and her symptoms seemed to have dissolved away, and she was able to complete the weekend. This experience was the beginning of my Reiki journey. It completely altered my life.

I am assuming that if you have come to this magazine, you know that Reiki is the practice of channeling universal life energy to raise the vibration of our client. The most common outcomes from a Reiki session include reduction of stress or anxiety, reduction of pain and an overall sense of wellness. Reiki is not a religion. It is a hands-on, or just above the body, and a healing technique developed by Mikao Usui in the early 1920s.

My dilemma, as a traditionally trained physical therapist in the United States, was how to explain to my peers precisely what happened during my first Reiki weekend. I

had experience with energy techniques when I learned Craniosacral therapy in my physical therapy training. I had read about energy techniques. Reiki seemed to go much deeper, psychologically, for me. After completing the Reiki I&II class, I was so intrigued and excited about Reiki. I wanted to tell everyone about it. My enthusiasm met with stern skepticism. I remember one of my mentors telling me, “You’re going to ruin your career!”

So, back to my original question, why would you want your healthcare practitioner trained in Reiki? One reason is *The Original Reiki Ideals*. They are inscribed on the Usui Memorial Stone, erected in 1927 in Tokyo, Japan, in memory of Mikao Usui Sensei and taught in class. The inscription at the top of the stone reads, “Memorial of Usui Sensei’s Virtue,” and one section in the remainder of the inscription states, “...what the REIKI cure is aiming at is not only to heal the diseases but also to correct the mind... in teaching the persons, therefore, we are supposed to first let them realize the last instructions of the Emperor Meiji, and chant the five admonitions morning and evening to keep them in mind.”

The 5 admonitions are:

1. Don’t get angry today.
2. Don’t be grievous.
3. Express your thanks.
4. Be diligent in your business.
5. Be kind to others.¹

I try to live by the Reiki Ideals daily. Sometimes, it may not be all day, and I have joked with my students that some days, as I am driving in busy traffic, that it may be minute by minute, to remind myself of the Reiki Ideals. Honestly though, if we could all live daily by these simple reminders our life would be a lot less stressful. A point to highlight, “that the REIKI cure is aiming at is not only to heal the diseases but also to correct the mind.” What does that mean? To me, one of the most challenging issues in healthcare is correcting the mind. We must correct the mind first. As a physical therapist, what this means to me is that one of the main goals of my treatment plan is to empower my patients to be accountable for their treatment program and outcome.

I cannot speak for other healthcare disciplines, but I know as a physical therapist that currently, we face a decreased amount of time with our patients. For our patient to have a successful outcome, he or she must be the one to decide to restore their health and to not be at the effect of the symptoms of their disease, poor living conditions and limited health insurance. I am not saying that adverse circumstances are avoidable, just that it occurs to me that my patients who meet their goals quickly are the ones who own their plan of action. Two quotes come to mind by the Dalai Lama XIV from *The Art of Happiness*:

“A disciplined mind leads to happiness, and an undisciplined mind leads to suffering.”

“Although you may not always be able to avoid difficult situations, you can modify the extent to which you can suffer by how you choose to respond to the situation.”²

Therefore, I wish all healthcare practitioners and all patients would train in Reiki. I believe that the Reiki Ideals are brilliant and can bring discipline to the mind and in life.

Now that we have looked at Reiki helping to correct the mind, what else happens when you receive a Reiki session? The most commonly reported outcomes when receiving Reiki are a reduction of stress, a decrease in pain and an overall feeling of wellness. How I typically explain this to my clients is that Reiki assists with activating the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) so they experience deep relaxation. I discuss how the PNS is the counterpart of the sympathetic nervous system which stimulates our fight or flight response, and while the fight or flight response was useful in the caveman days to keep us alive by running away from something trying to eat us, currently, we all are staying in a sympathetic state far too often.

I believe that everyone can agree that reducing your stress, will lead to a healthier lifestyle. It only seems logical. A recent NIH study in 2008, by M. R. Salleh, “Life Event, Stress and Illness” shows a direct relationship between chronic stress and the occurrence of illness.³ Reiki is one way to reduce the level of anxiety and stress in our lives. Besides being able to treat others using Reiki, a benefit of learning Reiki is that Reiki practitioners can also treat themselves, thereby promoting a healthy state of mind for all.

It is my opinion that by being a Reiki Master, I am a better physical therapist. I believe that far too often we are locked into a current methodology or way of thinking, not usually willing to entertain other schools of thought. I think that there are many other things that we have yet to learn. Being locked into a certain way of thinking may block us from seeing a miraculous cure.

I currently treat patients in their home with home health physical therapy. Sometimes I am asked to return to my patients when they need more physical therapy. I have had other therapists ask me, “Why do you think that your patients ask for you to come back?” I answer that Reiki has allowed me to be more present assisting me with quieting the endless mind chatter that happens during our day, such as, *Am I doing this right? Oh, that was stupid. Why did I say that? OMG, that patient will never do their exercises. Why isn’t this any easier? This job is hard. I don’t want to call that doctor again. Doesn’t anyone use their turning signal anymore?*” and so on.

As Reiki helps to quiet my mind, I am more present to listen. Also, as the Reiki Ideals remind me to be grateful, and I am thankful for my patients, it is through this gratitude I am

more compassionate and effective. I asked one of my patients why she wanted me to be her physical therapist. She responded, “It is like you give me energy and ultimately I can do more of my own therapy then.”

One recent research study titled, “Comparison of Physical Therapy with Energy Healing for Improving Range of Motion in Subjects with Restricted Shoulder Mobility” showed that Reiki was as effective as physical therapy to improve the subjects’ mobility and reduce their complaints of pain. The study even concluded that it might be useful to have physical therapists trained to perform Reiki!⁴

I also believe that Reiki has assisted me in promoting my wellness. I do self-Reiki sessions every night before I go to bed. This self-care allows me to go to sleep faster. I am not perfect and have had sleepless nights, but overall, I do believe that Reiki has assisted me in resting more deeply more often. Who wouldn’t want a well-rested healthcare practitioner that listens to you and is grateful for your presence? Anyone can learn Reiki. It is a practice that has changed my life, changed how I practice healthcare and with Reiki, I am a better physical therapist. ❄️



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Endnotes

- ¹ William Lee Rand, *Reiki, The Healing Touch First and Second Degree Manual* (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, February 2016), 15-16.
- ² The Art of Happiness Quotes by Dalai Lama XIV. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1651617-the-art-of-happiness-a-handbook-for-living>.
- ³ Salleh, M. R. (2008, October). Life event, stress and illness. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22589633>.
- ⁴ Baldwin, A. L., Fullmer, K., & Schwartz, G. E. (2013). Comparison of physical therapy with energy healing for improving range of motion in subjects with restricted shoulder mobility. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3847956/>.