

Reiki: Deep Relaxation *Promotes Deep Healing*

By Mara Bishop, MS, ThM, CSC

My clients report many benefits from receiving Reiki treatments, from physical pain relief to easing of anxiety, but perhaps the most consistent experience is a profound level of relaxation. For many, this is not simply a restful pause but an intense releasing, a shift in consciousness that differs from many other kinds of therapeutic sessions.

Reiki is a form of energy medicine that originated in Japan in the end of the 19th century. The *kanji*, or characters, for Reiki can be interpreted to mean “*healing energy flowing from the divine into the hands of the shaman, who combines that energy with the life giving power of the elements to balance body and spirit.*” More simply, a client is held in a safe and grounded way in universal healing energy. This is deeply soothing.

We know the benefit of rest, both personally and from research that shows adequate sleep improves memory and creativity, helps repair tissue and decrease inflammation, and generally sets the stage for optimal productivity and better mood. But if sleep is interrupted—by loud noise, for example—not only have we lost some of the benefits of the rest but we also have the stress of being startled awake, heart thumping and adrenaline coursing through our bodies, making the experience a potential net loss. It is also hard for most people to fall deeply asleep if the setting they are in feels exposed or uncomfortable.

The environment where healing takes place makes a difference too. When setting the space for energy work, like Reiki, it’s best to take care to prevent interruptions, to create a cozy cocoon of the right temperature and lighting, and to foster a sense of protection that we are being cared for and can let down our guard for a while.

The qualities a practitioner emanates also affect our ability to relax and sink into a state where we’re most likely to heal. Imagine yourself in two contrasting situations: in one you’re sitting with a dear friend whom you trust, and in the other you are with a person you find off-putting or irritating. In which case would you be able to sink into deep



meditation, or share a vulnerability? It’s important to find a practitioner who is a good fit for you. We all have different personalities and communication styles, and our comfort level differs from person to person. Not everyone matches energetically, and it’s key that you feel at ease with your practitioner so you can relax and let yourself be cared for.

How students learn to provide Reiki and other forms of spiritual healing makes a difference as well. I’ve been training Reiki practitioners for many years. My classes are very small. In most cases, they are also by invitation only. My intention is not to exclude, but to create an environment of safety and trust while people are learning and practicing. As both a practitioner and a client, this can be deep and intimate work. I can’t guarantee that everyone in class is going to feel an immediate connection with one another, but if I’ve had some personal experience with everyone in the class, even if it is only from a few sessions of one-on-one work with me, I can have confidence in the energy they bring, and trust that they can be part of creating a safe environment for the group.

Maintaining a safe energetic learning environment—be it for Reiki, shamanic work, or any of the other modalities I teach—is very important to me. As clients, practitioners and teachers, we all affect and

are affected by the environments we move through. When we are working intentionally on the energetic levels, we are often most vulnerable and therefore need to be particularly aware of creating sheltered times and spaces for the work to evolve.

When we feel safe, comfortable and nurtured, we relax. When we relax, we open to healing and rejuvenation, within our bodies, our psyches and our relationships. Many people are having difficulty finding calm during these very intense times. Reiki is more than a relaxation aid, but by helping the mind, body and spirit shift into a deeply peaceful state Reiki can bring increased receptivity to its healing benefits. **h&h**

NEW CLIENT INTRODUCTION

If you are new to this work and would like to experience it in the New Year, I invite you to schedule an initial consultation with a \$30 reduction from the usual rate through the end of February. Please mention *Health&Healing* magazine when scheduling.

**More information:
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She holds master’s degrees in Energy Medicine and Theology and a bachelor’s degree in Art and Communications. She is a graduate of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies Three-Year Program in Advanced Shamanism and Shamanic Healing, Sandra Ingerman’s Shamanic Teacher Training program, and advanced training with Betsy Bergstrom. Mara is the only Harner Certified Shamanic Counselor® in North Carolina.