

Why Reiki?

By Jacqueline Allison, Usui Reiki Master Teacher

Reiki is finally starting to become a familiar household word; mention Reiki to a friend or family member and the chances are good that they will have heard it somewhere before. We're still a long way off from having complimentary therapies practiced by everyone just yet, but certainly the momentum and interest is picking up.

In this article, we will be taking a closer look at the Usui system of Reiki (Usui reiki shiki ryoho), where it comes from, what it is, and how we can all learn, share, and benefit from it.

A Brief History

There is much debate on the subject of Reiki's true history and its humble beginnings. Much has been distorted by the passage of time and even deliberately twisted by its teachers. So without delving too deeply between conflicting stories or speculating on the possible existence of Reiki throughout previous centuries, for the benefit of this article, Reiki was first discovered in 1922 by a man named, Dr. Mikao Usui who was born in 1865 in Taniai-mura, a small village located in the Chuubu region of Japan.

Despite all of his traveling and endless study, Dr. Usui did not feel content in his life; he felt there was still something missing. In an effort to find answers, he approached an old Buddhist monk and asked him if he knew, what was the meaning of life? The monk responded by telling him, "In order to know what the meaning of life is, one should kill himself!" Of course this was not the answer Usui was looking for and eventually he decided on the alternative approach put forward by the monk; the alternative being that he should carry out the Lotus Repentance ritual, also known as the Lotus Sutra, a Buddhist meditation of prayer and fast lasting for a period of 21 days.

With this, Dr. Usui took 21 stones and journeyed up Mount Kurama. Everyday, he would throw away one stone so as to know how many days had passed. On the 21st day, after having thrown away his last stone, and disappointed that he had not gained enlightenment, Dr. Usui thought to himself that perhaps he would need to die after all as the monk had first suggested. But then, as he sat meditating, he was struck by a flash of light; it was then that Usui saw the sacred Reiki symbols which have since become a fundamental part of learning and practicing Reiki. However, unbeknown to him that any change or attunement had actually occurred, Dr. Usui decided that he had had enough and returned back down the mountain.

It was on his journey back that Dr. Usui realized what have now come to be known as the four miracles:

On his way down, suffering from starvation and being slightly disoriented, Dr. Usui banged his foot on a large stone. He, as anyone would, picked up his foot and wrapped his hand around his bleeding toe. Instantly, the pain disappeared!

Then, on his return, he stopped at an old tavern and ordered as much food as he could possibly eat. The inn keeper warned him to eat slowly and in small quantities as, since having not eaten anything in three weeks, he could injure himself if he ate too much or too quickly. Despite this warning, he ate quickly - and he felt fine.

Upon hearing the story of Dr. Usui's foot the inn keeper was keen to see if Dr. Usui could help his daughter who had for the longest time been suffering with a bad tooth ache. Dr. Usui, who was eager to help, placed his hands on the girls face and the pain instantly went away.

Finally, upon returning to his village, Dr. Usui discovered that one of his friends was bed ridden and suffering from arthritis. He placed his hands on his friend's body and his friend was healed.

What is Reiki?

To put it simply, Reiki is a complimentary healing technique wherein a Reiki practitioner channels universal life-force energy through his or her hands to assist a recipient in the natural healing process. When Reiki energy is channeled, it goes to the places most needed by the recipient's body.

The word "reiki" is a combination of two Japanese characters, "rei" meaning universal or spiritual, and "ki" meaning energy or life-force. In Japan, the term is used generically in reference to spiritual power. In English, Reiki is the name given to the therapeutic method used, or in reference to the Reiki or universal life-force energy.

In addition to the Usui system of Reiki, there are many other systems being taught and used around the world, such as: Sacred Path, Tibetan, Karuna, Seichim, and Tera Mai, and many benefits can be seen by both practitioner and receiver in all.

Receivers of Reiki treatment often report appreciable and sometimes incredible results for a multitude of common issues, such as the reduction of stress and anxiety levels, easing of pain, improvement of self-esteem, and a list of other benefits with regard to various physical and mental health ailments.

A typical treatment will normally last anywhere between 40 minutes to an hour and a half; after having received Reiki the client should always drink plenty of water to assist the body in cleaning out impurities. The technique or methods used can vary from practitioner to practitioner but it is common to do a whole body treatment, treating each of the chakras from head to toe, either with hands laid on the body, above and around the body, or over vast distances using distance healing practices.

For practitioners too there are great rewards, such as the benefits of self healing, spiritual development, and not least the ability to help friends, family members, pets, and if so desired, go on to help others. The benefits of Reiki are too numerous to detail here, needless to say Reiki has value for everyone no matter of age or religious background.

Learning Reiki

Anyone can be attuned into and learn Reiki. Reiki practitioners are attuned into progressive levels through their teacher, a Reiki Master. With each level, the new practitioner goes through several different emotional and mental states, each making them stronger for the next. Traditionally, the time between each attunement/progression between levels can be significant, often years past before a level one student progressed to level two. These days, most Reiki teachers are less stringent; some even offering both level one and level two courses to be held together over a period of only a couple of days. At the very least, it is advisable to complete a 21 day cleansing period before moving on to the next level, but ideally new Reiki practitioners should wait until a time when they are practiced, knowledgeable, and feel ready to take the next step.

In the Usui Reiki system, there are three levels of practitioner. They are:

Level one - Reiki level one is the first step in your Reiki journey. The attunement process at this level involves putting Reiki symbols into the student's aura, third eye chakra, and hands. The level one practitioner can now give Reiki to plants, friends, family, and carry out self treatments. Level one practitioners should not charge for treatment, though an exchange of some description is encouraged.

Level two – From level one the student can, when ready, progress to level two. The attunement at this level involves putting new Reiki symbols into the student's aura, third eye chakra, and hands. At this level, the student also learns about distant healing, acquires knowledge of Reiki symbols, and may now provide treatment to clients in return for payment.

Master level (level three) – For those who can truly dedicate themselves to the principles and practices of Reiki, have gained knowledge and experience, and are ready to progress, Reiki Master is the final step. A Reiki Master will learn about the master symbols and how to attune others through each level of Reiki.

It is important to note that a practitioner who has reached the master level is not necessarily taught to be a teacher. Therefore, the often referred to level of Reiki Master/Teacher is somewhat subjective. Reiki Masters are taught the master symbols, as well as how to attune somebody into Reiki; whether or not they are taught how to plan and deliver a course or ensure product quality and customer/student satisfaction, can only really be determined through reputation or actual course attendance. Hence, it is always advisable to get references or talk to other students before paying and attending a Reiki class.

The 5 Principles

The five principles are taught at the very first level on a Reiki course and considered as a foundation in the Usui Reiki system of learning. It is said that if you give yourself a treatment and live these principles every day, health, abundance, and happiness will come to you effortlessly.

Dr. Usui's 5 principles of Reiki are:

- 1) Just for today, I will count my many blessings
- 2) Just for today, I will not worry
- 3) Just for today, I will not be angry
- 4) Just for today, I will do my work honestly
- 5) Just for today, I will be kind to every living creature

Even for those not yet attuned, it is clear that Reiki holds wisdom that everyone can benefit from in their daily lives.

Conclusion

To sum up, Reiki has something for everyone and everyone has something to give; the healthy can maintain their health and the sick can conquer their sickness. I only hope that we don't just wait around for science to catch up with what is a force as old as the universe itself. When more people understand, experience, and accept such benefits, the universe will of course be a far better place.

References

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