



Parenting and Learning to Surrender

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YEARS AGO, I HEARD, “Little children, little problems; big children, big problems.” At the time, I was a sleep-deprived, physically exhausted mother of three young children and I found it hard to fathom. However, now that my youngest is 15, I get it!

Wanting the best, I have supported, guided and influenced my children’s activities and behavior. And with increasing determination, they have resisted my involvement, asserting independent choices and actions, some with dark and dangerous consequences.

Last year, panicking about my children’s futures, I felt like I was trying to stop a raging river with my hands. Naturally, I couldn’t. The harder I tried, the more scared, tired and powerless I felt. I was drowning.

Desperate, I reached out to Reiki Master, Alex McLeish-Deuters, who offered to make a house call. She arrived swiftly, cueing music, lighting candles and rubbing lavender essential oil on her palms. I settled on the table and snuggled under a plush blanket, feeling cherished and nurtured. As the Reiki flowed, I relaxed and slipped into a dreamy journey.

I was in a little boat floating down a river, lying on my back. I had no oars with which to row or a rudder for steering. All I could do was surrender and allow the current to carry me. Soon, the weather turned stormy, the river rough and wild. The sides of my little boat rose and closed around me, providing safety and shelter. I relaxed into the boat’s protective embrace, riding the waves like a roller coaster, racing through crests of terror but never leaving the tracks.

Eventually, the river calmed and at a bend my boat washed up on the shore and came to a stop. Three light beings approached. Slowly and gently, they cradled my broken shoulders and lifted my battered head. One held a shell to my chapped lips. I gratefully received a golden elixir. As I drank, the liquid flushed out negativity, exhaustion, helplessness, judgment, and despair, healing me and fortifying me with positivity, courage, confidence, gratitude and hope.

The light beings, readying me to resume my journey, gestured down the river towards a city of healers. There was a bright star above the city, which cast a light on the river and illuminated my path. Everyone who lived in the city had navigated the same rough passage. I was surprised to learn that

they had been monitoring my progress and looked forward to my arrival. The journey was not easy, but there were many valuable “blessings” (blessing + lessons) along the way. The only way to enter the city was to arrive solo, but I could rest and ask for support whenever I needed it. Thus prepared, I returned to my little boat, feeling refreshed, supported and filled with purpose, following the current and the light, holding faith that I would be carried safely to my destination.

Since then, I’ve revisited my Reiki dream at times I’ve needed strength and encouragement. Each time I do, I unpack a little more meaning. I have learned that:

- 1. I can’t stop the river.** My frustrated attempts to control my teenagers were futile. The crises I tried to avert unfolded despite my best efforts. I can choose to ride on the river or rest on the shore, but I must let the river flow.
- 2. I must take care of myself.** I am of no use to anyone when I am drowning! I need to take conscious, regular rest stops. Getting out of the water and maintaining my equilibrium make me more reliable support for myself and others.
- 3. When I encounter a challenge, it’s time to get curious.** I’ve come to view challenges as “blessings.” Staying open and interested in what I can learn helps me navigate them with grace.
- 4. I am not alone.** Others have made, or are making, the journey. If I need help, I must ask. Reading, watching and listening to talks, and participating in support groups and personal therapy have all been helpful.
- 5. Things change.** I find comfort in the constant cycling of nature. Day follows night follows day. Stormy days and rough waters alternate with sunny blue-sky days of calm. Each passing state has challenges but also benefits, for which I am grateful.

6. **I can do this.** My proven ability to overcome challenges makes me feel capable and confident. Similarly, I know my children need to face and manage their trials to obtain and enjoy mastery.
7. **Everyone must make the journey by themselves.** I have realized that on my journey, I've acquired life rings and jackets, boats, underwater breathing devices, and so many other helpful resources. I am eager to share them with my children and others, but I've learned that no help will be accepted unless requested.
8. **I have a sense of purpose.** I am encouraged by Senior Reiki Master Teacher William Lee Rand's words, "Guide me and heal me so I may be of greater service to others." I feel grateful for my strength, resourcefulness and resilience and I feel compelled, a duty even, to share them with others. I believe that my life experience and what I have learned help me be a more compassionate and effective Reiki Master.

Allowing young people to make their own choices, take risks, make mistakes and experience consequences isn't easy, but I know it is necessary. When I am suffering, I take heart in these lines from Kahlil Gibran's poem, *On Children*:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

Above all, I am grateful to Reiki for helping me release stress and bolstering me with comfort and guidance as I learn to surrender.

Recently, I dreamt that I was at the river, embracing and launching my children, one-by-one, each in their little boat. I watched them bravely cresting waves carrying them farther and farther away. As their little dots vanished over the horizon, I held my heart and faith. 



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