



My Reiki Story

BY KIMEIKO HOTTA DOVER, M.ED.

There is a crack, a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in...

—LEONARD COHEN

MY PATH TO WELLNESS began with suffering. I was feeling powerless, depressed, and lethargic after a traumatic relationship experience, and my emotional pain was presenting as physical symptoms. I had furballs in my throat, and it was hard to speak. I struggled to haul my leaden body out of bed and clutched my hands to my chest to hold my shattered heart together.

I withdrew socially, immersed myself in gardening, and listened to podcasts on healing. One podcast mentioned that Reiki gently removes pain from the body. Curious and willing to try anything, I made an appointment with a local Reiki Master, Salima Pirani.

At the time, I knew I felt better, but I did not realize the effects would last or comprehend how meaningful and transformative that first Reiki experience would be. I didn't realize that I had just taken the first step towards reconnecting my body, heart, and mind and improving my mental and physical health.

Salima's hands felt supportive and nurturing as she placed them on various parts of my body. She sensed and described sensations, noticing conflict in my head, congestion in my throat, and anger in my heart. The anger surprised me. I had been thinking of myself as a victim—someone did me wrong! I was devastated. But angry?!

And yet, Salima was absolutely right! I had experienced a betrayal which I did not deserve, and it was unfair! I was SO angry! Acknowledging my anger, and above all, my RIGHT to be angry was cathartic.

After the session, I felt calmer and more peaceful. At the time, I knew I felt better, but I did not realize the effects

would last or comprehend how meaningful and transformative that first Reiki experience would be. I didn't realize that I had just taken the first step towards reconnecting my body, heart, and mind and improving my mental and physical health.

A few months later, I took a Reiki I class because I experienced post-trauma flashbacks, and I wanted to give Reiki to myself. After the class, I found that I could just put my hands on myself whenever I felt anxious. The Reiki energy helped me separate the past from the present and find calm.

I had only expected to use Reiki for personal use, but when I tried Reiki on others, I was surprised by what I could sense and its positive impact. For exam-

ple, when I put my hands on my husband's knees, I observed that one felt colder. He affirmed that the cold knee had a metal plate in it. I kept my hand on both knees until they felt the same, and my husband's knee felt better afterward.

Then I gave Reiki to a woman who had received a concussion in a car accident. First, she reported feeling shivers running down her body, and then her whole body began to shake! Assuring me she was all right, I kept my hands on her, and she gradually settled into a deeper calm than she'd experienced since the accident. Later I learned that after traumatic experiences, many animals shake to release

the trauma from their bodies. In contrast, humans store traumas, which become issues in the tissues.

During Reiki, as we discuss where a client's body feels tight, hot, cold, heavy, achy, sad, angry, or fearful, I am struck by the connections between physical and emotional health and how these connections have long been reflected in language. After a breakup or a loss, we say, "she's heartbroken" or "he died of a broken heart." When we're angry, we feel "hot-headed" or like our "head is going to explode." When we're overwhelmed, our head can be "in a fog." Clients with shoulder pain tend to "shoulder the burdens of others" or "carry the weight of the world on their shoulders." Anxiety is expressed as, "I have butterflies in my stomach," whereas resistance and anger show up as "I can't stomach it," and any of these sensations can affect digestion. After an upsetting experience, you may feel "thrown off balance" or "ungrounded."

Are you aware of how your physical symptoms and emotional experiences are connected? Unfortunately, many of us have learned to silence our voices, hold back tears, repress anger, and be "good." If we ignore or deny our feelings, our bodies have to knock louder and louder to get our attention. This process is how mild discomfort can morph into significant physical and emotional issues. On the other hand, being aware of and validating symptoms often relieves them.

When I hold a Reiki client in my hands and observe their suffering in a compassionate and non-judging way, they feel the relief of having their pain validated and not having to bear it alone. They begin to connect with and trust themselves more. As we become more mindful and sensitive about what our bodies are telling us and learn to appreciate our feelings as allies, we can better align our feel-

ings, words, and actions. Gradually, we learn to live with greater authenticity, which leads to more physical, emotional, mental, and interpersonal peace and vitality.

I am drawn to working in integrative wellness because it feels good to connect deeply with others and make a positive difference. I am studying to become a registered psychotherapist and look forward to supporting clients in a somatically oriented therapy practice. From his earliest days with Reiki, my teacher, William Lee Rand, set an intention which resonates deeply with me: "Guide me and heal me so I may be of greater service to myself and others."

While I love giving Reiki, the current focus of my practice is on teaching Reiki. In the Reiki I class, people learn to give Reiki to themselves to soothe and refresh themselves anytime they feel shaken or depleted. What's more, even a beginning Reiki student can support their family and friends with Reiki. As they do, they discover, as I have, the many ways that people suffer. The more we understand that everyone is suffering, no matter how great things look on the surface, the easier it is for us to empathize, drop judgment, demonstrate compassion, and connect, making the world a better place for everyone! 



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