

Reiki? What's That?

BY JENNIFER BRODIGAN



THE WORDS WE USE TO EXPLAIN or offer Reiki to others either open the way for us to share the Reiki gifts that flow through us, or they close off the opportunity for the ones which could have enjoyed receiving Reiki. How then do we phrase what we need to say in a way that opens the listener to accept our offer to give Reiki to them? Practice, practice, and more practice. Practice makes perfect, or at least it affords improvement. I want to shorten your practice time by sharing some of my own experiences explaining and offering Reiki to others.

How do we describe something so far beyond our human language? To put Reiki into human language is to limit it. As soon as we define Reiki, it shows us how finite our understanding is. Reiki is experiential, and even for those of us who work with Reiki every day of our lives, no two Reiki experiences are the same. No two moments in time are the same. No two breaths we breathe are the same. No two listeners are the same.

Having the ability to say in a few words what the listener needs to hear for them to be receptive to receiving Reiki takes practice and repeated opportunities of offering Reiki to others. We say the right words and may think we've got it down, only to use the same words to another person, and that per-

son seems to want to run away as fast as possible. Was it the listener or the speaker who missed the opportunity for Reiki to flow where needed?

Offering Reiki to others is more about divine listening than about speaking. Before speaking, pause and take a breath while asking to receive the words the listener needs to hear. Trust that you are worthy of being given the correct words and listen with an open heart to hear them. Then speak without attachment to the outcome; you've done your part. What comes next is up to Reiki and the listener.

Oh sure, easier said than done, especially when you've just met the person and know nothing about them, or if someone has asked you to speak to a group about Reiki. We want to succeed, and so we become attached to the results. How do we put our will aside, say the right words, and trust Reiki to do the rest?

In Fall 2015, I began developing a Reiki program at our local hospital, Salem Health, in Salem, Oregon. Only a tiny fraction of hospital administrators, staff, and patients had ever heard the word Reiki let alone knew anything about Reiki. Talk about trial by "fire," ha! Maybe it was Holy Fire® that made up for my lack of verbal ability. I tripped over my tongue more times than I'd care to say, and that provided the perfect verbal training ground. Insecurity, thinking it was my responsibility to convince others that Reiki was the greatest thing since penicillin, caused spewing torrents of defining words to run out of my mouth with no way of taking them back. Despite my shortcomings, our Reiki program is an ongoing success and continues to grow, with thousands of Reiki sessions given to patients, their loved ones, and nurses.

Finding an effective method of offering Reiki has become an art. You would not believe how many times I've coached nurses on how to offer Reiki to their patients only to witness mishaps. For example, I've written two sentence descriptions, handed it to a nurse to read to me, practiced with her just before she walked into a patient's room and stood at the patient's open door to observe. Then I would hear the nurse say, "Do you want *Reekee*? It's kinda like a massage," or, "We have a lady here who can give you *Reggae*; it's like yoga," or, "Do you want *Ricky*? It's a meditation thing." ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

How did they misunderstand my script and coaching to result in those words? I'm not exaggerating in the least; I'm

not creative enough to make this up! The solution is practice, practice, trial and error—one step in front of the other. Then I realized I could help others not get stuck in that in-between place of practice and a lesson learned.

Here we go; lessons to infinity and beyond.

Let's start with our example. You've just asked a person the question, "Have you heard of Reiki?"

The most common responses are:

1. "No, what is it?"
2. "No, is that some sort of religious thing?"
3. "Is that a cult practice?"
4. "Yes, my so-and-so's friend (in some faraway place) does Reiki, but I haven't tried it."
5. "Yes, I've had it and enjoyed it."

There are many ways to reply to each of those responses, and having multiple replies on the tip of your tongue will significantly improve your ability to move forward. Remember, with Reiki, less is more. Use fewer words and have detached confidence that you will receive the right words to say, and the opportunity will open in a divinely orchestrated way.

When responding to an answer, be intuitively observant. We need to watch facial and physical expressions before then asking, "Would you like to try Reiki for five or ten minutes?" Most people will try Reiki if they feel it will not lock them into a long-time commitment.

Here are some suggested replies to each of the example responses above:

How to answer response #1: "No, what is it?"

- *Reiki is a technique for deep relaxation.*
Stop, observe, and use your divine listening skills. If more words seem necessary, add:
- *When our mind and body relax, they can heal themselves faster.*
Also, add:
- *I administer Reiki with a light touch or by holding my hands just above your body, while you simply relax.*
Lightly touch their arm, hold your hand over their arm, or show by doing the same on your arm as you speak. Before more questions arise, and with a smile on your face and nodding your head, yes, say:
- *Would you like to receive Reiki for five or ten minutes?*
Asking this question while you are touching them works very well; it allows the receiver to feel the goodness that flows through you. An additional phrase is:
- *Reiki is an integrative therapy. I administer Reiki with a light touch or by holding my hands just above your body, while you simply relax.*

To answer response #2: "No, is that some sort of religious thing?"

- *Reiki does not belong to any religion; it's available to all of us.*

To answer response #3: "Is that a cult practice?"

- *Oh my goodness, no. Reiki is a safe integrative therapy used in many hospital settings throughout the world.*

To answer response #4: "Yes, my so-and-so's friend (in some faraway place) does Reiki, but I haven't tried it."

If you sense a positive curiosity, which is usually the case when the person knows someone who knows someone who gives Reiki, not much is needed. Ask:

- *Would you like to try Reiki yourself?*
If yes:
- *May I give Reiki to you now? Alternatively, Would you like to try Reiki for a few minutes?*

To answer response #5: "Yes, I've had it and enjoyed it."

The door is open, walk on through and ask:

- *Is this a good time for you to receive Reiki?*
If yes:
- *How much time do you have for Reiki?*

Asking how much time the listener has for Reiki gives them a sense of comfort in they are the one who sets the time limit. Most often, when you meet the time limit, they will want more time for Reiki.

I have learned most of these responses while working in the hospital and they wouldn't be necessary within our day-to-day private Reiki practices, but you can use or adapt them when offering Reiki to family, friends or someone that you just met. Some of our closest family and friends will be more resistant than total strangers, and that's okay. There's no need to feel as though they have rejected you, they've rejected Reiki at that moment. Keep doing what you are doing, and someday when they have noticed the change working with Reiki has made in you, they may become ready to receive the goodness you offer.

Regardless of to whom or where you are offering Reiki, do your best to offer the gift of Reiki and allow Reiki to take it from there. When we attempt to convince rather than offer, we lose opportunities. If the offer is not accepted, so be it. You did your part by showing up to serve with an open, loving heart.

If you are working in a hospital setting and Reiki is a free service to patients, the following words have been successful for us while working in our hospital—*Reiki is a free*

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service to help our patients relax. We administer Reiki with a gentle touch. Most patients are open to accepting a free service. In the Prep-Recovery area of the surgery unit, I say, Reiki is a free service to help our patients relax while they wait for their surgery time.

Another helpful tool is a method of teaching the correct pronunciation of the word "Reiki." The correct pronunciation is useful for the person to whom you are talking when they tell others about their Reiki experience. Use the previously described hand gestures and eye contact while speaking the following words; *Rei-ki, like a ray of light, with the key to turning it on.* As you say the word **ray**, move your hand from above your head in a downward motion as if you are signifying a beam of light. When you say the word **key**, make the hand gesture of turning a key in a lock. Repeat the words and hand movements a second time. *Rei-ki, like a ray of light, with the key to turning it on.* It works every time! Please pass it on!

The last tip for this article is a visual description that I seldom use in the hospital but use during casual encounters with Reiki-curious people. I only use this description if I have picked up a clue as to their faith belief system or have

asked them if they pray and their response gave me the go-ahead. I say *Reiki is administered with a light touch. For me, Reiki is as if God's love is flowing into the top of my head, filling me up and flowing out the palms of my hands.* To the listener for whom it's appropriate, it's a comforting and inviting image that seems to create a longing within them to feel the love of God physically.

So, here you have it, some simple phrases to practice, adapt, and make your own. If you have learned other phrases that have been helpful for you, I'd love to hear from you.

I wish you great success and pleasure in your Reiki journey. ✨

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