



Officiate Ceremonies with Reiki

BY COLLEEN BENELLI AND ROBYN BENELLI

REIKI AND CEREMONY go together well. Over the years, I have officiated many ceremonies—weddings, funerals, baptisms, gratitude and burning bowl ceremonies, rites of passage, fertility ceremonies, adoption ceremonies, relationship-calling ceremonies and even more. It is a beautiful part of my Reiki practice and my life. I believe many Reiki practitioners would enjoy providing ceremonies either on a personal or a professional level if they knew how to develop and officiate them.

Before I share more information, I would like to introduce you to my daughter, Robyn Benelli, who is the co-author of this article. Robyn grew up with Reiki and ceremony as a natural part of her life. She went to college in San Diego, got her degree in business and accounting and entered into the corporate world. In her late twenties, she left the corporate world to follow her heart and become an entrepreneur. Last year Robyn finally said yes when I invited her to

Ceremonies put intention into action. They create a physical structure to convey our thoughts, prayers, purpose and intentions. A Reiki Burning Bowl Ceremony can help people let go of their burdens and reset their goals; a Reiki Gratitude Ceremony can release limitations to receiving blessings and restore thanks-giving inside. A Marriage Ceremony is an important statement of commitment and love. A Funeral Ceremony brings peace to those who have gathered and sends their loved one home.

Colleen: In my 2008 *Reiki News Magazine* article entitled “Creating a Reiki Ceremony,” I wrote, “Reiki Ceremonies are a powerful declaration of intention sent directly to God. They invite Divine support into the lives of the people gathered. Reiki empowers the light of ceremony so our prayers are heard in a big way. Ceremony creates an opportunity for us to come

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join me in my Reiki work. She is now a full-time Reiki practitioner and the project manager of Reiki Lifestyle and has joined me on our ReikiChat™ podcasts. I feel that as an older millennial she is able to teach other millennials how they can use Reiki as a tool to guide them. Robyn has a practical voice for her generation, and I feel she can be a bridge of understanding between the pragmatism taught by older generations and the pursuit of self-evolution of the younger generations. I learn so much from her and her perspectives and believe in the energy and enthusiasm she brings to our Reiki community. Of course, I could not be more excited to work with her!

Choosing to Officiate

Officiating a ceremony can be a very rich and meaningful service for you to offer in your Reiki practice. You can decide whether you would like to offer ceremonies for just you and your family or whether to expand your offerings to your Reiki community or beyond as a professional part of your Reiki business.

together, pray and feel the blessings available to us from the Enlightened Ones who love us so.”¹

When I started my Reiki practice, I had no idea that officiating ceremonies would become a part of it. In fact, I was intimidated by the very idea since I had absolutely no experience in anything like it. The idea of praying out loud in front of others was very scary to me. I was raised in the Catholic faith so all the prayers I knew were memorized and repeated—I didn’t know how to spontaneously pray out loud. It was simply out of my scope of experience and even more telling, perhaps, is that I didn’t know it was something I wanted. However, I love that I followed the guidance to learn what I needed to know in order to add officiating to my life and my Reiki practice. Robyn and I are working together to teach more about Reiki and ceremony, providing resources for people who may want to add officiating ceremony to their Reiki practice. This article is part of that step.

¹ Colleen Benelli, “Creating a Reiki Ceremony,” *Reiki News Magazine*, Summer 2008. Free article download on www.reikilifestyle.com.

Left: Heather and Ivan McClellan Wedding Ceremony.

Questions and Decisions

Here are some of the questions that Robyn and I believe are important to answer if you want to add the service of officiating to your Reiki practice.

- Why are you called to officiate a ceremony?
- What are the gifts you provide as an officiant?
- How do you meet the needs of the clients and the participants?
- What is your role as an officiant?
- Do you want to do this just for personal friends and family?
- What ceremonies do you want to officiate for them?
- Do you want to add officiating to your professional services? If so, what ceremonies will you advertise? Who is your ideal client?
- Will your service for them include one or more meetings beforehand?
- What will you charge for your services?
- How will you market yourself as an officiant?
- What clothes will you wear? Will your choices be based on your present Reiki practice style and branding?
- What is the structure of the ceremonies you officiate?
- What tools do you need for your ceremonies?
- Will you write each ceremony individually or have a set order of service for each type of ceremony that you officiate?
- What energy are you working with?
- How do you use Reiki in your ceremonies?
- Will you adapt the energy and language you work with according to the beliefs of the people you officiate for?
- What do you already know about officiating ceremony?
- What do you need to learn about officiating ceremony?
- What are your resources to study ceremony?

Karen Harrison, International Center for Reiki Training (ICRT) Licensed Reiki Master Teacher, taught a great exercise last year at the Sedona Reiki Retreat that would work well here. Get a pen and paper, turn on some music and activate self-Reiki. Then close your eyes and ask yourself what you want people to know about you as an officiant. Write down 10 words that describe who you are as an officiant without pausing to evaluate your answers. You can repeat this exercise to find the answers for many of the questions listed above. Let Reiki help you define your self-image as an officiant.

The Role of the Officiant

Deliver the purpose of the ceremony. Ceremonies have common elements to them—the purpose and intention of the ceremony,

who is participating, the order of service and the energy invited in to guide the ceremony. Some ceremonies you provide will specifically be Reiki ceremonies. Others may be ceremonies where Reiki is a part of how you do your work but is not necessarily featured in the ceremony, such as a wedding or funeral. However, Reiki is always participating in the ceremony through you.

It is the role of the officiant to determine how each part of the ceremony is structured and what prayer or intention energy will work within the structure. In some ceremonies, the officiant determines all the structure, including the words, music, tools, sacred items and the energy needed for each part of the ceremony. In some, the participants want to create their own content and the officiant delivers the ceremony structure according to their requests. This is usually determined through the interview process with the participants. Once the structure and the order of service are understood by the officiant, then each part and its content can be developed to deliver the purpose of the ceremony.

Meet the needs of the people. The first consideration is how does what you do meet the needs of the people for whom you are providing the ceremony. Colleen: I recently explained what Robyn and I were doing with our service of ceremony to my father-in-law and the first things he asked were, “How does that help me? What does it do for me?” Thanks to his questions, I realized that the first questions that you ask yourself as an officiant are: What does this ceremony do for the people? How does it make a difference?

It’s not about you. Colleen: I experienced one of the most important lessons about my role as a ceremony officiant at the New York Reiki Retreat years ago. I was officiating the Reiki Gratitude Ceremony. There would be a lot of people attending and several days before, I started to get really nervous to the point of real anxiety. That night, a bunch of us were drumming under the moon. I was feeling quite desperate when I prayed and invited Reiki to help me to have peace inside. My prayer was almost immediately answered. I heard a voice inside me say, “It’s not about you. You are here to bring gratitude to the people. No one is here to evaluate your performance.” It was exactly what I needed to hear. I knew that Reiki was there to support the ceremony and all I had to do was to allow it to come through and bring the grace of gratitude to the people. Reiki and God were on the job, which is how the gratitude would be present for the people attending. None of it was about me. That lesson is one of the most valuable ones that Reiki has taught me about all of my Reiki work including when I officiate ceremonies.



Left: Reiki Gratitude Ceremony, New York Reiki Retreat.

Right: Reiki Gratitude Ceremony, Colleen Benelli, Pam and Don McMahon.



Active listening. Listening is one of the most important skills that you need in your role as an officiant. When you are officiating, you are in a state of active listening throughout the process. You will be listening to divine guidance, the people, the ceremony and your inner guidance all at the same time. You will listen for the guidance on the structure of the ceremony and how it will meet the needs of the people, how the order of service fulfills the meaning of the ceremony, what energy you are going to work with for the ceremony and more. Listening allows you to adapt even as you are officiating the ceremony.

Hold the energy. The officiant holds the energy of the ceremony for everyone. Reiki will help you. Send Reiki in advance to the ceremony to assist you and the participants. Remember, you are delivering the energy for the ceremony; it is flowing through you, not coming from you. Let Reiki flow even if you are speaking about Reiki in the ceremony. That leads to the next part of your role—flexibility.

Flexibility. Many things can change spontaneously and the officiant will need to be flexible according to the situation. This is part of holding the energy. For instance, you may need to adapt your ceremony within a moment's notice. Colleen: I have had a Burning Bowl Ceremony for rehearsal dinners prior to a wedding where I had planned the ceremony with the whole wedding party, yet when the time came I realized that it would have been like herding cats to get them all together. Instead, I took the bride and groom aside and we did the ceremony privately. We shortened it, they burned and let go of what they weren't taking into their marriage and they felt ready and empowered for their wedding ceremony the next day. It is all part of holding the energy of the ceremony. This is another reason why it is so important to activate Reiki. It brings divine guidance to assist you with the spontaneity you may need.

Diversity: Are you willing to adapt your ceremonies for the belief system of the people you are officiating for? Robyn: The great thing about ceremonies is they can be adapted for many different occasions, groups and a diverse range of beliefs. As an example, I do a burning bowl on New Year's Eve to help people let go of what is no longer serving them and usher in a renewed sense of spirit for the coming year. I spend most New Year's Eves with friends who are PhDs in neuroscience or other STEM fields. In this setting, it is inappropriate for me to practice a full spiritual ceremony; many of them would automatically reject that. However, I can easily adapt it to fit the setting and it still accomplishes the same goal! I make it simple with little to no spiritual elements.

When I set up the ceremony, I run Reiki and fill it with intention. I personally run Reiki and hold space while we are participating in the ceremony. I have them close their eyes and take a few deep breaths; this ensures that they are participating in it with a clear mind and intention. I have them place their paper with their intended releases in the bowl and we all burn it. And that's it. And they love it! In fact, they continually request that we do this and it has since become part of our New Year's tradition. Some have even taken the idea to their respective groups and do their own versions of it instead of resolutions. Many choose to write down what they decided they are bringing in for the New Year; some don't. I am careful not to place too many requirements on it, as well as any judgment as to how each person responds to it. Although it is not a full ceremony [as I would see it], I am still achieving the same goals: bring in peace and help people in their empowerment and achievement of higher self.

Healing. Creating a ceremony can also be for your personal healing and can be used individually for your Reiki clients.



Photos courtesy of Andria Lindquist / www.andrialindquist.com/blog/

Left: Heather and Ivan McClellan Wedding Ceremony.

Right: Blessing Way Crystal Ceremony.

Adding a ceremony to a particular Reiki session can be a very powerful addition. For instance, you can have your clients ritually burn what they are letting go of in a Burning Bowl Ceremony, light a candle of gratitude in a Gratitude Ceremony or bless a crystal in a Blessing Way Ceremony all as part of a Reiki session. Colleen: Robyn and I just did a short Burning Bowl Ceremony to release the busyness and unexpected complications we have experienced in launching our Reiki ceremony online store. We missed our intended deadline by two months! The ceremony released the stress and urgency of our own expectations and moved us into the peace of right timing. Everything is already alright!

Activism. Another role of the officiant can be a form of activism. Robyn: Ceremonies are performed all over the world in a variety of ways, and in different religions and spiritual practices. The one thing the majority of ceremonies have in common is no matter where they come from or how they are performed, they are a way to express an intended purpose, achieve betterment of self and operate at a higher frequency. They are a great way to participate in activism. When you “start with yourself” and “be the change,” performing personal ceremony and ritual is a way to set an intention to raise your vibration. This creates a ripple effect that touches everyone in your life and in your Reiki practice. When you facilitate a ceremony for a group, you are doing the same thing for a collective of people who have come together with the intention to add goodness to the world. Whether this is through the thanks-giving in a Gratitude Ceremony, releasing in a Burning Bowl ceremony or the love in a Wedding Blessing Ceremony, you help yourself or your clients or groups achieve empowerment. Gratitude, release, love—what a beautiful vibration those words hold and you contribute to this every time you perform a ceremony!

Conclusion

Colleen: I only recently realized that I had a whole body of work about Reiki and ceremony written for the *Reiki News Magazine* over the years. For instance, the article I referred to at the beginning, “Creating a Reiki Ceremony,” talks about how to develop a ceremony, its structure and how to determine the order of service; it also includes a Wedding Blessing Ceremony. I have this article and others from past issues of the magazine along with the instructions for various ceremonies on my website, www.ReikiLifestyle.com. The download is free and you are welcome to use them and adapt them in any way that works for you. Robyn and I will continue to provide additional information about Reiki and ceremony. We love the subject and have lots of experiences that we want to share. Officiating ceremonies is a blessing in our lives! 



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