



Reiki, Your Way

BY COLLEEN BENELLI

WHEN TEACHING a Reiki class, I begin by helping students understand the word *Reiki* and how we use it today. When we hear the word Reiki, different contexts can come to mind—the name of the energy transmitted through the hands during a Reiki session; the system of Reiki healing including the hand positions for self and others and the use of Reiki symbols and the many healing methods; the techniques used to teach Reiki, including how to pass the Reiki ability on to others.

New Reiki practitioners can sometimes be confused and have questions regarding all the various Reiki techniques about which they read and hear. It is valuable to understand the distinction that Reiki energy is non-physical life energy. At the same time, the Reiki systems and techniques are the physical tools we can use to access and deliver this energy in the material world. They also provide us standard methods and definitions for teaching the practice of Reiki to others. Let's look at each aspect and clarify the different contexts.

The Reiki System

The word Reiki means “spiritually guided life energy.” The system and the techniques are how we access this energy. Many people are unaware that at least four other healing systems were using Reiki energy before Usui Sensei developing his method. In 1914, Matiji Kawakami, a Japanese therapist, created a Reiki healing system called Reiki Ryoho, and in 1919 he published a book, *Reiki Ryoho to Sono Koka*, or *Reiki Healing and Its Effects*. The other Reiki healing styles in use at the time were: Reikan Tonetsu Ryoho, created by

Reikaku Ishinuki, Senshinryu Reiki Ryoho, created by Kogetsu Matsubara, and Seido Reishojutsu, created by Reisen Oyama. The name, Usui Reiki Ryoho, shows he was teaching a healing system that used Reiki energy.¹

In *Reiki, The Healing Touch, First and Second Degree Manual*, William Rand writes:

It was during the time that these Reiki styles were already in use that in March 1922, Usui Sensei had his mystical experience on Kurama Yama in which he was given the Reiki energy and from this developed his style of Reiki, which he called Usui Reiki Ryoho. It is interesting that Usui Sensei chose this name as it indicates that he knew of the other styles of Reiki Ryoho in use and indicated that this was his style of Reiki Ryoho.²

We see further evidence of the word Reiki, as healing energy, in the inscription on Usui Sensei's memorial stone in Tokyo, which states, “He started newly a method to improve body and spirit based on REIKI in the universe. Hearing of the rumor, people who would like to learn the treatment and undergo the cure gathered from all quarters all at once.”³

Over time, Reiki practitioners developed additional new Reiki systems, also called Reiki schools, and each school taught a variety of Reiki techniques to give and receive Reiki energy. Dr. Hayashi, a student of Usui Sensei, created his school of Reiki, Hayashi Reiki Kenkyu-ka, and wrote *The Hayashi Healing Guide*, a manual of the techniques he used with Reiki.

Dr. Hayashi taught Mrs. Takata, then she created her school of Reiki, Usui Shiki Ryoho, which means, “The Usui system of natural healing.” Mrs. Takata also developed and taught new techniques to use Reiki. After Mrs. Takata passed in 1980, many new schools, systems, techniques, and methods developed to give and receive Reiki. Today, there are at least 60 schools of Reiki, and many new methods to use Reiki energy.

The Reiki Kanji

The word Reiki means “spiritually guided life energy,” and we can better understand the power of Reiki through the two Japanese kanji, *Rei*, and *Ki*, which represent the word.



In, *Reiki, The Healing Touch, First and Second Degree Manual*, William Rand writes:

The general meaning of Rei is universal... the kanji for Rei is composed of three sections. The upper section portrays clouds and its meaning has to do with the heavens. In this case the spiritual realms are represented, and more specifically, those higher areas of consciousness that are beyond ego. This area goes by various names such as spiritual consciousness, the Universal Mind, God, the Supreme Being, the third heaven, and so forth... The lower section of Reiki represents the earth and portrays layers of soil and stone. The middle section of the figure which is composed of three rounded squares represents three aspects of a human being—body, mind and spirit. More specifically, this section represents the

healer, and science calls it *biofield energy*... Ki is life energy. It is also known as a vital life force or the universal life energy. This is the non-physical energy that animates all living things... Reiki is a special kind of Ki. It is Ki that is guided by spiritual consciousness and is defined as spiritually guided life energy. This is a meaningful interpretation of the word Reiki.”⁴

Reiki Schools—Unique Practices and Techniques

Reiki systems are also called Reiki schools. Examples of schools include The Reiki and Seichem Association, Rainbow Reiki®, Komyo ReikiDo®, Karuna Reiki®, Jikiden Reiki®, Holy Fire® III Reiki, Hayashi Reiki Kenkyukai, Gendai Reiki Ho, and Usui Shiki Ryoho. Each teaches specific Reiki practices and techniques that are often unique to that school.

Reiki techniques are methods to give and receive Reiki. Examples of Reiki techniques are the ways to activate Reiki energy and symbols, hand positions, attunements, Placements and Ignitions, distance Reiki techniques, placing Reiki in a room, releasing unhealthy energy, and many more. There are many right ways to practice Reiki. When a student attends a Reiki class, they will receive attunements, which may also be called Placements or Ignitions, that connect them to Reiki energy. Their teacher will talk about Reiki energy, what it is, and how it works. Students also learn Reiki techniques to give and receive Reiki energy. The Reiki techniques a student learns can vary according to their Reiki teacher and Reiki school. Even though the Reiki techniques vary, they are all designed to give the student the tools they need to channel Reiki energy and give Reiki to themselves or others.

A new Reiki practitioner can rely on the Reiki techniques they learn so they can immediately give and receive Reiki. They provide established methods and ways to use Reiki energy. Many Reiki

techniques have been taught and practiced for years through all the various schools of Reiki, so the student can use them and trust that they work. Reiki energy will flow for them and through them. This knowledge gives them confidence and the ability to practice Reiki immediately after taking a Reiki class.

As different Reiki schools teach a variety of Reiki techniques, a student can take two different Reiki classes and learn different techniques. Since this approach could confuse a new Reiki student trying to practice Reiki the “right way,” understanding that different Reiki schools can teach different Reiki techniques clears some confusion for a new practitioner. There are many right ways to give and receive Reiki energy. Each of the different techniques works to provide us with access to Reiki energy and methods to deliver it.

Teaching approaches vary. Some Reiki schools are strict about the Reiki techniques they teach, instructing a student to use precise Reiki techniques to achieve a level of practice and proficiency. Other schools teach students to combine intuition with established Reiki practices, and after gaining experience, develop their own style and techniques. Both approaches work, and generally, students will gain more profound knowledge of Reiki by first practicing the established methods, and by following the guidance of Reiki, to develop their own style based on the unique awareness and guidance they receive.

As students become more experienced with Reiki, they might be guided to develop a new Reiki technique or style. They may read a Reiki book, an article, or take a Reiki class to learn about new techniques. They may also go into higher levels of consciousness which will enhance their Reiki sessions and classes. All of this can help each Reiki student develop a unique style that is right for him or her.

When I first learned Reiki in 2000, it was through a strict Reiki school. Some rules presented seemed dogmatic to me and were counter-intuitive to what I believed Reiki was teaching me. For example, they taught me to use exact hand positions and to change them every three minutes. There was music with a three-minute bell timer indicating when to change positions. They taught us to charge money when giving Reiki. I felt like a rule-breaker when I followed my guidance and changed hand positions too soon or didn’t charge my mother money for Reiki. I was quite confused about following the rules versus my guidance. I wasn’t aware that other Reiki schools taught an intuitive Reiki style in which one is encouraged to follow the guidance of Reiki.

I found that I had a passionate love for Reiki and knew I wanted more Reiki training. In 2003, I took Reiki classes with William Rand in England. He taught the available evidence-based history of Reiki, and I found that some rules I had learned did not have a historical basis with Usui, Hayashi, or Takata. In fact, my inner guidance to use an intuitive approach was validated. This knowledge brought tremendous freedom to my relationship with Reiki and expanded my ability to follow its guidance.

The Reiki techniques William Rand taught made sense. For example, we learned how Usui Sensei used his intuition and *byosen* scanning to determine his hand placements. We learned Mrs. Takata’s standardized foundation treatment, only seven hand positions, and how she used intuition to discover the location of the cause of a particular condition and gave additional Reiki to those areas after completing the foundation treatment. These techniques work and provide Reiki practitioners methods through which to connect with Reiki energy and deliver it.

William Rand writes, “Attunements and the practice of Reiki were originally based more on intuitive guidance and in-

tention than on set rules, with the Reiki energy being the defining element. The flexibility of the Usui system makes it broad enough to include a wide range of methods and techniques, thus validating the many styles being practiced today.”⁵

When describing Reiki techniques taught in the Reiki I & II manual, he says, “As you practice all the methods in this manual and become familiar with them, you will be better able to develop your style based on the techniques that work best for you.”⁶

Reiki Knows What to Do

In my experience, Reiki energy knows what to do and does not need us to direct it. It is much more aware and knowledgeable about healing than we are and in fact, it works much better if we just let it do its thing. It will adapt and work for each person using the techniques they have learned or feel guided to use. We see this is true through the wide variety of effective Reiki techniques practiced by all the schools. We choose the Reiki techniques to provide a foundation for practice, but they are not the Reiki energy itself. Reiki is conscious and works according to the needs of the person receiving it. It engages with their life energy and core awareness directly. Even though the rules and techniques I originally learned had no historical basis, and I didn’t prefer them, Reiki still worked. I use both intuitive and standardized hand positions. I charge money, and I don’t charge money. The Reiki energy is not evaluating these things; it merely heals and empowers us because that is its nature.

Reiki, Your Way

Reiki energy works with every belief system. It can be scientific for one person, consciousness for another, and divine spirit for another. Reiki energy is effective regardless of our beliefs about the energy or the source from where it

comes. You can perceive Reiki as biofield energy and therapy, and you can view it as spiritual energy. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) places Reiki therapy in the category of biofield energy. According to their definition, biofield energy is any electrical or magnetic field produced by a biological organism, e.g., a human. The human body produces measurable electrical and magnetic fields.⁷

William Rand states, “While Reiki is spiritual in nature in that it provides love and compassion to the client, it is not a religion. It has no dogma and does not conflict with religious beliefs. People who are followers of all the various religions have practiced Reiki and find that it enhances their religious experience.”⁸ Reiki is as effective for an agnostic or atheist as it is for those with spiritual or religious beliefs. In fact, the inscription on the International Center for Reiki Training’s World Peace Crystal Grids reads: “May the followers of all religions and spiritual paths work together to create peace among all people on earth.”⁹

Reiki is spiritually guided life energy. It knows how to do what it does, regardless of our interpretation of it, or the techniques we assign to it. It heals and empowers us because that is its nature, and will work for you according to your needs. We see evidence of this by how Reiki has performed throughout the history of its use. We experience its love for us, and for those for whom we send Reiki because Reiki takes care of us in such a personal way.

To me, humanity is in a significant transition from the “age of the outside authority,” to the “age of the inner authority.” I believe Reiki energy is guiding us through this age, teaching us how to find our inner authority, and how to use it according to how we sense the need. Reiki energy shows us it works within all the Reiki systems and the tools and techniques they use. It works

because we invite it to and because the energy delivers divine love to us.

Reiki affords us each a personal relationship, empowering us to find our inner truth, our authority, and our inner guidance. I often say, “There are seven billion people on the planet and seven billion realities.” All Reiki practices are valid, as each of us experiences it in our unique way. So, ask Reiki to guide you to do Reiki your way. It is one thing Reiki does best! ✨

Holy Fire® is the registered service mark of William Lee Rand.



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Endnotes

- ¹ William Lee Rand, *Reiki, The Healing Touch First and Second Degree Manual* (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, February 2016), 13.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ibid., 15.
- ⁴ Ibid., 13-14.
- ⁵ Ibid., 129.
- ⁶ Ibid., 53.
- ⁷ “National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).” National Institutes of Health. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, September 25, 2019. <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/nih-almanac/national-center-complementary-integrative-health-nccih>.
- ⁸ *Reiki, The Healing Touch, First and Second Degree Manual*, 11.
- ⁹ World Peace Card Set | Reiki. <https://www.reiki.org/store/prints-and-posters/world-peace-card-set>.