



# The Blessings of Being an ICRT Licensed Reiki Master Teacher

BY COLLEEN BENELLI

**R**EIKI IS A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE for each person who receives it. Some are called to Reiki to heal themselves of physical, emotional and spiritual pain, some are called to spiritual growth and development and others are called to practice Reiki as a professional business. I had no idea that I would be called to a professional Reiki practice and full-time business. It was not on my radar at all. I already had a successful business that I liked. In addition, I couldn't manage my empathy; if someone felt pain, I felt pain. If they cried, I cried and I knew that wouldn't be helpful for a practitioner. However, I was completely compelled by Reiki. All I knew was that I wanted to do Reiki all the time. I wanted to talk about it, give it and receive it with whomever would talk about it with me. Through a winding path, I sold my other business and created Reiki Lifestyle and a full-time Reiki practice. I would like to share the blessings I have experienced in following my professional Reiki path in case you are considering your own professional Reiki practice.

## It Began with a Horse

My horse Dakota became lame at five years old. I have always had horses; in fact most of my major life decisions were because of my love of horses. Dakota was my lifetime dream horse. I spent hours with him and when he went lame it was very difficult for me. I asked him what had happened, and he told me that he went lame to deliver me to my power to heal. And then through an inner vision, he showed me giving him Reiki. I didn't believe in the effectiveness of Reiki at the time. I knew that it was passed from one person to another through a ritual called an attunement and I didn't think that was possible. I had been taught and believed that if I wanted something, I had to work hard for it. I couldn't comprehend that Reiki could be given to me simply by my willingness to receive it. So I procrastinated and didn't pursue Reiki for a long time.

Then, one day, a woman came into my business in downtown Portland. She told me that she was a psychic and that she had a message for me from my horse. She said that he had told me to do something and I hadn't done it—that I needed to do it because life was coming and I was going to need it. I listened and this time, I didn't procrastinate. I received my first Reiki attunement within two weeks!

I still remember the feeling of my first attunement. I was surprised that it was so physical. A current ran from my hands to my

elbows for months. The energy was actually so uncomfortable and strong that I would place my hands on the roots of our big fir tree to discharge the energy. The experience completely expanded my belief system. I thought, "If this is real, what else is possible? What else is true?"

## Reiki Enters My Life

My Reiki attunements changed my world. I finally found what I had been seeking. I realized that I had been looking for a way to discover my own inner authority and true spirituality. I was looking for a way to have a direct relationship with God without an intermediary. I believed in Gandhi's teaching to be the change I wanted to see in the world. Reiki was a spiritual energy and practice that gave me the tools I needed to accomplish my purpose and goals.

My decision to teach Reiki was very compelling. The results from the Reiki sessions I gave to others and the self-Reiki I did inspired me to do more. People's lives were changing for the better—people felt better—I felt better. Yet, at the same time, I realized that I didn't know enough about Reiki to be as professional with it as I wanted to be, especially in the role of teacher. I had a lot to learn.

My first Reiki Master attunement was in 2000. I learned about the history of Reiki from Takata Sensei's story. I also learned some very strict rules about Reiki and was told that there were certain rules that were imperative that we follow. Some of the rules felt inaccurate to me so I started to research additional Reiki training. That is when I found the website for the International Center for Reiki Training (ICRT).<sup>1</sup> I liked what I read there—"Honoring all lineages and schools"—and I liked the wealth of information freely given. It felt very professional, informed and generous. I saw that William Rand had founded the ICRT and that he had a Licensed Teacher Training Program. I looked at the criteria for the program and it piqued my interest.

I read that William was teaching a Reiki Master and a Karuna Reiki® Master class in Glastonbury, England and that the Master attunements were given inside the circle of stones at Stonehenge. I knew that I had to go. That was in 2003, and I had been a Reiki Master for three years and had been in shamanic studies with the LightSong School of Shamanic Studies for six years. I was ready for an adventure!

<sup>1</sup> [www.reiki.org](http://www.reiki.org).



I attended both the Reiki ART/Master and the Karuna Reiki® Master classes. And we did indeed receive the attunements inside the circle of the stones. The whole experience was mystical and extraordinary. But the most important part to me was the explanation about the accurate history of Reiki.<sup>2</sup>

Frank Arjava Petter, a Reiki practitioner and teacher living in Japan, had recently been made aware of the location of Usui Sensei's memorial stone. The history of Reiki had been etched into the 10-foot tall stone in 1927 by one of his students. Arjava had it translated. The translation revealed new information about Usui Sensei and how and why he had founded Reiki.<sup>3</sup> Arjava also introduced the Japanese Reiki Techniques<sup>4</sup> to the world in 2000 in a workshop hosted by William Rand in the US. These events opened the door for more research into the history of Reiki. The research revealed new evidence and information about how Usui Sensei, Hayashi Sensei and Takata Sensei actually practiced Reiki. I realized that there were many discrepancies in the history that I had originally learned and that many of the rules that I had been taught had no historical basis—they had simply been created and passed on by various Reiki teachers along the way. The history that William presents in his classes and writings makes so much more sense; Usui Sensei practiced an intuitive and spiritual style of Reiki, which was what my intuition had been telling me. The Reiki tools and techniques I learned in William's classes gave me the freedom to listen to Reiki as my primary teacher.

In 2003, this updated history of Reiki was just becoming known and its introduction was quite controversial at the time. There was an undercurrent of criticism in the Reiki community. Through all of this, the energy of Reiki itself was still pure and constant. Its energy did not contain the controversy. What I personally learned from this is that how we view its history or the specifics of the traditions or techniques we use to deliver Reiki does not define Reiki. Reiki heals regardless of our beliefs about it.

After my Glastonbury classes, I went home very excited! Reiki was even more compelling than before. As time went on, I became more interested in the ICRT Licensed Teacher program. So I next traveled to Sedona, Arizona to study with Laurelle Gaia and Michael Baird. I recognized the same integrity, professionalism and dedication to Reiki that I had experienced with William Rand and felt a deep resonance with both Laurelle and Michael. I knew that I would be very fortunate to study Reiki with them. I wanted to be a part of it all and receive training from these amazing Reiki Masters.

### Taking Another Reiki Step

I was accepted into the ICRT Licensed Teacher program in 2004 and discovered that I would be mentored by Reiki Masters

Mary Grace, Laurelle Gaia and William Rand. The program is extensive, with over 1,000 hours of training, and it took me four years to complete. Reiki had guided me to amazing teachers who taught me the skills that I needed to teach Reiki professionally.

My teachers were and are very committed to honoring Usui Sensei's first decision to spread Reiki in the world. Usui Sensei said, "I must share this power with the general public and enjoy the benefits with them rather than keep it exclusively inside my family."<sup>5</sup> I believe that Usui Sensei's decision flows through the foundation of Reiki. I have found this same commitment to Reiki in the ICRT community of teachers and students. Their goal is to empower every student to succeed with Reiki in a way that is meaningful to their lives so that they and others might benefit from it. This path then guides all of us to support each other's success with Reiki.

I found that many of the goals and innovations of the ICRT were personally meaningful to me, especially their professional teaching materials and outlines that are backed with a consistent level of training. But there were and are so many other resources of information and guidance that the ICRT offers including its leadership and support of the development of Reiki as a complementary therapy in medical communities, the development of the Center for Reiki Research, which includes the compilation of statistical and subject-related information about the presence of Reiki in hospitals,<sup>6</sup> the development of Reiki community through the Reiki Membership Association, the publication of the *Reiki News Magazine* (now in its 17th year), with its many informative articles on an unlimited number of Reiki-related subjects that have been so helpful to me including how to develop a Reiki practice and how to use Reiki for personal growth and spiritual development. All of these were things I was also passionate about, and I knew that I had found a community with opportunities to take action and make a difference.

And so, I decided to sell my other business and become a full-time Reiki practitioner. It took a while to build my Reiki business. The training I received from my mentors included instruction in successful business practices. In addition, the ICRT is a well-respected Reiki organization, and I received referrals for my Reiki classes from the ICRT website,<sup>7</sup> so I was fortunate that my classes grew in numbers. I also started a Reiki program within the LightSong School. Clients began to call through that window as well, helping me to develop an active Reiki practice that continues to grow, allowing me to gain confidence in my Reiki skills and abilities.

Right from the start, my Reiki practice gave me such meaningful work. Along the way, Reiki became my form of activism, in line with my initial wish to be a changing factor for the world. Reiki is a tool that heals and eases stress, conflict, suffering and hate and at the same time empowers peace, truth, beauty and

love. It also empowers an inner authority over an outside authority. When people overcome pain and are empowered, they find more successful solutions. I have witnessed firsthand how Reiki attunements and healing sessions often change people's lives. It's been one of my many blessings to know that as my practice has grown, I have been able to increase the number of people who get to see how Reiki does this. All of this was reaffirmed when I began my monthly podcasts.<sup>8</sup> I heard the same thing from other members of our Reiki community all around the world. I have seen that Reiki works for every person in just the right way.

### Welcoming in Holy Fire Reiki

In 2014, the Holy Fire energy introduced itself into the system of Reiki through William Rand.<sup>9</sup> William was excited to share Holy Fire and asked the Licensed Teachers to receive the Master Ignitions to Holy Fire Reiki and begin to teach and practice it. I was both excited and challenged by this evolution of Reiki. However, I believed in it so I made a commitment to Holy Fire Reiki to work with its energy exclusively for three years. I knew I needed to work with it to gain mastery with it and understand its nature in order to teach and practice it. Holy Fire told me that it was a fire of unification, and I felt it invite me to act as a midwife to help bring it onto the earth. It told me that it can only come to us to the degree that we are willing to receive it. It is here to teach us new levels of free will, to heal our religious trauma, to unify people and to unify our internal self, our spirit, soul and ego. It said that the Holy Fire energy decided to merge with Reiki because anyone can learn Reiki—it invites all diversities of people and beliefs—and it is easy to learn. Holy Fire immediately gave evidence of the powerful results of its energy.

### Mentoring with ICRT

Several years after I became a Licensed Reiki Master Teacher for the ICRT, Laurelle Gaia, the program's executive director, invited me to become a mentor teacher for the newly accepted teachers. I accepted this invitation and in this way, I have had the opportunity to mentor other Reiki Masters through the program. I get to support and assist them in their Reiki training the way I was supported. In 2016, Karen Harrison and I became the co-directors of ICRT's Licensed Reiki Master Teacher Training Program, building on the foundation established by Laurelle. It is an honor to develop new and innovative ways to support others through this professional Reiki path.

I always encourage any Reiki Master who is at all interested in or even simply curious about the teacher training program to explore its components. If you go to the ICRT website,<sup>10</sup> you will find a listing of all the requirements. See if it interests you. However, even if you are not ready or are unsure, you may want to

consider completing the requirements on your own, just for your own business development.

### A Final Note

I could write many more words about the blessings I have received because of my professional Reiki practice—including the incredible opportunity and blessing of writing for the *Reiki News Magazine* or the opportunity I and my local students and colleagues have by being able to volunteer our Reiki services through the NW Reiki Association for our local Compass Oncology cancer clinics. I am so passionate about Reiki; I think about it all the time. I am unceasingly grateful that this is what I get to do for a living. I see the powerful results that Reiki provides my students and clients in their personal lives, and I am continually inspired by the positive results that they experience.

There are many resources available to you. Reiki is your greatest one. Each person is called to Reiki in a way that is personally meaningful. Your way is just right for you. Many blessings on your Reiki journey! ✨



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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the most accurate history of Reiki to date, see the following, *An Evidenced Based History of Reiki*, published by the ICRT and available at [www.reiki.org](http://www.reiki.org); *A Modern Reiki Method of Healing* by Hiroshi Doi, available at [www.reiki.org](http://www.reiki.org); *The Future of Reiki*, found at [www.reiki.org/Download/ReikiVideos.html](http://www.reiki.org/Download/ReikiVideos.html); *Reiki: The Healing Touch* by William Lee Rand; *Light on the Origins of Reiki* by Tadao Yamaguchi; *This is Reiki* by Frank Arjava Petter.

<sup>3</sup> Rand, *Reiki: The Healing Touch*, 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–61.

<sup>5</sup> Doi, *A Modern Reiki Method For Healing*, 32.

<sup>6</sup> [www.centerforreikiresearch.org](http://www.centerforreikiresearch.org).

<sup>7</sup> [www.reiki.org/ReikiClasses/CenterLicensedTeachers.html](http://www.reiki.org/ReikiClasses/CenterLicensedTeachers.html).

<sup>8</sup> ReikiChat™ at [www.reikilifestyle.com/reikichat/](http://www.reikilifestyle.com/reikichat/).

<sup>9</sup> Holy Fire Reiki, [www.reiki.org/holyfire.html](http://www.reiki.org/holyfire.html); Holy Fire Reiki, [www.reikilifestyle.com](http://www.reikilifestyle.com); Podcast on Holy Fire Reiki with Colleen Benelli and Robyn Benelli [www.reikilifestyle.com/reikichat/](http://www.reikilifestyle.com/reikichat/).

<sup>10</sup> [www.reiki.org/ReikiClasses/CenterLicensedTeachers.html](http://www.reiki.org/ReikiClasses/CenterLicensedTeachers.html).