



Illustration by Gaia Orton

# Reiki and the Art of Receiving

BY COLLEEN BENELLI

ONE OF THE FOUNDATIONAL QUALITIES of Reiki is that it teaches us how to receive. I remember that I actually had resistance to learning Reiki because I didn't believe that it could just be given to me through a ritual and then it would flow through me. Because I was raised with the belief that if I wanted something, I had to work hard to have it, I was used to everything being hard work, including my spirituality and my healing work. At the time I received my Reiki attunements, I had already been in advanced shamanic studies for four years. Shamanic training requires years of very dedicated practice to become a skilled practitioner, and this seemed to meet my belief that if I wanted it, it would be hard work. Don't get me wrong. I love my shamanic practices and have continued that training, including shamanism in all my Reiki work. But it can be a very hard spiritual practice. Reiki softens the efforts of those practices by helping me to receive them rather than do them.

you to do something and you need to listen and do what he has told you, because life is coming and you are going to need it." It was such a strong message that of course I immediately contacted one of my shamanic colleagues who knew Reiki and asked her to attune me.

The effects of my Reiki attunements were so physical, I was amazed! What felt like an electrical current ran through my arms and hands, to the point of discomfort. There was no doubting that I had received some energy and that I felt different than before the attunements. I experienced an instant recognition of something that I knew already deep inside. I remember thinking, "If this is true, if someone can just do some hand motions over me, and I receive this incredible life force energy running through my body and hands, what else is possible?" My Reiki attunements completely blew away my belief system in many ways. This immediately expanded my possibilities.

What I have come to realize is that the real reason I couldn't accept the idea that Reiki could just be given to me, is that at the

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My shamanic teacher, Jan Engels-Smith, the founder of Light-Song School of Shamanic Studies, had been telling me that I needed to get my Reiki attunements, that they would be part of my shamanic practice. However, I procrastinated and didn't follow her advice right away. As often happens, my life was my training ground for my spiritual work, and I ended up receiving my Reiki attunements because of my horse, Dakota. He was my lifetime dream horse, and he went completely lame at five years old. When I asked him why, he told me it was to "Deliver me to my power to heal," and in a vision, he showed me laying my hands on him to heal him. Jan helped me understand and told me this was Reiki and again encouraged me to get my Reiki attunements, but because of my beliefs around Reiki, I still procrastinated. Then one day I was at my business, in a market in downtown Portland, and a woman came to me and told me that she was a psychic and that she was supposed to give me a message from my horse. She said, "Your horse has been telling

time, I was not very good at receiving. I now know that I didn't have any concept that "receiving" would benefit me. I had never thought about it. I was always the giver, the independent one, the one who could do everything herself and didn't need any help. In fact, I was a tremendous "over-giver." I would give at great personal cost and not even think about how it affected me. If anyone asked me if I needed help, I would politely smile and decline the offer, saying "No, I've got it covered. I'm fine, but thank you anyway!" And I believed it and was proud of this part of me. I remember a friend of mine telling me that she never knew what I needed because I never asked for anything. It used to really frustrate her, but I thought it was a good thing. I thoroughly believed in the teaching that "It is better to give than receive." I also thought that if I asked for or received help that I would appear weak, and that I would have to compensate people when they gave to me. I had to always give back what I was given.

## Reiki Heals and Empowers Receiving

I have observed Reiki teaching me about receiving from the beginning, and there is much more to learn. It is a beautiful course of study that has changed my life. I actively practice receiving in an intentional way, particularly with self Reiki, so that I can better understand it and become more fluid with it. Reiki is given to us—we simply have to invite it. When we activate and invite Reiki, pure Reiki is what shows up—every time. We don't even have to know why or how or have long years of experience. Reiki will flow in its pure form and provide powerful healing and empowerment to the receiver.

We receive Reiki as we give it. It fills us as it flows through our crown chakra, through our heart and body and out through our hands. Reiki activates our divine presence as it travels through us, awakening our spirit and empowering our life force as we receive while we give. The person, place or thing receiving Reiki has to do nothing, not even believe in it. As the practitioner, when we are “giving Reiki,” we are actually receiving the Reiki on their behalf, as their life force draws Reiki through us and they receive what is exactly right for them.

We can use the Reiki symbols to focus on receiving. They bring specific divine energy that awakens the symbols' qualities in our life force, spirit and body. Activate them in your self-Reiki sessions and in your sessions with others. Set the intention to understand how they heal and empower our ability to receive. Then listen to what it teaches.

When we invite CKR, we receive the light of the divine universe; when we call SHK we receive the power of the divine mind; and with HSZSN we receive the power of the divine heart and the powers awaken within us. When we invite DKM we receive the light of the Great Being of the Universe and the light shines on us as our friend, and the light of God awakens within us. When we invite the Tibetan Master symbols we receive the light of the Earth and the light of purity and they awaken within us.

When I received Karuna Reiki®, I learned even more about receiving. Kwan Yin is a Goddess that embodies the compassionate action of Karuna Reiki®. She talked to me about the Divine Feminine and Divine Masculine in my Reiki practices. She said that the two were very out of balance on the planet at this time in human history and that one of the causes is misunderstanding about giving. She said that humanity has misunderstood the teaching that “it is better to give than receive” and that there was an intentional exploitation of that belief around 500 years ago. It was such a powerful influence that it is deeply ingrained in us today, and we act on it practically at a cellular level. The results are that we are not very good at receiving. Kwan Yin explained to me that receiving is an aspect of the Divine Feminine, which creates through receiving, while the Divine Masculine creates through giving. We need each in equal amounts to have balance. I was also shown that this dynamic has colored our views of our spirituality, which are often seen through examples of giving. Some believe we will be closer to God if we are givers. But she

said the equal truth and teaching is “Ask and you shall receive,” and that the world would be more balanced if we also gave equal attention to asking and receiving.

What I find in the Reiki community is that we are often over-givers, coming, perhaps, from cultural conditioning, but sometimes also part of our nature from childhood. We were often the caretakers in our families or in our group of friends and we like this. However, we may not be as good at receiving. It is not that we should give less; it's that we can receive more. Just think of the possibilities if we were to receive with the same degree of passion that we give.

My Reiki guides tell me that many of us are learning about receiving at this time in history to usher in a new ability to receive. It is part of our higher consciousness and will result in new ways of learning and inventing. They tell me that Reiki is instrumental in healing us and the planet and that through our collective healing we will empower the Divine Feminine here in the world and remember how to create through receiving. It is a natural result of being in relationship with Reiki because we always receive with Reiki. This is as appropriate for men as it is women. We all have both the masculine and feminine principles within us. The power of the Divine Masculine is also essential to the well-being and balance of humanity and the earth. Creating through giving is as important as creating through receiving. Balance is our goal. Most of us are already good at giving, and we will continue to be good at it. Reiki also gives us a great ability to give with Reiki. Even when we are receiving self-Reiki, we give by healing and empowering ourselves.

Reiki also speaks of its intention to help us receive the solutions to the problems we face here on Earth. Scientists can receive innovative ideas by tapping into the field of all possibilities and opening to the inspiration available there. Inventions and medical breakthroughs are created by receiving the ideas first, then taking action to manifest the idea—again the blend of the masculine and feminine working together to create. The Tibetan Master symbol, DKM, is a perfect representation of the balanced Divine Masculine and the Divine Feminine, coming together to create form. The Tibetan Master symbol, the FS, has taught me about receiving from the Earth by returning me to my relationship with the Earth. The Earth, a source of the Divine Feminine, tells me that she creates in absolute abundance as she receives the light of the Sun. There is no resistance to her receiving from the sun, it just is. Because of her receiving, life is created in amazing forms all over the planet. The abundant and prosperous Earth is in balance, receiving and creating all at the same time.

The Tibetan FS symbol connects us to the Earth. This connection has helped heal my separation from her. I have learned that we are all made of the Earth. We receive everything from the Earth, since everything is made of the earth, even the things we call “man-made.” There is nothing but the Earth here. She tells me that much of our inability to receive is fundamental to the belief that we are separate from the Earth. Many of us are aware that we feel separate from God, but we aren't as aware of our sep-

aration from the Earth and her Divine Feminine form. Our bodies are made of the Earth to house our brilliant spirits, and she is as much a part of us as the light of source. When we are aware of our connection with her, we receive from her more easily, and we learn to simply let receiving be a part of how we create.

*Go to your fields and your gardens,  
And you shall learn that it is the pleasure  
of the bee to gather honey of the flower,  
But it is also the pleasure of the flower to yield its honey to the bee.  
For to the bee a flower is a fountain of life,  
And to the flower a bee is a messenger of love,  
And to both, bee and flower, the giving and  
the receiving of pleasure is a need and an ecstasy.*  
—KAHLIL GIBRAN

### Practices that Remind us to Receive

I began to develop Reiki practices when I realized that I wanted to be better at receiving. I set intentions when giving myself Reiki, asking for a clearer understanding about it. I started using the words “I receive” in my conversations—for instance, “I received your e-mail.” I taught myself how to say yes when people offered to help me with small things and even big things. I got used to receiving compliments and practiced accepting them gracefully. I recognized and intentionally received from myself too. I added to the Reiki principle by saying, “Today I will be kind to all people, and I will be as kind to myself as I am to others.” I began to compliment myself and acknowledge what is right in my world. I also really stretched myself and started to ask for help when I needed it. This was the biggest challenge! Then I had to accept the help without feeling as if I had to give something in return. I found that I had a really big ego around receiving and that it was limiting my life. I realized that my inability to receive was actually a weakness and that I wanted to change it. I also felt as if I had been instructed by Reiki and my spirit guides to actively get good at receiving—that it is important and will affect the creative feminine principle in my life.

My spirit guides showed me that I had to understand the healing I needed around receiving. I had to learn which beliefs came from me and which didn't. There were many ingrained beliefs I would have to let go of or transform. For example, I was told that I was also affected by my generation and feminism and that I needed to let go of the collective mantras that were placed on me that were inaccurate. I remember during part of my healing sessions I had a song stuck in my aura from the early 70s that had to be released. The song was from a commercial and was played all the time. Many of you probably remember it. The lyrics said “I can put the wash on the line, feed the kids, get dressed, pass out the kisses and get to work by 5 of 9. I can bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan and never, never, never let you forget you're a man... 'cause I'm a woman....” Yikes, I used to think it was such a great song, and I sang it without realizing the impact it would have on me. It was so thoroughly stuck in my aura



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See Colleen's article  
 "Reiki and the Art of Receiving"  
 in this magazine.



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that I have had to have several Reiki sessions using Aura Clearing to extract it. I have always admired feminism and since I was a young woman I have felt a responsibility to women's rights. However, I have discovered some of the imbalances that have been created by feminism in trying to compete with men as a woman's source of power, rather than developing and understanding our own source of power. Reiki is helping me find my authentic beliefs around women's power. I am not always sure of it. There are so many right ways feminine power is expressed, and I appreciate them all.

I began to notice the effects from my increasing ability to receive. One of the first places I noticed a change was in my relationship with my husband. He has always been a very supportive person, but I thought he wasn't as cooperative as I would have liked. What I discovered was that he couldn't give to me because I wouldn't receive. If he tried to help, I would tell him I could do it, I didn't need help or I decided I could do whatever it was better than him. As soon as I began to receive, Robin responded in such a positive way. He began to give in ways I always thought I wanted. He did all kinds of things for me that I wouldn't have allowed in the past. It has been a wonderful and unexpected result of my practices!

My friends and family have also enjoyed my ability to receive. It allows them to give and gives them a feeling of well-being to be able to help me when I need it. Sometimes people tell me that it is so nice to have me just say thank you and mean it. I am so

amazed at how easily people give and how much pleasure they get from it. People are generous by nature and like to care for one another. I let them now, and I get to experience the gifts and enjoyment that comes from receiving. I am also learning to create through receiving. This article had a completely different title and subject a couple of days ago, until I heard the message from my Reiki guides to write about Reiki and receiving. The article is one of the easiest I have written. I am simply receiving the words and the pertinent information.

My perceptions and intention about receiving are changing. I am creating a life where I acknowledge that receiving is possible, and I find ways to notice it. Sometimes it is in the daily things I take for granted and sometimes it is big and showy. I now know that I am receiving all day long, and I am able to recognize it and acknowledge it. I think of my granddaughter Eva running up to me with a huge smile on her face saying, "Grandma, Grandma!!" I receive her hug and it fills my heart! I am receiving love. Noticing it as receiving adds to my enjoyment. I still have the goal to receive as much as I give. I love focusing my attention on this intention and having Reiki to help me discover new ways to heal and empower my abilities. It is an innate quality of Reiki to receive. Reiki is a great teacher. Just ask and you will receive. 

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