



Transformation Through Reiki

Journey of a Left-Brained Medical Professional

BY ROBIN FUERST, BS PHARMACY, PHARM D

MY JOURNEY WITH REIKI for the last 15 years has transformed me—mind, body and spirit—and this process continues to heal me or make me more whole. I have a doctorate in clinical pharmacy and have been working in hospital settings optimizing and dosing medication therapy in consultation with physicians, other health care professionals and patients for almost 30 years. On the surface I seem to be an unlikely candidate to be a Karuna Reiki® and Sekhem/Seichim Reiki Master as well as a Professional Licensed

This was tough for me because at the time of the accident I was functioning as a Type A+ individual. I was a new clinical pharmacy coordinator for a hospital, a mom of a precious one year old, and a wife of a tenure-track assistant professor with his own busy schedule. I was also a life-long member of the local Lutheran church and sang in the choir. With all this activity, as well as recently finishing a stint in graduate school and academics, I had shifted away from my decade-long hobby of reading in the areas of psychology/spirituality.

I chose the conservative option of a back brace/SI stabilizer and physical therapy. This started an eight-year journey with chronic pain, and an exploration into complementary medicine for me. I started reading outside the area of pharmacy, books about the mind-body connection by Joan Borysenko and others. I also explored meditation and centering prayer.

I endured sometimes painfully deep massage to attempt to loosen spasming muscles. I even went to a chiropractor (even though a neurologist/neurosurgeon

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Teacher with the International Center for Reiki Training—and yet I am.

How did such a transformation begin?—with an accident where the Universe literally and figuratively sat me on my butt some 20 plus years ago. My hip bone ended up jammed beneath my sacrum, multiple tendons were stretched out of shape and there were muscle tears with additional injuries to my back, neck and shoulders. Initially I was unable to sit long enough to make my 45 minute, one-way commute and as a result was off work for about a month.

However the options traditional medicine gave me were not appealing—offers to inject a caustic substance into my hypermobile sacral-iliac (SI) joint or wire my pelvis together—especially since “results would depend on chance or how I happened to heal.” Equally uninviting was the option of taking pain medication or muscle relaxants for an extended period of time. These agents clouded my ability to think and made me feel sick and not myself—not to mention the addictive potential of these classes of drugs that I had witnessed other patients spiral into in similar situations.

I once rounded with in the hospital setting routinely discouraged his patients from this avenue, explaining the very limited movement that could occur, with the risk of paralysis). My weekly massages and chiropractic adjustments allowed me to “survive and function,” although I was exhausted most of the time.

I eventually found that through the use of a mantra, “Cosmic Christ, I surrender to your grace,” and breath work the bothersome back spasms would relax (the concept of energy had not yet entered my reality). I also had some success re-labeling pain in

my mind to “muscular tightness” to help me cope. I took many early morning walks when my back/pelvis discomfort woke me up and would arrive at work an hour or more early “since I was up and I might as well be productive.” I relied heavily on my “superwoman cape” during these years!

Then my usual massage therapist went on vacation and I tried someone new. Marie Rimmelspacher was also a Reiki Master. She explained that Reiki energy could penetrate deeper than massage and that she thought it could bring more long lasting relief for me. My doubting left brain must have shown on my face because she sent me home with some information to read about Reiki. Interestingly enough, as I was reading about Reiki, my hands started to get warm and pulse. This got my attention, so I signed up for the three sessions, three days in a row that Marie suggested.

Those three sessions changed my life. I meditated as Marie did Reiki on me. During these sessions I had amazing visual experiences I had never experienced before and felt more relaxation and peace than I had had in a long time. And at the end of the third session I was pain free for the first time in eight years! I was excited to find out Reiki was something I could learn and use on myself too!

And so began my journey with Reiki—initially centered on relieving my pain and discomfort. My left brain was very active during the Reiki Level I attunement—wondering what Marie was doing and thinking that nothing had happened. That thought shifted when I became very warm and had sweat dripping from my body within seconds of starting to practice Reiki on my partner. My mental reply to the Universe was, “OK, OK, something really did happen.” I was amazed at this physical response. I was also surprised by how calm, relaxed and clear I felt by the end of learning the standard hand posi-

tions, as well as the positive response of my partner. I was more open and less judgmental for the Reiki Level II attunement!

Six months later Marie invited me to join her in traveling to a nearby monastery to help assist her in giving Reiki sessions to several nuns interested in learning Reiki, so they could experience it before being attuned. One of these sessions was unique. To start with, I saw my first angel—a miniature being in white with wings who was beckoning with her finger. My left brain, of course, interpreted this as something for the Sister with whom I was doing the Reiki session. Then my crown chakra opened wide and so much energy was coming through that I became so dizzy and nauseated that I had to sit down for a few minutes—again, my left brain explained this away as not drinking enough water after a vigorous hike up the butte behind the monastery prior to breakfast. At lunch, the Sisters were entertained by my interpretations and gently suggested that I consider the option that the angel was inviting me to journey with her.

I observed Marie teaching the Reiki Level I and II classes and afterward, for the first time, started considering taking the ART/Master training, although still insisting to myself that I would be using this level of training for self treatment and providing sessions for friends and family. After the class, Reiki was offered to anyone who wanted to receive it. One of the volunteers, a sweet, barely five-foot-tall nun in her 80s came into the room, leaning heavily on her cane. At the end of the session she spryly hopped off the table and insisted we follow her down the private stairway to the kitchen for an ice-cream treat, forgetting her cane upstairs!

Later that summer I took the Usui/Tibetan Reiki Master class and a Sekhem/Seichim Reiki Master class too. In the fall I was thrilled to notice through Reiki self treatment I was able to

suspend my regular visits to the chiropractor because the energy was able to keep my body relaxed so that tight muscles didn’t pull my spine and hip out of place, and did so much more gently than the chiropractic adjustments.

During this time period I was also exploring the labyrinth, a metaphor for our spiritual journey through life.¹ It was a major shift to be offering workshops around the labyrinth, which meets people where they are at on their spiritual journeys and helps them take their next step. I even noticed that I was now able to quiet my chattering brain more easily during meditation and labyrinth walking. I could actually “be still.”

I slowly started to realize that I was being asked to be a bridge between traditional medicine/religion and complementary medicine/spirituality, especially after the Karuna Reiki® Master training that following year. One moment this was crystal clear was at week-long continuing education conference for advanced pharmacy clinicians. I was enjoying the learning process and commented to the Universe that “my heart is here and engaged with pharmacy.” The reply I received surprised me: “And your soul is not.” What a wake-up call for really starting to listen and discern more about what my purpose on this earth is all about.


Around this time I started a Ministry of Light ordination program as part of my intention to expand the scope of my Reiki practice with others. Originally the reason for beginning this program was to be able to touch people and do hands-on healing “legally.” This program, in addition to Reiki, ended up dropping depth charges into my “traditional” psyche and accelerated my healing and becoming more whole on many levels.

¹ Robin Fuerst, “Reiki and the Labyrinth,” *Reiki News Magazine* Spring 2010 (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications) 33–36.

Now the concept of being a bridge was expanding to include using the bridge of light energy of HSZSN to help with connections. It also became clear that Reiki needed to be more integrated in my life—no more being a “closet” Reiki Master at the hospital or church! Also, being able to use HSZSN and Karuna Reiki® to connect to (the HSZN) and help release (the Karuna Reiki®) “issues in the tissues” of past traumas, recover soul parts and do ancestral healing has deepened my own healing and my work with others. This continues to amaze me and be an incredible gift in my practice!

To fast forward to today, Reiki has made a tremendous difference in my life! It has helped speed recovery after several car accidents and surgery. I really wonder how people make it through major life events like divorce or the death of a parent without the love, light and compassion that is Reiki. Reiki has calmed me many times in the middle of the night as I wrestled with the decision to move to Bend, OR and then most recently to resign my pharmacy position and devote all of my time to my Reiki business.

I now appreciate Eastern, Western and complementary medicine practices as well as spirituality, and I appreciate knowing where each can be useful either alone or

synergistically. Embracing mysticism and energetic healing has shifted so much in my life. My life is no longer ruled by endless lists of things to do, with no time to breathe and celebrate accomplishments. I am a more patient and present person, able to more deeply and richly connect with those I serve. The pace of my life allows for time for inspiration and spontaneity. These changes allow me to experience the joy and peace that comes from connecting with this Universal or God-consciousness energy we call Reiki. All is one and is love. 

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