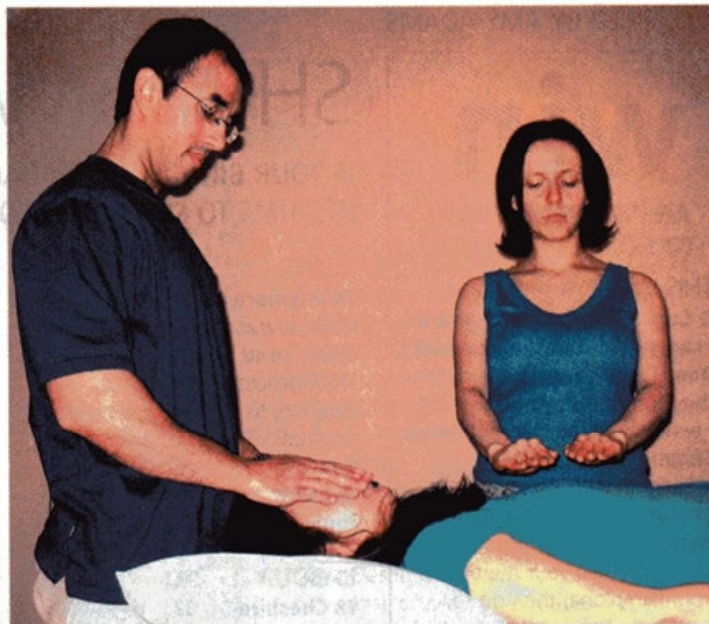


Personal healing

AMY ADAMS DISCOVERS HOW YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF THROUGH THE ENERGY-CHANNELING ART OF REIKI.



Once associated with the incense-soaked realm of new-age hippies, reiki is rapidly infiltrating the mainstream. Like acupuncture and reflexology before it, doctors are now recommending reiki as viable healing method, and today it's practiced through the world by many millions of people.

IN THEORY

reiki is a Japanese word formed from 'rei' meaning 'universal' and 'ki' meaning 'energy'. It refers to the energy moving around us and within us all the time. Generally, reiki is used to describe the Usui System of Natural Healing thought to be developed by Dr Mikao Usui in the early 20th century — though there are several theories flying about. When we're ill or injured, be it emotionally, physically or spiritually, the flow of energy in the body is disrupted. A reiki master is someone who can channel universal energy through your body to heal this blockage, making you feel healthy and whole again.

SELF HEALING

Learning how to self-heal through reiki means you can maintain your body's balance

even when there isn't a specific problem. According to Andy Chrysostomou, a reiki master for the Healing Company, anyone can become a reiki healer, not just 'gurus' or 'shamans' who think they have special powers. "A reiki course will empower you and enable you to heal on a regular basis, rather than relying on a practitioner," he says. In the UK, the reiki Regulatory Work Group (RRWG) lay down recommendations on what these courses should involve. Generally the teaching is structured in levels, from self-healer to reiki master.

GET ENERGISED

The first step of learning how to heal yourself through reiki involves the attunement process, which links you to the energy of the universe. Through five reiki sessions a master will open and strengthen the channels in your body so the energy can flow freely.

"As you attune, the energy comes through the body, finds anything it doesn't like and gets rid of it," explains Chrysostomou. The effects of the attunement process vary from person to person. For some, it's a very spiritual experience, for others it's emotionally

traumatic or physically exhausting. Those with lots of toxins to flush out of their body might even get diarrhoea or vomit (not on the spot, it takes a while for the effects to materialise).

But it's worth it, says Dawn Mellowship, another reiki master at the healing Company, "because by connecting with the energy in the universe you'll also connect to your higher self and be guided on a higher path."

Once attuned to reiki, you can learn the hand positions used for channelling energy and how to picture the energy source so you can begin self-healing. After this it's just a case of practising as much as possible so, eventually, like Chrysostomou and Mellowship, you can self-heal on your lunch break or in front of the TV.

IT'S ALL SYMBOLIC

In reiki, different types of pain are considered to have different frequencies — high if you're suffering emotionally and low if the problem is physical. Level 2 on a course that follows the RRWG recommendations will introduce the reiki symbols — sacred symbols that, according to Chrysostomou, "came to Dr Usui when he was on a 21-day retreat". Visualising different symbols as the energy source helps the healer to channel the right frequency to match the problem.

HEALING OTHERS

Once you can effectively heal yourself, you will be able to heal others, even if you are miles apart. This is called distance healing and will also be taught on Level Two. At the end of this level you'll be able to join a reiki association and get insurance to practice Reiki. Becoming a Reiki Master requires Levels 3 and 4. ■

■ The Healing Company (146 Fotheringham Rd, EN1; 020-8367 9158) offer a one-day Level 1 and 2 short course for those wanting to work on healing themselves, and friends and family, but not fee-paying customers. The cost is £200. See www.thehealingco.com.



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