



Reiki, Resiliency and Self-Care

BY KATHIE LIPINSKI, RN, MSN, CH

WE ALL KNOW THAT WE ARE LIVING in challenging times. We can't change the everyday ups and downs of life, nor have control of what happens around us. We can't stop the waves of life but we can certainly learn to surf. Stress will always be a part of our lives, and we can learn to change the way we look at things and therefore change our thoughts, beliefs and behaviors. Here are some of my thoughts and suggestions to help you ride the waves of life with Reiki.

Your Reiki Practice

One of the most powerful ways to navigate the ups and downs or waves of life is our Reiki practice. Daily self-Reiki is the foundation of Reiki practice. Whether it's five or ten minutes throughout the day whenever you can, or a full body treatment in the morning or before bed, daily self-Reiki is the key that unlocks the treasures within. Our daily practice feeds our soul and strengthens our connection to our spiritual self. It nourishes us from the inside out.

Practice is something we do every day, like yoga, meditation or Tai chi. Practice is how we develop a skill, memorize a speech or prepare for an event. Our spiritual practice is something we do to develop our inner resources and connect with our strength within. It helps us improve our coping skills, promote healthy behaviors and lessens feelings of stress, overwhelm and anxiety. Our spiritual practice helps us maintain peace and calm in the wakes of the storms.

Reiki, as a spiritual practice like yoga, meditation, or tai chi, develops as we "practice" every day. And just like exercising a muscle, daily self-Reiki deepens and enhances our connection.

Self-care

Self-care is so important. Self-care is an act of self-love. It allows us to pause, quiet the mind, reconnect with our spirit and calm the body. Making time for daily self-Reiki helps to replenish your spirit and allows you to offer Reiki to others from your abundance and your overflow, and not your empty vessel. Even when you are on an airplane, the attendant's instructions include putting the oxygen mask on yourself first before you attempt to help another! We know that all healing begins with self-healing, so take care of yourself first. If you don't make time for self-care, sooner or later it will catch up with you and you'll run out of

steam, no longer able to move towards balance and health, but rather towards imbalance and dis-ease.

Self-care helps you to develop resiliency; it builds inner reserves and internal survival skills. It is a deposit in your bank account of life. Resiliency is "the ability to overcome challenges of all kinds—trauma, tragedy, personal crises, plain 'ole' life problems—and bounce back stronger, wiser and more personally powerful."¹

Building resiliency is a life skill. We can begin with our children and help them grow into healthy adults as we demonstrate and share our self-care practices with them. You may not see the changes from day to day, but looking back, you will know without a doubt the difference it made.

If you aren't giving yourself Reiki every day, begin wherever you can. Start with a few minutes here and there throughout the day. Place your hands where it hurts or where your body holds stress and tension. The beauty of Reiki is that you can use it anywhere, any time. What better gift to give yourself than self-care.

Self-directed wellness

Western medicine focuses on illness and treating a symptom or disease. Reiki is an invitation to wellness for yourself and others. Instead of focusing on disease and illness, become the captain of your own ship and steer yourself in the direction of well-being. Balance body, mind and spirit to promote wellness and optimize health. Don't wait until the stress builds up and you become sick. Our body is always striving for homeostasis, or its natural state of balance; so is our mind and our spirit. Start by saying yes to wellness and move yourself towards harmony, balance and well-being through your Reiki practice. Encourage your friends, family and clients to do the same. And when you want a special treat or are in overwhelm, seek out another Reiki practitioner to assist you in the process.

The Reiki Precepts

The importance of the Reiki Precepts (also referred to as the Reiki Principles, Ideals or Gokai), cannot be emphasized enough. They are an integral part of our daily Reiki practice. They were given to us by Usui Sensei, as a way to live a compassionate life as well as look after our psychological health. He believed that if you

¹ Nan Henderson, Resiliency in Action, www.resiliency.com. Ms. Henderson is president of this organization.

healed the mind you healed the body. Usui Sensei described the precepts as “the secret art of inviting happiness...the miraculous cure for all diseases.”² Chanting or saying the precepts out loud before or during our practice, reminds us how the power of our words can influence our thoughts. I think of the precepts as anchors in the storms of life that help us navigate the rough waters. I love to say them in Japanese and feel their energy move throughout my being. You can hear them spoken and sung in Japanese online if you would like to learn how to say them yourself.³ Reiki began as a spiritual practice and like the practice of mindfulness or being fully present in the moment, it helps ground us in the here and now. The precepts remind us that “just for today” we can get through anything. They remind us that every day is a blank page that we get to write on and begin anew. Although many people have previously written about and described their interpretation of the Reiki precepts, I’d like to share a few of my thoughts.

The Five Principles of Mikao Usui

Just for today • Kyo dake wa

Do not anger • Ikaruna

Do not worry • Shin pai suna

Be grateful • Kan sha shite

Do your work • Gyo o hagemu

Be kind to others • Hito ni shinsetsu ni

Do not anger • Ikaruna

When I talk about this precept, I think of attachment to outcome and wanting things to happen as we think they should. When this doesn’t happen, we get angry. This keeps us focused on the small self or ego, forgetting about the big picture or Divine plan for our life. I know personally that every time I resisted making a major or life changing decision, it meant I had to do it. And what happened as a result of that painful or challenging decision was growth beyond anything I could have ever imagined! The Divine plan knew the big picture for my life (and yes that included Reiki), and I had to let go of the anger I felt because my life didn’t turn out the way I wanted it to or thought that it should—in fact, it turned out better!

Reiki can help us to let go of how we think people should act so we can love and accept them as they are. Reiki can remind us to let go of how we think our life should be. That only causes suffering and pain. Reiki teaches us to surrender and accept what is, trusting that everything is exactly as it is supposed to be and that people and experiences are in our lives to help us grow.

Do not worry • Shin pai suna

In my private practice, I have found that a common cause of worry is the fear of the unknown. What immobilizes us or keeps us

stuck in fear is that we don’t believe that we will know what to do if something happens, or that we won’t be able to cope or figure things out. We think that we have to do everything on our own. This precept helps us manage our fears and trust that all will work out. “Just for today” can remind you to focus on the present and live fully in the moment. It can help you learn to trust yourself and your higher power, whatever you believe that to be. Help or guidance is always available to us. All we have to do is ask. Most of what we worry about never happens anyway, and the worry just drains our energy.

Be grateful • Kan sha shite

Embracing the “attitude of gratitude” expands and enhances all aspects of our lives. Being aware of the constant ebb and flow of life and how things can change in a moment reminds us to stay present and savor every moment. Being thankful for people and experiences in our lives reminds us how rich our life really is. Even the challenges of life help us step out of our comfort zone and become who we were always meant to be (the pearl is formed by the irritation of the sand in the oyster). And most of all, Reiki practitioners are grateful that we get to do what we love!

Do your work • Gyo o hagemu

When thinking about this precept, I always felt that it was reminding us that we are our life’s work. That we are here to live authentically and be true to ourselves. I also think that Usui Sensei asked us to do what we are meant to do and do it with our whole heart! I believe that living the compassionate life means living with integrity and walking our talk. When we do the work on ourselves, we help heal the world. And while this precept does offer us wisdom about what we do in the world, it is most important to remember that we are human beings; not human do-ings!

Be kind to others • Hito ni shinsetsu ni

Being kind to others is the golden rule. It is having compassion for all beings. It is walking the path of loving kindness, knowing that we are all connected and we are all in this together. What we do affects others.

² William Lee Rand, *The Healing Touch: First and Second Degree Manual* (Southfield Hill, MI: Vision Publications, 2011), vi.

³ To hear the Five Precepts spoken in Japanese, go to: www.reiki.org/japanesetechniques/5principles.html. To hear them sung in Japanese and English by UK Reiki Master and composer Colin Powell, who wrote the “Gokai song” as a tribute to the Precepts, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=re6SZz1O5DU; to purchase a copy of this go to: alteregouk.bandcamp.com/track/gokai-song. This recording is great to share with your students in class as a helpful way for them to learn the Precepts.

This precept reminds us to be kind to ourselves. Have compassion for yourself and treat yourself as you would your best friend. When you feel down and out, place your hands on your heart, let the Reiki flow and say “I am here for you.” Being there for yourself is the most powerful act of self-love.

Living the Reiki precepts and practicing self-Reiki is indeed “the secret art of inviting happiness.”

Other self-care practices

Here are some of my other favorite suggestions using Reiki for emotional and psychological self-care.

Honoring yourself and others

Before you have a heart to heart talk with someone, you can use Reiki to actually speak from your heart. Place one hand on your heart and one on your throat. Allow Reiki to flow for a few minutes. Activating the SHK (mental-emotional symbol) will increase the presence of your heart.

Before you have a “power” conversation with someone (a person in authority, a person who holds a business position above or below you, a friend or loved one), place one hand on your power center or solar plexus, and one on your throat. Allow Reiki to flow for a few minutes. You can add the SHK and/or CKR (the power symbol). This practice helps you to speak your truth and stand up for yourself, coming from a place of personal empowerment and respect for yourself and the other person.

Clearing out the day/emptying the trash

One of my favorite practices that is helpful for honoring our feelings and letting go of challenging days, is clearing out the day or emptying the trash. We all know how important it is to feel our feelings, honor them and then release them. Unexpressed emotions can build up in our body, mind and spirit, throwing us off balance and moving us towards dis-ease. This practice is a powerful way to do that.

I love to share this with my students, especially those who are health care professionals or those who, in other ways, come in contact with many people every day. This is especially helpful when you have to be strong, have to maintain a composed, professional presence or be the anchor in a crisis or challenging situation and can’t express your emotions at that moment, instead having to hold them in or compartmentalize them so that you can get through the crisis and help everyone else do so too.

At the end of the day, check in with yourself. Place your hands on your heart, bring in SHK and let Reiki flow and fill you for a few minutes. Begin a dialogue: feel your feelings. Listen to what they have to say to you. Let the tears flow. Let the anger out. Keep the Reiki flowing as you say to yourself:

“That was hard when I had to share that bad news with a patient.”

“That was hard to see that person in pain and suffering.”

“What ____ said hurt my feelings.”

“I am really angry about _____.”

Emotions are energy, and keeping them bottled up only hurts us in the end. IF you can’t do it for yourself, ask a friend to give you Reiki as you have this dialogue.

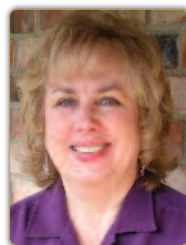
The Reiki shower

In today’s world we are constantly being bombarded with too much information, the products of technology, intense emotions and negativity. This can be challenging for all people, but especially for those who are empaths or “sensitive.” The Reiki shower is a great way for sensitive people to clear themselves of other peoples’ energies that they might have taken too much to heart. This an easy and fun visualization practice that anyone can do, day or night (and if you can’t take a shower, a bath with Himalayan sea salt or Epsom salts will work as well).

To begin the day with a fresh start, imagine the water of the shower as Reiki energy flowing over you, energizing you, washing over you and filling you up to begin the day (many students have told me that they visualize Reiki energy as rainbow colors or golden honey). If you had a challenging day or feel the need to clear yourself, taking a Reiki shower at the end of the day can release any stuck emotions, thoughts or negative energy that has crept in. Imagine the water as Reiki energy flowing over you and washing everything away, with any negativity flowing into the drain, leaving you clear and refreshed. Think of it as releasing the toxins of the day.

Riding the waves

Navigating the ups and downs of life can present you with many challenges. Your Reiki practice and the Reiki precepts can help you develop resiliency to ride the waves. Become the captain of your own ship and move yourself into wellness of body, mind and spirit. Reiki is a wonderful gift that we give ourselves—an act of self-care and self-love. ❄️



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