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Reiki and MS

BY ELYN SELU

RECENTLY, I RECEIVED wonderful news, miraculous news, words I'd hoped and prayed for ten years to hear from a neurologist. "You're in complete remission. You'll never have another relapse again." I jumped out of my chair and gave my surprised doctor a hug. My first question for him was, "Is it because of Reiki?"

He told me that indeed my efforts to take care of myself contributed to my recovery. He wouldn't go so far as to say Reiki was the reason, but I knew, deep in my being, Reiki was what brought me back from the brink. Reiki is like following the current of a gently flowing river.

It gently nudges you along to exactly where you need to go. Before I understood the gentle but powerful healing of Reiki, I resisted the current, trying to swim against it.

My illness started a decade ago with odd symptoms: inexplicable, bone-crushing fatigue, numbness and tingling in my hands, and pain so intense in my neck and back that it woke me at night. After a circuitous and frustrating route through allopathic medicine, I was diagnosed with Relapsing/Remitting Multiple Sclerosis (R/R MS). The diagnosis meant there were times when my immune system went into overdrive and my confused T-cells

attacked the fatty insulation that protects the nerve endings in my brain and Central Nervous System (CNS). Each attack brought a host of new and bizarre symptoms to deal with. Once the relapse subsided, I had brain damage, but the symptoms would ease and become a nuisance rather than disabling.

After years of being sick, it was a relief to have a diagnosis. It meant I could do something about it. I began a maintenance drug treatment for multiple sclerosis and filled my medicine cabinet with a host of other drugs to treat the many lingering symptoms. At the time, a friend recommended Reiki. I wasn't interested.

Reiki sounded too esoteric. I became a good patient and did all that my allopathic doctors ordered.

Because I was relapsing every four months or so, it was recommended that I begin an eighteen-month course of chemotherapy. The drug would shut down my over-active immune system effectively, slowing the rate of relapses. I was terrified, confused, and exhausted. I went to a specialist who explained that the frequency of my relapses indicated that I was spiraling into Secondary-Progressive MS. Once in that stage, there would be no remissions—only worsening symptoms. I would become more and more disabled. Chemotherapy was the only option.

Feeling completely discouraged and without support, I turned to the friend who had recommended Reiki. She was a

truly experienced it until those treatments. I would easily fall into deep meditation while Pam worked on me. I started to see how my lack of self-worth courted illness. Reiki eased my MS symptoms but it also nudged me out of an abusive marriage and forced me to see how my emotional outlook and spiritual growth affected my physical being.

Reiki encourages its recipients to become self-healers. Pam gave me my first attunement in 2001. Reiki wants to be shared and so I did. I gave Reiki to everyone who was willing. I learned; I grew; I healed. I found that taking salt baths while giving myself Reiki treatments would leave me feeling clear of fatigue and depression. I was able to empty the medicine cabinet of most prescriptions.

Early in my diagnosis, I read that there were rare cases when someone

ing. Pam encouraged me to begin my own practice but I held a belief that until I was healthy, I couldn't help others.

Through Reiki, I developed a trust for my own tuition. I left New Orleans after Katrina and found my way to Oregon. I studied with a new Reiki Master, Colleen Benelli. My understanding of Reiki deepened. I no longer resisted the current of Reiki's wisdom for me. I came to understand that healing is a process. I might never be perfectly healthy, but I could still help others. With encouragement from Colleen, I started my own Reiki business in the fall of 2008. I am deeply blessed by my clients' and students' discoveries, awakenings, and healings. You cannot heal another without affecting healing within yourself, in your environment, in everyone you encounter.

I kept asking Reiki what was next for me. My fiction writing career had stalled, and I wanted to do more to bring healing to others. The answer came over the radio in an advertisement for the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine. I could become an acupuncturist. It seemed like the perfect way to apply Reiki in a medical setting.

Being someone who has spent her life avoiding science in favor of the arts, I argued with the wisdom, fought the flow. Reiki gently nudged. I was filled with fear about my physical limitations and my difficulty with math and sciences. Fear pushed me out of the river and onto the bank where I fumed while the river lazily went its way. Finally, I realized I could use Reiki to help me get through school. I applied to the program to earn my master's degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

While waiting for my acceptance letter, I took college chemistry as a pre-requisite. Whenever there was a moment that the professor's lecture was too difficult to grasp, or when I would take an exam, I drew the Mental/Emotional symbol and the answers came more easily. I got a B in the course. This is huge for the woman who received a D for her first semester of biology as an undergrad. Reiki

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nurse, so maybe it wasn't such a bad idea. In one of those wonderful cosmic coincidences, the Reiki practitioner she recommended, Pam Eveline, lived only a block from my New Orleans home. I went for treatments once a week. Those quiet Friday night treatments with Pam changed my life. I didn't realize it at the time, but Reiki would alter the entire course of my illness and my life. Reiki, like the slow-moving waters in a lazy bayou, works so gently that only in retrospect could I see its profound effect and understand its power.

The Reiki treatments softened the side effects from chemo treatments, eased painful muscle spasms, and calmed my over-active bladder. What I didn't expect it to do was heal my heart and spirit, too. I'd heard of holistic healing but had never

with MS went into permanent remission, never to relapse again. I asked my neurologist about it. He said, "That's extremely rare. The best we can hope for you is to keep you out of Secondary-Progressive for as long as possible." He convinced me that I would eventually reach this stage in my illness, but I never stopped looking for ways to heal myself. It became a personal calling to find a way to delay that slide into Secondary for as long as possible.


I quit working full time, moved to a cooler climate with less pollution, and switched to a mostly organic diet. I exercised whenever and however my body could tolerate it. Yoga was the best for easing muscles tightened by spasticity. Most importantly, I stuck with Reiki and hoped it would eventually bring my body heal-

coaxed me out of my liberal arts box and into the sciences, all for the sake of becoming a better healer.

To further nudge me along, I read *The Biology of Belief*, by Bruce Lipton, Ph.D. This book bridges the gap between allopathic medicine and energy medicine. Lipton's work as a cell biologist led him to the discovery that cells are so much more than a nucleus and membrane; they are affected by energy. "Quantum physics discovered that physical atoms are made up of vortices of energy that are constantly spinning and vibrating; each atom is like a wobbly spinning top that radiates energy...So every material structure in the universe, including you and me, radiates a

unique energy signature." The book deepened my understanding of cellular biology and why our bodies respond to Reiki.

This fall will be the ten-year anniversary of my diagnosis. It will also be when I begin full time study in Traditional Chinese Medicine. I will go through four years of intensive study to become a licensed acupuncturist. The question everyone asked through the application process was, "What about your health? Can you handle the stress?" When I start to worry about the course load, I step back into the flow of Reiki. Like riding a raft on a river, I feel buoyed and supported. Reiki will be with me for the entire experience. If I let myself float down the river, Reiki will get me there.

It has been three years since my last relapse. My latest magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) shows an actual shrinking of the scars on my brain. According to my doctor, I will never relapse again. My journey to become a healer began with the intention to heal myself. Along the way, I learned how to help others. In bringing others closer to health, I made a surprising discovery—there is indescribable joy, and your own healing is amplified. 

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