



# Reiki: Finding a Higher Calling

## *Teaching Reiki to a Cancer Patient*

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*Teaching Reiki to cancer patients as a daily self-care practice allows them to become active participants in their healing, find deeper connection and meaning in life as well as a stronger sense of self. It also allows the teacher to grow.*

*There is a pattern to the personality of long-term survivors. They demonstrate action, wisdom, and devotion in their response to cancer and seek personal empowerment.<sup>1</sup>*

*A cancer diagnosis is an abrupt confrontation that signals a need for care on many levels. For optimal health and well-being, patients need to address daily not only the disease, but also its underlying imbalances and any unhealthy habits of body or mind that weaken well-being. Patients also need to heal from the shock of the diagnosis and, once treatment starts, from treatment-related side effects and stress.<sup>2</sup>*

*The overall approach to cancer care needs to be holistic, combining the best of traditional Western medicine with integrative and complementary modalities. Reiki fits well into this paradigm.<sup>3</sup>*

*Reiki sessions, classes and self-treatment can be valuable tools and resources for anyone at any point throughout this experience, which often spans years. We can adapt many aspects of Reiki practice to specifically meet the needs of people with cancer.<sup>4</sup>*

*Reiki is an easily learned self-care tool that can quickly offer relaxation, stress reduction and symptom relief for people with cancer. Reiki class for these students is empowering and can be taken at any point in their cancer experience including during active treatment and palliative or hospice care.<sup>5</sup>*

CARIE CAME INTO MY LIFE in February 2013. It was a week after completing my Karuna Reiki® training. I know this was no coincidence. I received an email from her mom requesting an appointment as soon as possible. Her daughter—20 years old—had recently received surgery for a brain tumor and was waiting for her radiation and chemotherapy treatments; she was scared and anxious. A friend of hers had recommended Reiki, which they wished to try. My first reaction was a mix of emotional stir and concern about my ability to handle such a situation. Until then, my practice did not include clients with serious illnesses or critical medical conditions. Then a voice came to me: “Just do Reiki.” Calm, re-centered, I went to their home to “just do Reiki.”

*When I was diagnosed with a brain tumor in January 2013, I thought my life was over. I had just graduated college and was looking forward to starting my life; now everything was put on hold. When family and friends heard about my situation, of course they wanted to help. One of my mom’s friends at work insisted that she take me to get a Reiki session. I had never heard of Reiki, but my mom went online and found Veronique Frede. (Carie)*

### Emotional Transformation

When I met Carie the first time, she looked like a beautiful, fragile, frightened and lost angel. She was surrounded by her mom and her sisters. I felt so much love around her that I was compelled to share it with her: “You are so much loved.” My uncertainties disappeared as my faith and confidence returned. We hugged, talked about Reiki, did a mini-session and agreed to go ahead and try. Our first session happened that same week and was, for both of us, the beginning of a journey of wonders and growth.

*From the first day I met Veronique I felt overwhelming emotion and even began to cry as she hugged me and reassured me that everything*

<sup>1</sup> Bernie Siegel, *Love, Medicine & Miracles* (New York: Harper Collins, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Pamela Miles, “Reiki For Body, Mind and Spirit Support Of Cancer Patients, Clinical Perspectives,” *Advances*, Fall 2007, 22(2): 20.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Van De Velde, “Reiki in a Cancer Center,” *Reiki News Magazine*, Spring 2012, 11(1): 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Van De Velde, “Cancer Center,” 28.

would be okay. Even though we had just met, I could feel her love and attention for me. She offered to drive to my house to perform Reiki sessions since I was not able to drive after my surgery. (Carie)

### Physical Transformation

Seeing Carie regularly every week over the past four months has enabled me to observe how subtle yet powerful Reiki truly is. After our first session, I could already see a physical change in her. She reported feeling more relaxed, less anxious. Her faith in life had returned. Her mom mentioned a noticeable inner peace and tranquility in her daughter. Carie's anxieties, insomnia and headaches gradually decreased. Her smile came back.

*I didn't know what to expect from a Reiki session, and was surprised by how relaxing it was. From the very first Reiki session with Veronique, I could feel the heat radiating from her hands and was amazed by how my anxiety and fear levels began to drop with each session. I remember one session in particular—my hands began to feel like they were growing and becoming larger and heavier. It was incredible to me to feel the energy moving so strongly through my body. Veronique was also kind enough to give me meditation CDs, Reiki music and books that helped me to better manage my anxieties. (Carie)*

### Spiritual Transformation

Our on-going sessions led me to deepen my personal connection with Reiki. I gradually understood and embraced the practice as spiritual—one that demands spiritual connection, commitment and regular self-practice. I started to see how Reiki touches the many parts of us and our lives at many levels. Reiki practice brings a deeper sense of awareness, compassion and understanding. It promotes attention and mindfulness. It encourages harmony and conscious living. It leads us to a path of service—to oneself and others. As we practice, its ideals of peaceful and harmonious living come forth in our lives in a very gentle and natural way. Reiki is not just about healing; it is also about supporting our soul on its journey of spiritual awakening and growth—for ourselves and also for others.

As my spiritual connection with Reiki deepened, Carie's spiritual curiosity increased as she gradually discovered the benefits of breathing, meditating, practicing mindfulness through yoga and using inspirational cards. She developed a special interest in crystals and crystal healing through the use of her Bio-Mat filled with amethysts. At the beginning of spring, her mom found a group of rose quartz crystals in her yard while gardening. Carie picked them and arranged them around her house. Observing the emergence of her inner life led me to reflect on possible ongoing inner-transformation that might not be outwardly apparent.

*In April I learned that I wouldn't need chemotherapy anymore, just radiation, and I began treatment. I felt that this was truly a miracle and was so grateful that I did not need further chemotherapy. Veronique began to perform Reiki sessions twice a week as my anxiety levels began to grow again during the six weeks of treatment. (Carie)*

At some point along our journey, I became aware of the importance of informing our clients regularly about Reiki; the healer is not the one we generally think he/she is. Reiki practitioners act as facilitators; clients are the ones who allow healing to happen as they open themselves to it. They are the ones drawing the energy and bringing change in themselves and their life. As this can be empowering for them, it is also a nice reminder for us, the practitioners, that results do not depend on us. I began to understand the importance of boundaries, of being supportive while respecting each other's journey, of loving by being present, listening and understanding, of empowering by sharing and encouraging others to connect with, within and beyond their body to find deeper meaning and purpose in life in order to gain a clearer sense of who they are.

### Life Transformation

*It was during my six-week-treatment that I found out that my doctor had his own Level I certification in Reiki. He recommended that I learn how to perform Reiki on myself. I was amazed that a medical doctor encouraged me to learn Reiki as well as continue to receive sessions. Veronique agreed to teach me the Level I course, and we began shortly after my radiation treatment was over. Learning how to perform the hand positions and becoming attuned was such a special experience for me. I couldn't wait to begin practicing on myself and others and seeing how they felt after a session with me. I first practiced on my mom and was pleasantly surprised when she began to have uncontrollable twitches and told me it felt like there was a heating pad placed on her. After these sessions with my mom I felt like I could possibly assist in the healing of others, which is what I've always felt is my calling in life. I also enjoy performing self-treatment, which helps when I am feeling anxious or to help relax before bed. (Carie)*

I felt joy and excitement when Carie asked me to teach her Reiki. Her request was a clear signal of her healing and growth. She was stronger and ready to move on, commit and take responsibility for her own healing. It was also an indication that I was ready to become a teacher. I assembled my materials, exchanged with other Reiki Masters, reflected upon and developed a format and content for our class. While respecting the requirements for the Reiki Level I class, I chose to adapt the teaching by keeping it simple—to the essence of it—following

Reiki Master teacher Jane Van De Velde's advice to make it easy to learn—and integrate into Carie's day-to-day life.<sup>6</sup> When the time came, I taught Carie about Reiki—its principles, history and how to treat herself and others. The initiation was empowering and meaningful for both of us in different ways. When she took Level I Reiki Practitioner training, the Teacher in me came forth—the Master gaining deeper knowledge, more confidence and maturity.

### Conclusion

*I believe everything happens for a reason. If I hadn't gotten sick, I would have never heard about Reiki or met Veronique and her healing hands. She has helped me get through some tough times and I know that she will be there for me in the future. She has shown me so much love and care that I feel truly blessed to have met her and to have her as a part of my life now. Before I got sick I wanted to go to school for occupational therapy. I still intend to go down that path,*

*but I also feel drawn to performing Reiki on others in my future. Maybe I got sick so that I could learn Reiki to help others. When I first began this journey, I would have never guessed that I would become so involved in Reiki, but now I am excited to see where my future with Reiki goes. (Carie)*

Our respective journey of healing, learning and growth carries on. Carie is continuing with her own healing. I am keeping up with my Reiki practice, feeling blessed for the gift of Reiki, grateful for having found Carie in my life, supported like never before; this allows me to bring Reiki further into my life and outside into my world as a daughter, spouse, parent, practitioner and as a teacher.



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<sup>6</sup> Van De Velde, "Cancer Center."