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Developing Your Teaching Style

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Students learn in different ways, have different needs, and varied reasons for wanting to know Reiki. Understanding different styles of learning and gearing your teaching to meet the needs of your students will improve your teaching and help your students to learn more effectively.

A good place to start in an exploration of learning styles is to ask yourself, “How do I like to learn?” Take time to think about your favorite non-Reiki classes and favorite teachers. How did they teach? Were their classes lecture, discussion, experiential or a combination of these techniques? Was the subject matter crammed into your head or were you given just enough information to whet your appetite? Did the teacher give you the basic information to help you

Auditory learners learn through listening. They learn best by lecture, discussion, talking things out, and listening to what others have to say. They need to “hear” the materials. Taping a class or having something they can listen to after class is often beneficial for an auditory learner.

Kinesthetic or tactile learners learn through moving, doing and touching. They learn best through a hands-on approach and enjoy exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

It is important to incorporate a variety of learning styles into your teaching in order to meet the varied needs of your students.

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get started and supply additional materials or resources? Did he/she guide you step-by-step through the process? What type of personalities did your favorite teachers have? What did you enjoy about their classes?

Now think about your own Reiki training. Ask yourself these questions: What did you like about the way your teacher presented the material? What didn't you like? What would you have done differently? Taking time to think about and answer these questions will help you in developing and planning your own classes. Understanding how you learn and knowing what is important to you will help you understand how others learn.

Three common ways of learning are: **visual**, **auditory**, and **kinesthetic/tactile**. Visual learners learn by seeing. They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays such as pictures in books, videos/DVDs, Power Point presentations, diagrams and so forth.

Some ways of doing this are:

- Printed materials, such as:
 - Outline of material to be covered
 - Class manual
 - Handouts printed in different colors
 - Diagrams of auras and chakras, Reiki hand positions, etc.
 - Articles of interest (Reiki research, how Reiki heals, etc.)
- Power Point presentations
- Instructional videos/DVDs
- Playing appropriate music during attunements, meditations, and hands-on practice sessions
- Burning incense or essential oils (when and where permissible)

- Rubbing Sandalwood oil (or lavender or rosewood) on your hands for the attunement
- Demonstrating what you are teaching and letting students practice
- Guiding students in hands-on practice

A Reiki class may be an entirely new experience for people so providing time for questions and answers is essential. Your students will also learn from your stories and examples of how you have used Reiki. It is also important to help students bond in a class. Simply having students share their stories can create group rapport. The energy of the group coming together helps provide a supportive and rich environment for learning.

In essence, the most important parts of Reiki training are the teaching, the practice, and the coaching that one receives during and after class. When a teacher is present, he or she can observe the student practicing and can support, supervise, guide and assist in the learning process. Questions can be answered immediately and mistakes corrected. Discussions can come from the practice and can lead to other topics that are also relevant.

Things to consider when teaching various populations:

Friends and family

When you teach friends and family, it is important to remember that you have an identity, role or relationship already established with them. Your energy fields have a certain way of interacting with each other. To change your “role” to healer, instead of friend, wife, mother, etc., can sometimes change the dynamics of the relationship. Some relationships are “threatened” or upset by a change in role. Therefore, one needs to be cognizant of how best to approach these special people in your life.

Having said that, one of the best ways to begin teaching as a new Reiki Master is to have friends or family as your first students. Often, you have already practiced on them so they will be familiar with Reiki and enjoy receiving sessions from you. When you are ready to begin teaching, they know that this is new for you. If you approach them as needing their help and guidance, they will be more open to you. They know that you are “practicing” and growing and are often eager to help you learn and refine your new skills.

Friends and family can be taught in a more loosely structured format. You do not need to teach them all the standard topics in a typical Reiki class. They have probably heard most of it already. You can let them structure the learning and be available when they are ready. You can also simply teach them what they are

interested in learning. Most of the time, you are teaching them for their own personal use, not as practitioners who will be offering this service to the public.

Years ago, two students of mine took the Master class in early December and as a Christmas present, gave their mom and sisters (and the cat) Reiki I. Their family had already received Reiki treatments from them so they knew about it and had some understanding. On Christmas Eve, they made the attunement a part of their holiday ritual/celebration! They sent me a picture afterwards and told me how special it was and that doing it informally as a part of their holiday celebration made it a very memorable and special holiday indeed!

My husband Bob and my son John, who was 9 years old at the time, were my first Reiki initiates. I had been practicing Reiki on them for two years already and had talked a lot about Reiki, so they were very familiar with it. We sat down one evening; I talked a little bit about the history, a little bit about what Reiki actually is and what it can be used for, and then explained the attunement. I then gave them the attunement for Reiki I. There were tears in my eyes as I gave the attunements, knowing that they were now open and forever connected to this very special gift. I did not teach them the hand positions...they were more interested in scanning. It turned out that they were both naturals at scanning so I taught them how to go where they felt the energy difference, and to this day, that is how they practice. My son Matt was four when I attuned him to Reiki. He was an infant when I learned Reiki and began using it on him on a regular basis. He saw me draw the symbols so he already had a “knowing” of them. He wanted the Power symbol desperately and already had a feel for energy work. I made his “class” brief, giving him the attunement and letting him go from there. My “boys” are now 16 and 21. Both are very gifted Reiki channels.

It is a gift indeed to be able to share Reiki with the people you love the most! So go with the flow with your families and friends. Find out what they want to know about Reiki and structure your informal “teachings” that way. Then they can practice on you and you can give them all the support they need.

Adult Education

Besides family and friends, one of the best places to begin teaching is at an adult education class. Many schools have adult education programs and are always looking for classes. Adult education classes attract adults of all ages so you will gain experience with a varied population. Breaking up the class into two-hour sessions gives you the opportunity to stretch it out and

“master” the different topics to be included in a Reiki class. You do not have to be prepared for the entire class; you have time between to prepare and rehearse each part. (See “Teaching Reiki, Part II” on page 43.)

(**Note:** Because of potential liability issues and larger sizes of these classes, I have people practice in chairs rather than on tables.)

Children and Teenagers

Barbara McKell in her article, “Teaching Reiki to Children” (*Reiki News Magazine*, Spring 2004), describes how “Children respond to things that are stimulating and tactile rather than just words. They operate on so many levels at once.” She advises that Reiki classes for children should keep them busy and be full of fun. Drawing, coloring, movement, activities, and music are all important strategies. Children have shorter attention spans so short sessions and frequent breaks are important.

Children often surprise me with their understanding and expression. They are naturals at feeling the energy. They “get it” by feeling it and doing it. They do not need to understand it mentally as adults often do.

Teenagers also feel the energy easily and are fun to teach. As young adults they want you to be authentic and real with them, not put on airs. Teens are often just learning to be independent and spreading their wings. They enjoy learning skills that empower them and help them deal with growing up. Reiki is a wonderful tool for teens to build self-confidence. Reiki empowers them to be who they really are and gives them more tools to help them feel in control of their lives.

One method I’ve found effective is to attune the children and let their parents teach them. Often, the children have already received a Reiki treatment from their parents and have some understanding. Having the parent teach them helps the parent to develop their teaching skills as well as support the child in their learning. “Teaching” can be done informally as part of a conversation before, during or after a Reiki session, or anytime they are together. It also strengthens the parent/child bond and allows them to share this special gift!

For more information on teaching children, visit Barbara’s Web site, www.reikikids.ca. She includes information on teaching children of different ages, class manuals, and meditations for children, as well as energy exercises.

Older adults

Some older adults have physical or health challenges that need to be considered. They may tire more easily, not be able to

sit for long periods of time, have pain or discomfort, or limited vision or hearing.

Some older adults are interested in learning Reiki simply for treating themselves or loved ones. If this is the case, you can keep it short and sweet. Teach them some basic information about Reiki, give them the attunement, some handouts (to help them remember) and teach only basic hand positions. You can then simply tell them to put their hands where it hurts or where the problem is. If they have physical limitations, you can suggest that they hold their hands on the area of discomfort as long as they can or send the energy to it with their eyes. Teaching them to give themselves Reiki while sitting in a chair or lying on a bed works well for those who are physically or health challenged and tire easily.

Clients

It is very rewarding and empowering to teach Reiki to clients. I attune many of my clients who are chronically or terminally ill, or going through cancer therapy, to Level I. I also attune their families. The teaching begins after their first Reiki session. There is no formal classroom. I attune them during one of their sessions, first doing a guided meditation. We talk about what Reiki is and how it heals. I give them a manual or book to read, and we talk about it at each session. I answer questions and address issues as they come up. I teach self-scanning so that they can put their hands where the energy is out of balance or needed most. I encourage daily self-treatment. Nice and simple. That is all they need.

Teaching health care professionals

Many Reiki practitioners are hesitant about teaching Reiki to health care professionals. Remember that you are not teaching them about health care or medical conditions, you are teaching them Reiki, something they may not know anything about. When teaching health care professionals, you can emphasize that Reiki is a stress reduction and relaxation technique. Talk about stress and its effects on the body and then explain how the relaxation response helps the body to heal itself. Professional groups expect an organized and professional class. Make sure you take the time to develop your class, follow your outline, present material in an organized fashion, adhere to the established time schedule set for the class, and provide lots of reading materials and resources.

Some helpful resources for health care professionals:

- Kathie Lipinski, “Reiki and the Helping Professions,” Part I, *Reiki News Magazine*, Fall 2006.

- Kathie Lipinski, "Reiki and the Helping Professions," Part II, *Reiki News Magazine*, Winter 2006.
- James Oschman, "Science and the Human Energy Field," *Reiki News Magazine*, Vol. 1, Issue Three. (This article can also be found in the "Reiki in Hospitals" section of www.reiki.org).
- Nicole Mackey, "The Science of Reiki," *Reiki News Magazine*, Summer 2005.
- James Oschman, "Science Measures the Human Energy field" www.reiki.org

The Web site, www.reikimedresearch.org provides important information regarding Reiki research and uses of Reiki for various conditions.

Some people simply want to tap into Universal Life Force Energy to bring health and balance to their lives. They do not intend to use Reiki to treat other people. Some have health problems and want to use Reiki only for themselves and their healing process. Others may have chronic illness or care for a person who is dying or has long-term illness. They may be elderly, or may be young parents of a premature infant or a child with cancer. Many of these people only need a simple explanation, an attunement, and some basic hands on guidance.

Those who intend to develop their use of Reiki into a healing practice obviously need more. A structured class that presents all of the necessary material to help the student become a competent and effective practitioner is essential to meet their needs. Gearing your teaching to the needs of the population you are addressing is one of the best ways to ensure that your students will actually follow through, use their Reiki training to the greatest advantage, and gain power and effectiveness as Reiki channels.

Note: It is important to note that Reiki Practitioner Certificates (Certification as Reiki Level I or Reiki Level II Practitioner) should not be awarded unless a student has received all the training necessary for competence at that level. Clients/family members and others who receive attunements and limited instruction for use in treating themselves and family members may be awarded a certificate of "Reiki for Self-Treatment" or something of the sort, but should not receive certificates designating them as Reiki Level I Practitioner or Reiki Level II Practitioner unless they have received the complete requisite training for that level.



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