

Paul's Sabbatical Year

Last year I realized that 2018 would be my 40th year practicing Reiki. I've decided to take this year as a sabbatical from my usual work in the Reiki community.

I have carried around in my mind a list of things that I've always wanted to do or explore, but never seemed to have the time or money to do them. I've decided it's time. I want and need to create the space to see if these plans really have energy for me. Here is what my list looks like: meet and get to know my half-brother who lives in California; spend time with my daughter from a previous relationship; volunteer in another country with the intention of getting to know people who do not live in the western middle-class world that defines my concept of a happy, abundant life; write a book exploring the promise and potential of daily Reiki practice.

I'm not making these ideas into a checklist. I want to stay open to where the energy leads. I want to be disciplined and use my time well. I am also clear that I am not abandoning Susan and her mom; I need to be present to my family.

Traditionally, I believe, a sabbatical can be a year of study. I want to study James Fowler's book, *Stages of Faith*. I'm intrigued by his delineation of stages of faith development.

I have been puzzled by the apparent gap between our professed spiritual and religious values and the choices we make that do not seem aligned with them. I hope to see if a key to understanding this gap is in understanding stages of faith and spiritual development. I'm fascinated by the possibility of spiritual teachers consciously teaching to different levels of development and more importantly, systematically encouraging and supporting movement to the next stages. I feel drawn in by these questions and can't wait to see if the energy stays compelling.

On the one hand I see this quest as totally beyond my capacity, and at the same time I feel my whole life in Reiki has been preparing me for this work.

I am not disappearing from the community this year. I will be at the 2018 Reiki Alliance conference and participate in online meetings as I am able. My intention is to take time to listen deeply to what Reiki is calling me to. I know I am not alone in this and am grateful for the support I feel.