

QFH XXXXIII

Why Do I Want To Help?

One reason I was so drawn to Reiki was that it promised a way of helping others. Of course I learned that Reiki was “first of all for myself,” but that did not mean that it wasn’t also for others or invalidate my initial motivation.

My first lessons in Reiki centered around the aspect of Healing Practice. I needed to make “doing Reiki,” especially in the form of self-treatment, a daily practice. I also needed to put my hands on as many people as possible in order to learn about offering Reiki without pushing, and to learn about trusting the outcome of treatment. I needed to learn to trust myself as a partner with Reiki, to learn about exchange for treatment, to learn that my desire to treat others might not result in having many opportunities to treat others, to learn to “trust what Reiki brought me.”

Another set of lessons centered around the aspect of Personal Development. Through self-treatment and having Reiki more present in my life, I began to learn more about myself, learning that there were so many ways that I was not taking care of myself. This learning had many manifestations: discovering what my body needed in terms of food and drink, awakening to the relationships that did not serve me, the choices I made about using my time that did and did not serve me, discovering what form of work nourished and fulfilled me, finding that many of my decisions were based on what others wanted and expected of me, finding the courage to make my own choices and chart my own path, giving myself permission to value what I felt rather than being so concerned about what others felt. There was a lot of learning, a lot of growth, and self-discovery as I honored and developed the gifts that are uniquely mine and are my responsibility and gift to the world.

The next phase centered on the aspect of Spiritual Discipline. The Principles have been a powerful guide—Dr. Usui’s “secret

method that brings happiness.” Here I am learning not to overidentify with what I am feeling, what I think I need, what I want, what my gift seems to be, and my desire to be seen, appreciated, needed, and loved. Spiritual Discipline seems to be calling me beyond myself to a more real self that is about connection with others. The true self as called out by the Principles has these qualities of connection: kindness, gratitude, honor, honesty, trust, tolerance, patience, compassion, forgiveness. I have a growing recognition that when anger, intolerance, unkindness, impatience, holding on to hurts, and lack of honor are present in my behavior, they are a manifestation of my false or defended self. This is the work and healing aspect I am busy with mostly these days. I see that it is this work that brings me more to the aspect of Mystic Order, where I imagine I will live more in the experience of connection with All That Is, with the dissolution of boundaries that breaks through the illusion of separateness. I sense that this is the deepest longing of my spirit, my soul, that this is the truest experience of “coming home” that I long for.

So, why is it that I want to help others? At the beginning of my journey in Reiki, it was because helping others gave me a sense of purpose, a sense of worth. I was good, valuable as a person, deserving of love because I helped others. I was afraid of a dark center of unworthiness that I hoped to enlighten or at least hide by being of service to others. There was also a sense of connection and projection; if I could help others with their pain, perhaps my own would be healed.

Having responded to and worked with the call of Reiki as “first of all for myself” and done the healing work as best I could, it seems time to respond to the other call and teaching of Reiki: “then for our family, friends, and others.” The aspects of Spiritual Discipline and Mystic Order seem to be teaching me that “I and my brothers and sisters are one,” that everyone’s happiness and everyone’s suffering is mine. Perhaps I am moving to the conviction that helping others is truly helping myself. This also brings some fear.

Many of the great spiritual traditions teach that everyone's suffering is mine, and so I cannot just be occupied with my own well being. This teaching is hardly emphasized in our world today with such a focus on the individual. We tend to turn it around and say something like, "If I take care of myself, everyone benefits." Where is the balance? This is the question that scares me. What if we are way out of balance? What if my concern for my health, my security, my abundance, my fulfillment, and the realization of my talents and gifts is somehow missing the point, or at least missing half the point? This is a scary thought. But then, my practice of Reiki has led me into many scary places.

Perhaps my desire to help others is rooted in a basic understanding of life—that we are all in it together and no one should be starving and cold and homeless and lost and alone. I see how easy it is for me to point to governments for not doing their job to take care of all their citizens. Another scary thought: what if it is me that should be sharing more, caring more, doing more for others in need?

Why do I wish to help? I see that I am just beginning to explore this question. Will it lead me to some radical change? Time will tell.