



Reiki in the Operating Room

BY KEN EGBERT

MY HIGHER POWER has a sense of humor. I never did very well at attending my own high school, so He saw fit to lead me to work in a different one for 11 years. I have also always had a fear of doctors, hospitals and the like, so now He's placed my Reiki practice and me in a doctor's office. I spend most of my week in a medical office offering sample Reiki sessions to the patients instead of having them sitting in the waiting room. The rest of the time I am doing full sessions for clients, most of whom are referred to me by the wonderful doctor who has taken me under her wing.

The latest assignment from my Higher Power was well orchestrated. I had been reading a couple of articles in the *Reiki News Magazine* about Reiki in the OR the night before the opportunity presented itself. I even showed them to the doctor I work for because I knew she would be interested.

One of my clients, Leslie, had been receiving Reiki for pain management associated with Degenerative Osteoarthritis, Ankylosing Spondylitis (a form of chronic, inflammatory arthritis) and migraines. In her words:

A few years ago I realized that my general well-being seemed to be getting worse over time. I was noticing more aches and pains in previously unaffected areas, it was taking longer to get moving in the morning, and there were more frequent headaches, etc. I was not willing to add more drug therapy to my regimen and thought perhaps it was time to resign myself to the inevitable. My husband, also a medical professional, had recently started receiving chiropractic treatments, and we were both surprised and pleased with the improvement he had experienced for his problem. He was sure that I could also be helped by chiropractic sessions. I have a strong sense of personal space and have been known to withdraw from physical contact with people whom I don't know very well. Chiropractic is a very hands-on form of therapy. Based on my husband's experiences and some conversations with a friend I decided that if it resulted in relief of my pain I could prepare myself for the invasion of my personal space bubble. I found myself at the chiropractor's office seeking relief.

After several months of concentrating on my wellness rather than my diagnoses, I felt better than I had in several years.

Attention to wellness, in turn, led me to Reiki. Having resolved some of my personal space issues, I was a bit more comfortable with "hands-on" forms of healing. Once again, after several sessions with Ken, a unique and caring man and a Reiki Master, I found that I was

feeling better rather than worse with the passage of time. Sleeping well has been a problem for me for quite a while and Reiki therapy has helped this issue in particular. There is nothing quite like a good night's sleep to help a person feel well. Stress, especially about my health and its effect on my day-to-day life, was another problem that Reiki has helped me to keep under control. I honestly never knew just how much stress I suffered from until I experienced the feeling of near total relaxation that Reiki gave me.

Leslie came to see me a couple of days after I read the articles and told me she had to have some fairly major surgery done on her foot. Without missing a beat and definitely not from my mind I said, "Do you want me to be in the OR during your surgery?" She replied, "Yes. Can you do that?" I told her that it had been done and I was willing (that willingness in itself being one of the positive changes Reiki has had in my life), but there were a lot of things that had to fall into place for that to happen. I gave her the copy of the magazine with the related article and asked her to take it to her doctor at her next visit and see what he said.

The doctor was interested and not averse to my presence, but there were steps to be taken and permissions to be granted to make it happen. I knew he was a busy man so I waited. The surgery was about a month away. We continued our regular Reiki sessions twice a week for pain management and surgery prep. After a couple of weeks of waiting, I was feeling a little frustrated and contacted the doctor. I was told that he was awaiting approval from the hospital and the anesthesiologist.

I relayed my concerns and frustration to the doctor I work for, Martha N. Hackett M.D. She has been practicing family medicine for 30 years and is an Integrative Medicine fellow. Dr. Hackett had found that practicing medicine the old, traditional way was insufficient. She now seeks to awaken the healing wisdom within her patients. Reiki helps to do that.

Dr. Hackett made a phone call, then looked at me and said, "It's going to happen, so let's do your TB test." A couple of days later I received a call from someone at the surgeon's office telling me to contact the OR control desk to find out what I needed to do the day of the surgery.

I arrived early. They checked my I.D., asked for my TB test results, made a copy and handed me scrubs and head and shoe covers. Then they escorted me to a dressing room to change. The surgeon came into the OR control room and greeted me. He said

I could go to the pre-op room and sit with my client, which I did. She was calm as she has been through many surgeries. I immediately started practicing Reiki in the room while we waited. They came to get her, and I walked along with her to the OR.

Ken walked into the room wearing his own horrible cap; we laughed at each other and he gave me a hug. I began to feel calmer at once. After very little time had passed the anesthesiologist entered the room and spoke with me and then explained her rules and expectations to Ken. It was good to see that the woman who would literally have my life under her control treated him with respect and as a fellow medical professional as did all of the staff we encountered together. The first of several drugs was administered through a port in my IV and here is where my pre-surgery memories become foggy.

Leslie got on the table and the anesthesiologist went to work. The surgeon sent one of the OR staff to get me a chair while I was instructed regarding where to be and what not to touch. He left the room to get a lead-lined vest for me. I was about four feet from her head and began beaming Reiki to Leslie.

I was only glancing at the procedure because I wasn't too sure how being present during an operation would affect me. Suddenly my right arm jumped. I felt the flow of energy reverse and something went through me and into the ground. I looked to see what caused this and saw that they were separating her toe joints; the best description I can give is muscling or pulling them apart. This happened a second time when they were clipping the cartilage away. Then they began to drill holes for a metal plate to be installed and I was expecting it to happen again but it didn't. It wasn't until they began to drive the screws in that I felt it a third time. They took x-rays and pictures and stitched her foot up.

The first positive outcome that I noticed was that she came out of the anesthetic quickly. The nurses also noticed this. They asked her if she could move herself to the gurney and she said "yes." One nurse held her foot and the other held her gown in place as she moved herself over.

I walked with her to the recovery room. She was feeling good and declined pain medication. I let the recovery nurse know who I was and why I was there. I did hands-on Reiki the whole time that Leslie was in the recovery room. After a short rest and having her vitals checked, she was ready to go to her post-op room. The nurse was surprised at how quickly everything was progressing and after seeing the other people in the room I was too.


With all of my past experiences of waking in the recovery room I know this to be the worst part of the surgical experience. The pain for the first several minutes of consciousness is the worst. I opened my eyes thinking

I was dreaming because I felt nothing but peace and was looking up at Ken's friendly face smiling at me. No pain; none. This had to be a mistake; I must have just dozed from the pre-surgery medications and awakened in the OR before the procedure had begun. I felt calm, a little chilly and a little high. But my many memories of recovery rooms were telling me that I was, indeed, in recovery. Where was the searing, burning, throbbing pain that always followed an invasive surgical procedure? The recovery nurse saw that I was awake and quickly came to my bed to ask how I was feeling: What was my level of pain? Did I need medication for my discomfort? Was I well enough for some chipped ice or a little water? I told her I felt no pain and a look of mild surprise crossed her face. Assuring me she would return very soon, she turned and walked back to the nurse's station. She didn't believe me. I don't blame her. I did not believe it either. Ken seemed to be the only one who did.

When the recovery room nurse turned her patient over to the post-op nurse, she filled her in on the rapid progress. The post-op nurse said, "I know about Reiki... I'm getting goose bumps!" From the time my client left her house until she returned home was six hours. At her first check-up a few weeks after the surgery the doctor said that her healing was about two weeks ahead of schedule. She and I both credit this to the healing power of Reiki!

Word of my unusually fast and pain-free recovery found its way around the unit. This information along with the presence of a Reiki Master before, during and after the procedure was not lost on many of the medical staff. I was an exception to the rules and Ken was the reason. I was sent home without needing any post-surgical pain relief, and I never did fill the prescription for pain medication that the surgeon had given to my husband for me. I felt better after the procedure than I had felt when I woke up that morning. I knew that having Ken administer Reiki during my procedure would be beneficial but I was amazed at the actual outcome.

My physical recovery and the desired result of this procedure have also been exceptional. At my two-week check-up with the surgeon he was quite pleased with the quick healing of my incision and my ability to get around with no pain to speak of. At my eight week post-surgical visit to the doctor, the X-rays revealed that the desired outcome will be achieved about a month sooner than average. Based on these results, I will always request the presence of a Reiki practitioner in a surgical setting.

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