

# Alternative 101: REIKI

BY HEATHER K. PEAKE

Remember a couple months back, sitting in your driveway, listening to your car groaning and wheezing as it tried to come to life? The battery and the spark plugs were cold, and the oil and fluids thick, and it took a lot of work, right?

According to practitioners of Reiki, that's how

American woman of Japanese descent who had fallen ill on a visit to Tokyo. Mrs. Hawayo Takata became a devotee of Reiki, carrying Hayashi's teachings home with her. She would teach 22 Reiki masters – more than Usui and Hayashi had ever reached – and this corps of masters disseminated the practice far and

45 minutes and an hour. The recipient lies on a standard massage table, fully clothed, while the practitioner works. Following carefully orchestrated patterns, the practitioner lays his or her hands at positions on the head, the shoulders, the stomach and the feet, along with other areas that may be of particular concern to the recipient. Then they work on the backside of the body. Each touch is held for 2 to 10 minutes.

Recipients often report feeling a gentle tingling or pulsing sensation during treatments. Others say they pick up a sense of warmth from the practitioner's hands. For others, it's simply a feeling of peace and relaxation. In any case, its efficacy depends on the person's willingness to receive the energy and be healed.

Reiki energy can be delivered to anything: pets, rooms, cars, even food. People can receive distance attunements. Once trained (at least in the first level), they can perform it on themselves.

Reiki is not purported to be a cure for any disease, but by reducing stress and promoting a feeling of calm, it can provide a good complement to traditional medical care.

Even if you don't choose to have a full-out Reiki treatment, the principles developed by Mikao Usui can benefit us all. When Usui was confronted with failure with his first few patients, he came to realize that while he may have enhanced their energy, he had forgotten to instill the proper mental attitude. Drawing on both his Western and Eastern religious training, he developed this code for living:

Just for today, do not worry.

Just for today, do not anger,

Honor your parents, teachers and elders

Earn your living honestly

Show gratitude to everything.▼

## The art and science of Reiki is to maximize the universal life force, enhancing its outward flow.

many of us live our lives. Our internal batteries are not fully charged, so the energy – the purified life energy that lives within us all – can't flow. This puts us out of balance, making us more susceptible to stress, dysfunction, and disease.

Reiki (pronounced rey-kei) is a Japanese word most commonly translated as "universal life force." In other cultures, it's called "chi," "prana," or "spirit," but the idea is the same. The art and science of Reiki is to maximize this energy, enhancing its ability to flow outward.

Reiki practice was developed in the late 1800s by Dr. Mikao Usui, director of a Christian school in Japan. His search for a healing touch came from a conversation with students about Jesus' ability to perform miracles. After several false starts, he developed a system of healing that he practiced until his death.

Usui passed his knowledge on to just a few students; among them was Dr. Chujiro Hayashi, a former Imperial Navy officer who opened the first clinic devoted to Reiki practice. There he built and perfected upon Usui's original philosophies. In the late 1930s, he treated an

wide.

### The training

There are three levels of Reiki training under the Usui method:

**First-Degree** – a 1- to 2-day introduction to the scientific principles of Reiki that includes four separate "energy activating attunements" that teach the students to draw on their energy resources without depleting them. They also learn the fundamentals of passing this energy on to others.

**Second-Degree** – training begins about 3 months after the first degree. Students have two more attunements, methods for dealing with the emotional and mental blocks that can impede healing. They learn how to perform "distance" treatments. They also learn specific techniques of enhancing their personal energy flow.

**Third-Degree** – is often called the Master degree. This is in-depth training, which lasts several months and includes supervised teaching. Once completed, the student is ready to teach others.

### The practice

Reiki treatments, or attunements, last between

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