Frequently Asked Questions

Sue Lake-Harris – International Co-ordinator/Teacher

Why do Usui Reiki Network courses last 3 days? Someone near me offers Reiki 1 in just 6 hours.

Dr Hayashi (one of the last teachers who learnt directly with Usui Sensei, the founder of the system of Reiki), worked closely with Usui Sensei. He formalised the training and opened a clinic where students could learn and use Reiki with clients. He also sent students on house calls. Hawayo Taktata trained with him and took Reiki back to Hawaii, then mainland USA. She taught other teachers in the 1970s. Beth Gray was among them. Beth came to Australia in 1983 and returned for many years until her retirement. She trained Barbara McGregor as one of only two Australian teachers, covering everything that Takata had passed on to her.

I see myself as a custodian of a tradition, so I follow the teaching tradition as passed on from Dr Hayashi to Mrs Takata, then to Beth Gray & Barbara McGregor. Mrs Takata asked her teachers to retain the methods as she passed them on, which Beth Gray honoured and then asked Barbara McGregor to do the same. Barbara and Beth asked me to make the same commitment, as they did for the Network's other teacher, Keven Duff.

In order to cover everything, it simply needs two and a half days (around 20 hours depending on the needs of the class – we start on Friday evening, then continue over Saturday and Sunday). This permits in-depth assimilation of your learning and attunements - any less does you a disservice. When Hayashi travelled to regional areas, he taught this way – 2 and a half days for Reiki 1, then 2 and a half days for Reiki II.

I want to learn Reiki for myself but there seem to be so many options! Books promoting self-attunements, distance attunements and internet courses, 4 hour cheap courses, very expensive ones. And with some groups, there seem to be never-ending levels. How do I choose?

This question almost requires an article for me to respond fully. So here goes...

Firstly, Mikao Usui was physically present with his students when they received their attunements, and as he was the founder of this system of healing, I don't ascribe to any sort of "over the internet" or distant attunements or trying to attune yourself. That would be the first way I would eliminate a course.

The second point for me would be to know something about the teacher. How long has he or she been using Reiki? What training was received in terms of learning to teach? (The traditional Japanese approach is a long apprenticeship over a number of years, until a point is reached where both teacher and student teacher believe the apprentice is ready to teach, and beyond the apprenticeship, they usually retain a mentor relationship). Unfortunately, some people only do a weekend, or a month, and then proclaim themselves ready to teach. As a formally trained classroom teacher with a 4 year Bachelor of Education Degree and many years of teaching behind me, I can assure you, that isn't anywhere near long enough!

Please note, I'm not saying teachers of Reiki who have only done short courses are not caring and nurturing people - I am offering an opinion based on many years of experience regarding the minimum timeframe to develop understanding and expertise as a *teacher* (of any field of endeavour).

It's also good to know how many students might be present in an average class, and something about how the classes are conducted. For Reiki 1, a class with less than eight or so students simply doesn't provide the student group with enough varied hands on experience, interaction between students and teacher, and so on. A class that runs for less than 18 hours or so is probably lacking in depth and may not provide enough practice for students to leave feeling assured that they are experiencing the energy we call Reiki.

There should also be a gap between completing Reiki 1 and II.

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Students need time to practise Reiki at the first level, developing awareness of the energy and discernment of subtle differences in terms of flow and sensation. While not being a hard and fast rule, I would recommend three months or so between completing the two levels. I certainly do not support a single weekend where both levels are conducted as one class. This format simply doesn't give a student enough time for using their hands, let alone provide enough time to cover both levels appropriately and in depth. It was nearly a year between my Reiki 1 and II classes, and I believe this worked to my benefit in having gained quite a lot of hands-on experience before moving to the second level.

Finally, some basics - there should be four attunements at Reiki 1, and the teacher should have a verifiable lineage that goes back to Mikao Usui.

You should also check that the teacher belongs to a reputable teaching organisation and/or professional association, and carries professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

What are your thoughts on teaching Reiki to children?

I offer Reiki to children as a *treatment* at any age (including in utero!) For *teaching* children, my thoughts are a little different...

Children are vital and energetic beings, and unless unfortunate enough to fall seriously ill when very young, are robust and healthy, with strong energy and physical bodies. To take on board the teachings, they need to have awareness of themselves as individuals and to have developed at least a simple understanding of their own conscience. I therefore don't teach children younger than 7 (though I will teach family members of a young child who is ill).

It's important for children to be old enough to understand what they are doing, and to actually want to do the seminar - not just because they were told to or asked to. So I will always have a quiet discussion with the child before accepting the enrolment in order to be sure the child really wants to learn Reiki...

I've heard I can use Reiki with my pets and plants – is this true?

Yes, you can certainly utilise Reiki with pets. I use Reiki daily with my cat, and until he passed away a few years ago, my very old dog. Every time they had vet check-ups, the feedback was always how healthy they were – and of course with the cat, how healthy he still is! Pets love the energy, and we do provide basic guidelines on how you can use Reiki with pets on our courses. Potted plants are very happy when they receive Reiki, and cut flowers tend to last much longer. Seedlings take transplanting well, and tend to be vigorous growers.

Here are what some recent graduates have to say about the course...

"Absolutely awesome."

"Huge insight into Reiki and its benefits."

"Gained insight into how my body works and a way to help others."

"My hands are hot hot hot!"

"It changed my life – literally."

"What an experience!"

"Rei-ki is very powerful yet always gentle. It's not like anything I've learned before. It added a new dimension to my life."

"...much more than I could ever have anticipated... I experienced pain free days for the first time in over 20 years."

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