

Spirituality Gal

By Tammy Ann Winn, M.A.

"Whatever is true and holy in the world's religions is a reflection of the one divine light which enlightens the whole world."

– Elizabeth A. Johnson, referencing *Nostra Aetate*

Tammy Ann Winn works as a writer, recording artist, and fundraiser whose career has taken her around the world to continents such as Europe, Africa, and Australia. With a graduate degree in Religious Studies, Tammy's theological interests encompass promoting global justice and peace through interreligious dialogue and nourishing the feminine soul life through well-rounded spirituality. Tammy lives in the Milwaukee area with her husband, Ben, and their daughter, Nadia.



Reiki as a Spiritual Practice

You may have heard of Reiki as an alternative healing practice, such as acupuncture or herbal medicine, but for many contemporary Reiki practitioners and clients it is also a spiritual discipline.

Reiki originated in Japan, historically practiced as a form of self-care. Coming from the Japanese words "rei," which means universal, and "ki," which means "life energy," Reiki is traced back to the spiritual teachings of Mikao Usui who lived through the turn of the 20th century. Meditative techniques and healing practices were incorporated into Usui's teachings, and by the late 1930s Reiki was introduced to Western cultures.

Today there are many variations of Reiki being practiced. Milwaukee Reiki Master Eva Cribben follows the track of Reiki that connects healing with the divine. She describes the universal life energy as "God-consciousness," and shares, "It exists, whether we are aware of it or not, flowing at all times and places in the world."



Eva Cribben

Though interpretations of Reiki may vary among practitioners, the broad objective remains consistent: to promote overall wellbeing. This foundation is based on the idea that there is a source energy that supports the body's natural healing ability. The practitioner aims to access this energy and help it flow through the body to generate its own healing and restore balance.

In a typical session, the practitioner invites the client to lay on a Reiki table (fully clothed) while the practitioner places his/her hands on or just above different chakras of the client's body. Chakras, according to traditional Indian medicine, are concentrated energy centers found

at different points throughout the body that interact with endocrine glands and the lymphatic system. The Reiki practitioner spends a few minutes at a time on each chakra to stimulate an energy flow that helps flush out toxins, thereby reducing blockages in the body.


With a focus on restoring wholeness, it is understandable why Eva Cribben is among those who draw a parallel between Reiki and spirituality. She, unlike some, finds no conflict between religion and Reiki. Born and raised Roman Catholic, Eva feels that Reiki has enhanced her spirituality as a practicing Christian. "For me," she says, "Reiki has only led me closer to God because of the healing and nourishment it has provided. It has made me feel more aware of my deep connection to the universe and to my relationship with our Creator." Eva declares, "It is a mystery as much as anything else dealing with God is."

Regardless of her personal views, however, Eva points out that one does not need to believe in anything in order to participate in Reiki. "You don't have to do anything," she asserts, "You just have to be open to the experience." Eva also emphasizes that Reiki can do no harm. To the contrary, it only serves to lead people to a more balanced and peaceful life.

Eva's first experience of Reiki occurred when she received a treatment at a Catholic conference, which led her to studying it formally. Through Peaceful World Reiki, located in Franklin, WI, Eva trained under Reiki Master/Teacher Deb Karpek. The courses Eva took combined textbook learning, lecture, discussion, meditation, experiential opportunity and practice.

Today, Reiki is practiced in a variety of settings such as salons, hospitals, and ministries. According to the National Center for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine, millions of people are using healing therapy. NCCAM also states that scientific research is under way to learn more about how Reiki works and ways in which it may be beneficial to one's health.

In addition to being a Reiki Master, Eva also holds a certificate in Spiritual Mentoring, accredited through Cardinal Stritch University. Eva conducts her part-time Reiki practice out of a charming Riverwest apartment, alongside her daytime occupation.

As in finding a doctor, anyone considering Reiki treatment should research to find the right practitioner. Find out where they trained, how long they have been practicing, what their philosophy is, and what a typical session looks like. Ask for references from other clients or practitioners and pose any questions you have to ensure you are in good hands. 

Feel free to contact Eva Cribben at ecribben@yahoo.com for more information about Reiki or her private practice as a Reiki Master. Other resources include www.debkarpek.com and nccam.nih.gov.

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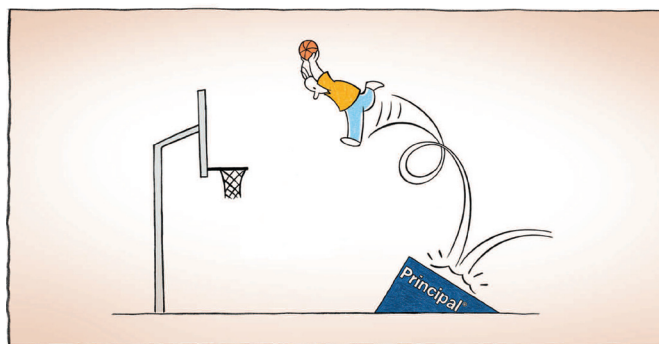
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