

## My Reflections on the Reiki Retreat by Eileen Dey

It started with an idea to gather Reiki practitioners to learn from a wise Reiki master connected to their lineage.

With only 3 months to plan and execute, the initial coordination was in determining a location and length of training.

A retreat center was found, on Vashon Island, that could accommodate the group and provide a place for the wisdom to be shared.

Next steps involved building the structure and form of what the retreat would look like. And not having a clear idea of the way in which it would all play out, we did our best to put words, web pages and ads together to create the event.

Over time, Reiki masters began to sign up. I handled all kinds of inquiries, questions, arrangements.

As the date of the retreat approached, the original house we were to be staying in had become occupied, so we had to shift and prepare for another house, one where we would be making our food rather than have it catered. Without seeing the second house, I trusted it would work out.

So, provisions were purchased, a 'kitchen team' was assembled. We planned a 3 day vegetarian menu.

Setting off to the center with my car stocked full of food, linens, towels and massage tables I reflected on all the preparation needed to allow the retreat to happen.

When I arrived at the house, I was initially disappointed by it's rustic nature, a kitchen without a functional microwave or dishwasher, heaters that had no handles but required a coin as a handle to turn them on and off.

And yet, the rooms in which we were to learn, practice and eat, were adequate. The windows looked out amongst the forested grounds and six deer seemed to live right outside our door, often grazing in the frame of each window throughout each day.

I hardly slept the nights before the retreat, making lists in my mind of everything that was needed.

When the day came, I felt good and solid that whatever happened, would be as it should.

I've cooked for dinner parties of six, but never 3 full meals (let alone all being vegetarian) for 3 days for a total of 12 people.

### Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011

On that first day, to say I was overwhelmed was an understatement. The house we were staying in didn't meet with my own standards, and yet, in the hour before everyone was to come, I was determined that everyone would have an enjoyable and reflective time. I thought about all those steps leading up to that moment and realized, that what would be would be.

A rhythm soon started to happen. Rise early, prepare the breakfast, connect with everyone, clean up, get ready for lessons, take in all the wisdom. Prepare lunch, digest the conversations, the food, go for a walk, in the rain, or in the blanket of an overcast day. Settle in for afternoon lessons, prepare dinner, devour the last meal of the day, it always seemed to be the meal in which I was most hungry, grounding me from the mental journeys I was taking with each lesson.

The first day, I had to adjust energetically to spending the majority of my week alone in self-employment to a house full of people.

Some of the practitioners are very talkative, others more reflective. The facilitator was completely confident in a way that comes from over 30 years of Reiki practice and teaching. The living room in which we learned became a container to become infused with all the details of the lineage of which all of us were connected.

One of our group was brave to jump into the whole retreat never having taken a Reiki class. She took each lesson in the same way in which I take lessons, quiet, pensive and reflective.

Many in the group were students and colleagues of mine. And I am sure it was fun for them to watch me be quite quiet versus the talkative and engaged teacher they have been used to!

Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011

In the early morning on the second day, I took potatoes and onions to be cut up out into the woods to another cabin so I could chop them without disturbing the rest of the house.

With a timed light that had to be reset every 30 minutes, I chopped the potatoes with total presence.

I gave complete appreciation for the potatoes, and even more appreciation for the onions, which continually made me cry. There were no emotions with those tears, just a normal response to the fumes of the onion and giving respect for the power of nature.

I returned to the sleeping house and rested quietly until the first stirrings of the morning were heard.

The meal planning and preparation for me were self-imposed grounding and centering tools.

It makes me cry in appreciation of my intuition to make the decision to take on that extra burden rather than default to an easier path of having meals catered.

The kitchen, with all its quirkiness, became my inner sanctuary.

After the second morning lesson on the Reiki precepts and what they really mean and stand for as a personal path of transformation, I felt energetic shifts starting to happen in my body. Emotions of grief, sadness, anger and frustration began to surface. Afterwards I needed to take a walk before lunch, in the rain, with the deer, reflecting on how much work I still needed to do personally to continue to walk the Reiki path as a teacher and practitioner. Reflecting on how much work I have done, but also contrasting that thought with the unease of uncomfortable emotions.

I fantasized about not returning to the center on that walk. On running away. On how earlier in my own life, I did run away or move when situations became unbearable.

On how, after walking in the rain for twenty minutes or so, I was getting hungry and I was responsible for helping to prepare lunch.

It was then decided by the facilitator that the non-attuned Reiki student would not be able to participate in the next day's exercises because in the traditional training of the Reiki Alliance, the advanced information cannot be shared.

So, I made a decision right there to work individually with that student the next day, yes, I would miss out on the teachings, but I knew my colleagues would fill me in on them, and I wanted to ensure the comfort of the student.

The rest of the second day, I still was integrating much emotion, and was grateful for a Reiki session towards the end to help balance out what had come up.

Dinner was welcomed, a hearty meal of veggie burgers and rice. Every meal had a fresh salad too, my body was adjusting to just eating vegetables with cheese and eggs being the only protein. I felt lighter and yet satiated.

That night, we were treated to an acoustic guitar performance by the facilitator and a fellow student.

The music was evocative, humorous, and insightful. It was balm for my soul and throughout that concert I felt deeply connected to everyone and united in Reiki for bringing us all there.

My partner came later that night to join me and complete the retreat the next day. We both adjusted to his addition and shedding of the life he had been experiencing before entering the retreat house.

Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011

The last day I was both relieved, excited, and preoccupied with now having to shift roles from cook to teacher.

After breakfast, I took the new Reiki student to another part of the retreat center to work on the remaining details of Reiki 1, to attune her and to hold space for the process she had been going through for 2 days in a room full of Reiki masters.

On the way to the other hall, my car got stuck in some mud and those Reiki masters all came out to help us. I contemplated the significance of the event, and realized that transitioning to my other role had left me ungrounded and perhaps unfocused as a driver. But the car was freed easily and soon two classes were being held simultaneously.

When we reunited for lunch, a change had come over the group. We were all attuned, we were delving deeper into the mysteries and wonderment of Reiki and lunch had magically been prepared. It was the first meal I had not assisted with.

Afterwards, I went back with the new student to further discuss the symbols inherent in the Reiki system. I felt the freedom of my own path in leaving the Alliance tradition over 15 years ago because I perceived the limitations of withholding information to curious students. At that time, I also disagreed with the high fees needed to be paid in order to become a Reiki master.

I had separated myself from that tradition and by default my own teacher.

And there at the retreat, a similar repeat was occurring. I separated myself from the group to work with a student who was curious and learning the tradition at a different pace. I talked with that student about the symbols in Reiki, their meanings and applications, and yet, I did not make my class with her a Reiki 2 or Reiki 3 class, but more of a discussion where the Reiki path can take a student.

On the other side of the retreat, the same wisdom was being imparted to Reiki masters by the facilitator. We were in unison, yet separated by a tradition that creates limits on when students are ready to receive information.

Eventually, and pretty symbolically, both schools of thought reunited, and to my surprise, were encouraged to send a distance healing together.

As I was sending Reiki, I realized that despite our differences in teaching Reiki, the facilitator and I had much in common in how we viewed the Reiki path.

But I also felt empowered that my own training program had allowed and does allow students to have freedom to take Reiki out into the world, into the mainstream, and be flexible in their approach and practice.

Our final dinner together was a completion of the three days. Some took their meals to go to catch the ferry, others milled around, having conversations of their own insights.

I began to pack up the remaining food and supplies, indulging in a few glasses of wine that had been brought to celebrate the end of the journey.

After most had left, our cleaning crew remained to put the house back in order to where we began. The path had come back to the beginning, and yet, we've all been changed by the experience.

### Afterwards....

Today, reflecting on the experience, there is nothing I would change about all the work involved in coordinating and implementing the retreat. The house we stayed in became a container for alchemical change. The surprise of having to teach the new student on the last day became part of my own journey in realizing how far I have come on the path, and of course, realizing that there is still more work to do, always, in letting go of old beliefs, making room for new ones, deepening my connection to my partner, to my life work and to the next journey that awaits me at the end of this week as we depart for Southern California for the winter.

The Reiki Training Program that remains in my absence has been infused and aligned in a stronger way. The pillars have been reinforced for a sturdier platform from which the mission of Touching the World Through Reiki can evolve.

I thank each and every one for coming and sharing and receiving what they needed this weekend.

I look forward to witnessing what evolves from this and I give great space for that unfoldment without attachment to the result.