



This is a printer friendly version of an article from www.nashuatelegraph.com
To print this article if a print dialogue does not open automatically, open the File menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Apr 30, 2009

Some reiki therapy skeptics not so easily won over

By PATRICK MEIGHAN, Staff Writer
pmeighan@nashuatelegraph.com

Debbie Griseuk says she used to be a reiki skeptic.

"I spent so many years trying to disprove reiki, that's why I'm so good at it," said Griseuk, who owns the New England Reiki Center.

However, not everyone who has examined reiki accepts this hands-on healing technique, which proponents claim has roots in ancient Eastern practices.

On March 25, a committee of U.S. Roman Catholic bishops declared that reiki is inappropriate for Catholic hospitals and other institutions and shouldn't be promoted by any church representative.

The bishops based the "guidelines" on both theological and scientific reasons.

Reiki, which loosely translates to "universal life energy," is based on manipulation of an energy source familiar to Eastern religions but unknown to Christian scripture or traditions, the bishops stated.

As for science, the bishops cited a lack of scientific proof that reiki is effective as a treatment and lumped it into the category of "superstition."

Because of the bishops' statement, the New England Reiki Center was forced out of its home at the Parish Nurse Center for Wellness at Milette Manor on Vine Street. The Parish Wellness Center is associated with St. Joseph Hospital, a Catholic facility.

The New England Reiki Center is currently looking for a new home, Griseuk said.

Skeptics contend that any positive result from reiki is because of a placebo effect. In essence, according to skeptics, if you believe reiki treatment will help you to feel better, then it probably will – as long as it's combined with conventional Western medical treatment.

Reiki was either invented or rediscovered in 1922 by Japanese mystic Usui Mikao, who said the ancient technique was revealed to him after 21 days of fasting on Mount Kumara.

The technique is frequently considered holistic or alternative healing and compared to other Eastern practices such as acupuncture, yoga and meditation. Like those, reiki has a spiritual component, but proponents say it isn't confined to any specific religious system.

Reiki involves touch either by the giver placing his or her hands directly on the receiver or holding them just above the body. Unlike massage, the hands are held in one place on or over a specific area. The recipient also is fully clothed, and Griseuk, a reiki master, refers to reiki as "appropriate touch."

A reiki master is the highest of three levels of training in the technique, though there is no official accrediting body for the study of reiki.

While the medical community says no evidence has been able to back up reiki as an effective treatment, some doctors have promoted its use on patients to relieve stress. Dr. Mehmet Oz, a cardiovascular surgeon at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Centre in New York who has been a frequent guest on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," has allowed the use of reiki during open-heart surgeries and heart-transplant operations.

Reiki practitioners aren't discouraged that the medical and scientific communities have doubted the effectiveness of reiki beyond as a placebo.

"In the beginning, yoga and acupuncture weren't accepted, either," said Laura Bullock, a level 2 reiki practitioner (one level below master) and former reiki client.

Reiki practitioners say the power of reiki lies in human touch, perhaps as a way to clear "energy channels." Some say that whatever the scientific basis, or lack thereof, touch itself is powerful as a healing tool.

"There are so few opportunities for human touch," said Carole Bouchard, also a level 2 practitioner.

Many of the sick or elderly who seek out reiki treatment have few other avenues for receiving touch, she said.

Regardless of whether reiki works or doesn't, most in the medical community believe that reiki at least is safe.

According to the New England Reiki Center's Web site: "Reiki is the missing link for the spiritual and emotional connection to your body. Healing may require time; it is a process of transformation. The power of touch is natural and nourishing to our bodies. Reiki is safe and gentle. Reiki accesses the built-in wisdom and intelligence of the body."

Patrick Meighan can be reached at 594-6518 or pmeighan@nashuatelegraph.com.

© 2007, Telegraph Publishing Company, Nashua, New Hampshire <script src='http://www.google-analytics.com/ga.js' type='text/javascript'>