

# Back door to the heart

A full Reiki treatment  
by Mamta Nanda

“Reiki goes to where it is needed – we have all heard this. So why do we need to do a full body treatment?” I used to wonder about this paradox. We know that Reiki does not just take care of our most acute needs during a treatment, but can do a whole lot of preventative work too. I feel that this preventative aspect of Reiki is strengthened if we follow the discipline of doing the full body treatment as we have been taught. This understanding really helped me reconcile with the paradox.

As a student of the Usui Shiki Ryoho form of Reiki, when I give a full Reiki treatment it lasts for about one hour to an hour and a half. Normally I start by treating the head, and then I work my way down the body to the abdomen. After this, if appropriate<sup>1</sup>, I ask the person to turn over and I treat his or her back. I feel that treating the back is an important part of a full hands-on treatment. The hand positions on the back can also provide support for some of the vital internal organs. Earlier in my Reiki journey, I had heard it said that treating the back can be like unlocking the ‘back door to the heart’. Then I started noticing that for some recipients it is easier to have an emotional release while lying on their front during a treatment. Here is what a client had to say about her experience while her back was being treated:

“When I was lying on my front, I had this overwhelming sense of emotion. I have no idea as to what brought it on; I was not scared or frightened; in fact the opposite. I felt very calm and still. A part of me just wanted to burst into tears, but somehow I could not do it. I was quite emotional and I did shed a few tears.

I remember that it was coming to the end of the treatment and that your hands were placed on my middle or lower back. Looking back on the treatment, I felt as

“ I trust Reiki to go  
where it is needed ”



though I was being cradled in someone’s warm presence. It reminded me of when I would lie down with my head nestling in my mother’s lap. I have not experienced this before, but it was a wonderful sensation.”

After doing all the hand positions on the back, I finish the treatment with the back stroke and a gentle squeeze/massage<sup>2</sup> on the back and along the arms and legs.

I have been taught that the back stroke stimulates the circulatory system. This can help clients return to their body if they have fallen asleep or gone somewhere deep during the treatment. I myself have noticed that if I have fallen asleep or gone somewhere deep while receiving a Reiki treatment, it is wonderful to wake up and come back into my body when I experience the back stroke at the end of the treatment. I remember hearing stories of Mrs Takata asking the clients to lift their shirt when doing the back stroke, and doing the stroke with such firm pressure that there would be red marks on the back. I have to confess that I don’t ask people to lift their shirts to do the back stroke but I do lift the blanket, if I am using one, before doing the back stroke so that I can ensure that my fingers are in the right places.

My understanding and appreciation of the importance of the back stroke was further reinforced when I saw Phyllis Lei Furumoto devote an entire evening session to the back stroke during a weekend workshop on *The Usui system in Public Practice* that I attended in 2005. She showed us how she stands

when doing the back stroke and how her body weight shifts with the movement of hands along the spine. Each participant – if I remember correctly there were about 30 of us – had to perform the stroke with Phyllis watching and guiding us. Phyllis also asked the person lying down on the table to give us feedback on how the stroke felt. It was an amazing learning experience.

The first time I gave my mother a Reiki treatment, when I did the gentle touch on her body at the end, she said that it reminded her of the touch of her mother, who had passed away a few years earlier. This experience further reinforced my belief that each step of the full treatment can be invaluable for the recipient.

I learnt Reiki in 2001. The further I go along my Reiki journey, the more reasons I find to do a full body treatment. If there is not enough time to do a full treatment, or if a full treatment with all the hand positions is not feasible, I simply do what I can - even if it means holding a person’s hand between my hands, or placing my hands on someone’s shoulders or feet. I remember hearing Mrs Takata’s words in a story – “Some Reiki is better than none” and I trust Reiki to go where it is needed and do what the person needs most at that point in time. □

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1. If recipients are unable to lie on their front, I treat their back while they are lying on their side. If lying on their side is also not feasible, I try to slide my hands underneath their body to treat the back. If that is also not possible, I treat the front of the body and simply trust Reiki to go where it is needed.

2. Depending on the legislation and/or the rules and regulations in a country, the practitioners may do either a light gentle massage movement on the body or a gentle squeeze along the body. In the UK, currently, we can do either.