



Photo courtesy of Denise Watson

How to Create a Successful Reiki Share

BY DENISE WATSON

It doesn't matter if you've only just been attuned or you've been practicing for years: regularly attending a Reiki Share is important. Providing the perfect healing environment for participants, however, is vital.

I WAS EARLY. Sitting in my car outside the Navitas Centre, I had plenty of time to think. And I thought about why I was there. That day of all days. There were so many other things I should be doing, and spending four hours at a Reiki Share didn't feel like such a big priority. But I'd been badgered into it by a well-meaning friend. After coming up with various excuses as to why I couldn't attend the three previous Reiki Shares, this time I was left with no option: "I've booked you in, you're going, I'll

meet you there!" Joan told me firmly, adding: "It's on February 16." My heart missed a beat. I'd been dreading that day, the second anniversary of my mother's death.

The only reason I'd decided to learn Reiki was because my mam got ill. She was diagnosed with terminal leukaemia and given three months to live. At 73, the doctors felt she was too old to be offered treatment, so they sent her home to die. We were, of course, devastated, but also determined to prove the doctors

wrong. And I just knew, instinctively, that I had to learn how to give her Reiki. So I did, despite never having had a treatment myself, or even truly knowing what Reiki was.

For 18 months my life revolved around Reiki and helping to heal my mam. After seeking a second opinion, she was accepted on a new medical trial at a different hospital and even enjoyed four months of remission from the disease. But then it all went wrong again, the cancer came back, and despite relentless Reiki, she died.

I was massively depressed—convinced I'd done something wrong. As time passed, the depression did ease and I forced myself to pick up the pieces of life and carry on. But if I'm truthful, two years on, I still felt stuck. And I had no idea how to move on.

"In this world, we're very quick to help others, but we usually find it hard to help ourselves," believes Simon Bailey, Reiki Master Teacher and co-owner of Navitas Centre, a UK-based Holistic Therapy and Reiki Centre.¹ "I often find that if someone has, for example, a cold, or if they're going through a difficult time, usually they forget that they have Reiki; they fail to use it for themselves. That's why Reiki Shares are so vital," says Simon.

Together with his wife, Kate (a reflexologist and Reiki Master Teacher), Simon opened the Navitas Centre in May 2012. Set on the edge of the Cheshire countryside, there are two treatment rooms, a communal space and large kitchen. "Kate and I always knew we wanted a retreat-like place one day, but we saw it as coming much later in our lives as we had a young family and a lot going on," Simon confides.

"Although we both practiced Reiki whenever we could, we also had full-time jobs: Kate was a successful solicitor and I was a stock manager with 248 retail stores to oversee. I was working 60 or 70 hours a week."

However, on his daily drive to the motorway each morning, Simon always passed number 248 Crewe Road: "As I passed this place, I always felt it would be a lovely place to start from," he says. Then one day there was a For Lease sign in the driveway. "I knew immediately that I was going to have a look," grins Simon. "Kate was a little surprised, to say the least; she was still on maternity leave from work and it just wasn't part of our plan." But plans change. After falling in love with the property and its village location, the couple borrowed money from family, and put an offer in on the lease to kick-start their dream. "That was in December and in January, when I was still negotiating the lease, I was suddenly made redundant from work. It was divine timing; there's no question about that," confides Simon.

In addition to teaching and giving Reiki treatments however, Simon was determined to make Reiki Share a central part of the Shavington practice. "The people who taught me Reiki were lovely and I think the world of them. I'm very grateful for all they

taught me. However, between each level, there wasn't continued practical support, although I knew I could pick up the phone and ask any question I wanted."

"I was fortunate enough to be involved in the spiritual side of things, and I was able to offer treatments to family and friends, but I still felt there was something missing for those people who felt a calling to Reiki, but didn't have the kind of outlets that I had. That's why having a Reiki Share was the second most important thing to me, after setting up the centre and offering treatments. I wanted to offer a place of continued support and practice for our students, plus anyone else who wished to attend."

Two months after opening, Simon started letting people know that he was holding a Reiki Share. "I didn't email anyone, I didn't advertise, it was all word-of-mouth and people came," he confides. "From that very first Share, we've always had capacity numbers," he adds. So popular are Simon's Shares that he now has a waiting list for those who want to attend—but with limited spaces, since each session can only comfortably accommodate 16 people. They run from 1 p.m.–5 p.m., usually on the last Sunday of the month.

"The reason they're so long is that I wanted to allow time for people to mingle, to experience different things, different energy exercises. I wanted them to learn about the energy from a slightly difference perspective, not from teaching, but from experience, and to do that you need time," says Simon.

As I joined fellow practitioners at my first Reiki Share, I did wonder how we would fill all that time—although by the end of the day, I wondered where the time had gone! We began with a group meditation and self-healing. And I found it, quite literally, life-changing. I closed my eyes, the music started—and to my horror, the tears did, too! And they wouldn't stop. I wasn't exactly 'crying.' It didn't feel like crying, although the constant stream of water cascading down my cheeks certainly looked like crying! Everyone was very understanding, offering me tissues and water, and thankfully my British sense of humour helped me counter the embarrassment I felt. But Simon said simply: "If it's in there, it needs to come out; just ask for healing and let it be." So that's exactly what I did. I 'cried' for the entire session.

"There's always a lot of excitement when you first learn Reiki, but gradually the practice of self-healing can deteriorate, and that's what I want to re-balance," says Simon, who spends over an hour at the start of each Reiki Share encouraging participants to ask for, and be open to receiving, all that they can receive. "It's about making yourself stronger and better and more confident, so that you can then give more to others," he adds.

After the self-healing practice, everyone moves into the kitchen and communal room for drinks and cake, giving Simon the chance to set up two treatment beds in the room. Upon returning, everyone then splits into two groups of eight, with one person lying on the bed to receive Reiki from the other seven par-

¹ www.navitascentre.co.uk

ticipants. Whatever time is left until 5 p. m. is divided into eight, giving the total amount of time each person will receive Reiki from everyone else, usually between 12 and 15 minutes per person.

Simon sets his watch, the chime sounds, the gentle music plays and the afternoon melts into two glorious hours of energy and exchange and healing. “During the group sessions, I feel so blessed and honored to be with like-minded people who are sharing this beautiful energy together. It’s great to see everyone allowing themselves to receive so deservedly,” says Simon.

Simon currently charges £4 (less than \$7) to attend the four-hour Reiki Share. “To be honest, I would rather charge nothing, but of course I need to cover the costs of the refreshments and electricity and so on, and in fact most people *want* to pay—they even tell me it should be much more,” he explains. When it comes to refreshments, Kate’s Cakes are always on the menu. “Kate would love to be here for the weekend Shares, but with Sam, aged five, and four-year-old Isabel at home, she can’t be, so the cakes are her way of contributing to it, to give that bit of love through her baking,” says Simon.

The weekend Reiki Shares have now proven to be so popular that the couple are about to start two-hour weekday shares, too. “Because the centre was new we didn’t know how the diary would work, and before we closed the centre for an afternoon to hold a Reiki Share, we needed to know we were doing the right thing—but I think we’ve reached the stage now where we can do that,” says Simon.

The ultimate step, however, is to have a Reiki Share that would be larger scale, involving up to 40 participants, and with all money raised going to support a local charity, Shine Bright (raising money for research into triple negative breast cancer²). “That’s always been our intention: to have a Reiki community and support network for people who both practice professionally

and are non-professionals, a place where people can feel safe and confident enough to seek the support they might need with their practice. I tried a different venue once, but it didn’t feel right., So right now I’m just watching out for the signs, and when I find the right venue, that’ll be the time to expand.”

Unlike in the U.S., where Reiki is widely accepted and even found in orthodox medical establishments, Reiki in Britain is still finding its feet. “We are very different in the UK, but I think we are changing; a lot more people are hearing about Reiki,” says Simon, though he admits there’s still a lot of confusion about what Reiki is. “Do I need to take my clothes off? That’s the most common question I get asked, because a lot of people think Reiki is some kind of massage. Also, in the UK, I think it’s seen as a New Age, hippy-type thing, which of course it’s not.”

It also doesn’t help that there’s no ‘school of excellence’ in the UK, like the International Center For Reiki Training in the U.S.. “There are groups that we can be associated with, but there isn’t that same voice in the UK that people in the US enjoy,” says Simon, who admits he’d love to establish that kind of support network here in the UK.

“Perhaps our centre is a stepping stone towards that?” he wonders.

For now, though, Simon’s happy to continue on his path, carefully watching for the signs that will help his dream unfold—which is perfect for people like me. As I write, almost a year to the day since I first waited outside the Navitas Centre, so much in my life has changed. I practice daily self-healing, attend every Reiki Share I can and have one-to-one healing whenever I feel the need. I no longer feel stuck. And February 16 is no longer the day my mam died; it’s the day I started to live again.



—Denise can be reached at denise.watson10@btinternet.com

Simon's Reiki Share Do's and Don'ts



ASK YOURSELF WHY you are setting up a Reiki Share. What is the purpose of it? It's important the Share is about everyone else who is attending, and not about you.

A Share is about supporting people, but it's also important to be accepting of all students, of all ages and backgrounds and to never undermine their teachings. Reiki is taught in so many different ways and a lot of the time it's taught in a verbal tradition, so it's not the teacher's fault if something is shared that is not quite right.

It's important that there are no levels at a Reiki Share. It doesn't matter if you've only just been attuned or you've been practicing for years; it's all the same energy, working together for a common cause.

Flexibility is important because every Reiki Share should be different, and in each share you need the ability to adapt, so it should be fluid, just like the energy itself.

The person who holds the share should be confident and have a very good understanding of the energy, internally and externally, but at the same time be humble with it, and always allow those who are attending to learn through their own experiences, but with guidance.

Make your Reiki Share feel homey; it makes people feel comfortable and it shows the love you want to put into it. It doesn't have to be a home-baked cake, but it's nice to find a way to show people that you really do care about them feeling welcome and comfortable.

And finally, try to finish on time. It's so important, because we don't know what people are planning to do outside of a Reiki Share, and if we run late that could apply pressure on the people attending, which in turn could make them feel hurried, and that could change the energy inside the room.

Don't

Use more than one room as a way of involving more people. I tried it once but it didn't feel right. It's better to be able to keep everyone together in the same room, so you can keep an eye on everything.

Don't forget to prepare the room. I always get here at least an hour before a Reiki Share starts to have time to set my intent for everyone to receive all that they can receive and learn all that they can learn. The environment has to be right for a Reiki Share.

What They Say

"Coming here is absolutely beautiful. I look forward to it every month. If I couldn't come I'd be gutted! As well as healing myself I like to help other people, but if you don't get a chance to do that at home then this is the only place to do that."

—WENDY, REIKI 1 SINCE JANUARY 2013.

"I love it here. The energy is so strong when we get together. Plus, this is the only chance I get to practice Reiki with other like-minded people—and to eat delicious cake!"

—JUNE, REIKI MASTER FOR 5 YEARS.

"This is my first time here and it's been so nice. When we all held hands I could feel so much energy, I thought I was going to lift off!"

—IRENE, RECENTLY ATTUNED.

"I was a bit apprehensive when I came to my first share, but now I think it's lovely. It's always so relaxing and I think it also helps me become better at giving Reiki. It's a bit of a social occasion, too, and whenever we do meditation it's different every time, so I'm always learning."

—JACKIE, ATTUNED 12 MONTHS AGO.

—Simon can be contacted at simon@navitascentre.co.uk ■