

Choosing a Reiki Master Teacher

by Carrie Laymon, RMT

People across the world have been blessed with many choices of Reiki instructors. There truly is someone for everyone. So many choices, however, can sometimes make it more difficult to compare the differences and make a wise decision. Following are some tips that may help you choose someone appropriate for you.

Compatibility

Sharing energy is very personal. Above all else, I believe that energetic compatibility is key to your class experience. Don't be timid. Ask questions, listen with your "inner ear", and honor the intuition or feelings you get as a prospective teacher speaks with you. If you feel good with a person and their philosophies, your experience likely will be positive as well.

If you aren't sure, you may want to consider getting a Reiki session from a couple of prospective teachers you feel most drawn to. This will give you the opportunity to share their energy, experience how they work, and view their practice environment.

Honoring You

Reiki is about sharing energy from the heart, and honoring all individuals as they are in each moment. Your teacher should honor and respect you at all times, be happy to support you and the growth of your practice, act with honesty and integrity, and always work to support your best interests.

Practice Experience

Ask a prospective teacher about their practitioner experience. It is easy to obtain a Master Teacher certificate within a very short time. However, it takes time, consistent practice, and ongoing personal growth work to develop awareness, understanding, and application of the Reiki principles to daily life.

If someone has not used Reiki in practice for a considerable time prior to teaching, they are less likely to have developed the awareness, understanding and range of practical experience needed to meet the responsibilities of an instructor.

Philosophies

The practice of Reiki has evolved considerably over the years, and will continue to do so. There are many variations in its practice and teaching. These range from the traditional Usui foundational base to newer forms which continue to be introduced. Usui Reiki provides the core foundation from which you can grow and expand. This typically is required before other forms of Reiki are taken.

Different teachers may maintain different philosophies about what Reiki "is" and how it "should" be used. Some are rigidly traditional while others may diverge to the point that the traditional foundation

is lost.

A good guideline is to look for someone who respects others' ways, but at the same time provides balanced approaches and offers courses that will give you a good basic foundation from which to begin.

Ask a prospective teacher about their philosophies and approaches to Reiki and choose someone whose responses feel compatible with what feels "right" for you.

Investments

There seems to be a fairly standard range of fees among most Reiki instructors, but there may be considerable differences in what you get for your investment. Following, are some factors you may want to consider in relationship to your needs and circumstances.

Class Materials

Reiki class materials may range from a few photocopied handouts to full manuals. Sometimes a full manual may be included in your registration cost or you may be asked to pay extra for one. Ask about this and understand what exactly you are getting. Good reference materials will be important to you later as you integrate and practice what you have learned.

Class Length

Individual classes may range from 4 hours to two days. Especially in Level 1 and Master Teacher, if a class is less than a full day, time will force you to sacrifice either foundational background or valuable hands-on practice time. Note if someone charges you nearly as much for a half-day class as others do for a full day or more.

Hands-On Practice Time

Reiki is experiential and can only be learned and integrated through adequate practice. Find out approximately how much time in each level is spent on book work or lecture vs. experiential activities.

You need time to understand the background, foundation and philosophy, and the feeling and experience of using Reiki. I feel that the average ratio should be about 50% experiential for Level 1 and at least 75% experiential for Levels 2 and above.

Follow-up Support

It is typical for questions or issues to arise after you have left class and begin to practice Reiki and process your attunement. Your teacher should be there to freely support you after you leave class.

Will your teacher be easily accessible to you, and in what ways and to what extent? Will your teacher promptly respond to you when you need it?

Continuing Education Requirements

If you need your Reiki class to meet requirements for professional continuing education, verify that your prospective teacher has current approval from the appropriate licensing agency to offer the credit hours you need.

A teacher's class advertisements should specify their credentials, what type of CE they are approved to offer, and the number of hours you will receive. If this is not clear, be sure to ask. If in doubt, call your licensing board to verify. Currently, Texas massage therapists should note that the TDH no longer is accepting Reiki or any form of energy work for continuing education.

Organization

Your prospective Reiki teacher should be able and willing to provide you with at least the following before you register: clear written information about what is included in each class; fees and policies cancellations and refunds; any preparation required on your part; and class time and location. You also should receive reasonably prompt confirmation of your place in the class and of receipt of your payments.

The degree of organization, respect and clarity with which a prospective teacher deals with you during your inquiries and before class may be a good indicator of how your relationship and class experience is likely to evolve.

Carrie Laymon is a certified Usui Reiki Master Teacher who has studied with nationally and internationally known instructors in a wide variety of energy healing modalities. She has operated a full-time professional practice of energy healing in Austin, Texas since 1999 and has taught Reiki classes on a monthly basis since 2000. Visit Carrie at www.pathfindertohealth.com.