

Food for Thought: Listening to Reiki and Each Other

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"The most efficient way to perceive the intrinsic nature of the world is to be more receptive than active." ~ Dr. Maslow

Some of my students ask about how to listen to Reiki. So often when they ask a question, I reply with the answer of "Ask Reiki." This can be a difficult answer to digest. Very few of us have been formally trained in listening to each other let alone something as seemingly abstract as listening to spirit or universal life force energy. One approach in the endeavor to learn how to listen is to be aware of what stops us or distracts us from listening. (For example, when a friend shows you a new piece of jewelry, do you really get into the story of how they got it and what they love about it or do you silently begin to ponder how they managed to afford something so magnificent when they should be saving money for X or how they can afford it and you can't?)

Where are you on the road to self-actualization? How secure is your foundation for "listening readiness"? According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, there are four levels of needs to be satisfied before you are ready to see self-actualization. The order of needs described below is not fixed, and may vary among individuals. The degree of satisfaction may also differ.

Level 1 involves the basic physiological needs, such as hunger, thirst, sex, and sleep. Once these needs are met, a new set of needs emerges. Level 2 requires a sense of safety. If you have not satisfied your needs at this level, you will mistrust others and be overly cautious in new situations. Next come the needs for affection from others and feeling like part of a group. Maslow refers to these needs as "love" and "belongingness". Level 4 includes the desire for self-esteem and the ability to achieve goals, to be independent and competent. You are then said to be growth oriented, extending beyond yourself and your ego to become receptive to a wide vista of perception. A self actualized person becomes, in essence, receptive to seeing life from someone else's perspective.(1)

After all, when we are asking Reiki for clarity, isn't that what we are asking for: a perspective outside our own? One that has its own intelligence that can bring clarity straight to the source of the issue regardless of where we think the source of the issue lies?

So, the next time you are thinking about getting a Reiki treatment or doing some self Reiki, here are some ideas for questions to ask/intentions to use. (Again, these are just ideas. Always follow your own intuition and take what you find useful and disregard the rest!)

- What are my basic needs that aren't being met?
- What is blocking me from being an effective listener?
- Bring fulfillment to my basic needs.
- Help me to be an effective listener; a mindful listener.

- I ask to know self-actualization.
- Show me how to listen without being judgmental and critical.
- I ask that each conversation I intentionally participate in be as exhilarating as standing breathless before a magnificent sunrise.
- How can I listen without being distracted by my own thoughts?
- For the Reiki practitioner: how can I be a more mindful listener of my client's intentions?

One way to practice listening to Reiki is to practice listening to friends, family, neighbors or even strangers. Rebecca Shafir suggests that three things are required to be a mindful listener: 1) the desire to get the whole message, 2) the ability to eliminate the barriers to listening, and 3) the willingness to place your agenda lower on the priority list. Food for thought, how might those apply to your relationship with Reiki and how you listen to Reiki's wisdom?

(1) Excerpt is from "The Zen of Listening: Mindful Communication In the Age of Distraction" by Rebecca Z. Shafir, M.A. CCC (Quest Books: Illinois, 2007).