



Just for Today...Gets Very Real

BY CAROLYN MUSIAL

“ALL THE DOCTORS ARE RECOMMENDING HOSPICE,” she said. The words hit me like a punch to the gut, and there is a loud buzzing in my ears. I feel myself retreating to that place deep inside where I don’t have to feel. My mind hears the words, but my heart cannot understand or accept them.

It is 5:00 a.m. and Fran, my best friend of almost 25 years, is on the phone. She is calling me from the hospital because she cannot sleep. She sounds a bit disoriented, and she is struggling with the news. I was not able to visit her yesterday as I have a sinus infection which would further compromise her immune system. We never really thought we would reach this day.

Fran had been diagnosed with stage IV ovarian cancer 19 months before. The doctors did not give her too much hope, but they didn’t know Fran. She was one of the most spiritual people I have ever known with a beautiful, positive outlook on life. Fran had easy access to her guides and angels since she was a little girl. We took our first Reiki class together 20 years before and had also enrolled in a four-year shamanic energy class at the same time. A few years later I began to teach Reiki, and Fran started teaching the shamanic energy practitioner class.

Fran did very well for more than a year because, I believe, of her attitude and daily self-Reiki. She received chemotherapy every three weeks with her husband beside her. I would arrive in the middle of the treatment to give her a Reiki session. We celebrated every time the CEA (carcinoembryonic antigen) levels in her blood went down, and they were dropping by a few hundred points each month. Then the chemo stopped working.

The doctors said cancer had spread to the lining of her spine and brain. She had gamma-knife laser surgery, and three weeks of radiation. However, the radiation was making her sick, and her energy was draining. She became so depleted that hospital admission was necessary.

So now there we were, and the doctors were all saying they had no more treatments to recommend and were suggesting hospice. I could not even visit her as I had the sinus infection, which also became a middle ear infection. I could not remember ever feeling that ill. A middle ear infection affects your equilibrium, and I could not lift my head without the world spinning. I was miserable. Everything in my world felt as if it was spinning out of control. I felt sick, sad and depressed. Moreover, I realized I was

grieving what I knew was the loss of my friend. I spent a lot of time sleeping which was both what my body needed and an escape from dealing with “reality.”

Of course, I was doing Reiki for myself all the time. It is second nature to me, and I call in Reiki automatically with everything I do. Then one day with the Reiki flowing strong I heard—*Just for today*. I sat with that thought for a few minutes and then I had a realization, what I call a “knowing.” I was grieving the loss of my friend, but she was still here! The time would come for grieving but in the meantime, every day that she was here with us was a gift, a blessing! I vowed then to appreciate every day and not think about the future. “Just for today,” became very real. It is no surprise to me that I began to feel physically better and within a few days I was able to visit with Fran, who was now receiving hospice care at home.

“Just for today,” are words from the Reiki Ideals or the “Gokai” in Japanese. “Just for today, I will not worry, I will not be angry. I will be grateful. I will count my blessings.” Many years ago, I had the pleasure of taking a Gendai Reiki Master class with Hiroshi Doi. Doi Sensei (Teacher) is a member of the Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai, the organization started by Mikao Usui Sensei. Doi Sensei shared that Reiki students and practitioners are to sit in *Gassho*—breathing meditation—every day. At the end of the meditation, they recite the Reiki Ideals three times. This ritual is an essential part of Reiki in Japan as Reiki is both healing energy and a spiritual journey. Never had the Gokai felt more important to me.

I was at Fran’s house four or five times a week, then more often as time went on. I did their grocery shopping, picked up her medications, spent time with Fran and her husband. She always called me “her brain” as I was the one taking notes at doctor’s appointments and that continued with the weekly visits with the hospice nurse. Each day I reminded myself, “Just for today, I will not worry,” or “Just for today, I will count my many blessings.” The Gokai reminded me to live in the moment and to LIVE REIKI in every moment.

When I was preparing her medications, I called in Reiki. When I was fixing her food, I called in Reiki. When I was changing the sheets, I energetically cleared the room and called in Reiki to fill the space with peace. When I sat with her to watch a movie, I held her hand and opened to Reiki. We did everything with Reiki. This practice is the way I live my

life, but it seemed heightened somehow, more real and more palpable. Perhaps it was my awareness or simple focus, my intention to BE present in every moment, to experience every moment. Reiki brought us into an even deeper connection.

It might sound strange to you, but we laughed—a lot! It certainly helped that she was not in any pain, which seemed a miracle to us. We had so many conversations about past experiences we shared and talked a lot about what it would be like for her, for each of us, after she crossed over. Always we felt surrounded by Reiki. Yes, there were a few difficult times, but they were short and few. Fran had the most fantastic attitude, and she was not afraid.

About two weeks before she crossed over she called me to her bed and said, “Care, I’m going.” My reply was, “Where?” Fran said, “No... I’m going!” Even then we laughed, and I noticed she was radiating such peace, such love. As a Reiki Practitioner for over 20 years, I am quite sensitive to energy, but I had previously never felt actual waves of love radiating out from her. She seemed to be glowing. She said, “I didn’t know it would be like this. It’s all peace. It’s all love.” That experience lasted for quite a while and then she fell asleep. After that, she was eager to go, and because I also felt a glimpse of what she was experiencing, I understood her desire to move on to the

next part of her journey. Fran had that experience two more times before she crossed peacefully one morning in her sleep.

Reiki guided me through what could have been one of the most challenging times of my life. “Just for today,” with Reiki constantly flowing by my intention, allowed me to stay present and celebrate each day, each moment as a gift. As time moves on I cannot think about Fran without smiling as I feel her joyful energy. I am so incredibly grateful for all the time we had and the blessing she was—and continues to be—in my life.

How do people live without Reiki? I have asked myself this question many times through the years and still do not have an answer. I only know that Reiki is always there to guide me with love and grace and I remind myself that, “Just for today,” I am grateful. ❄️



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