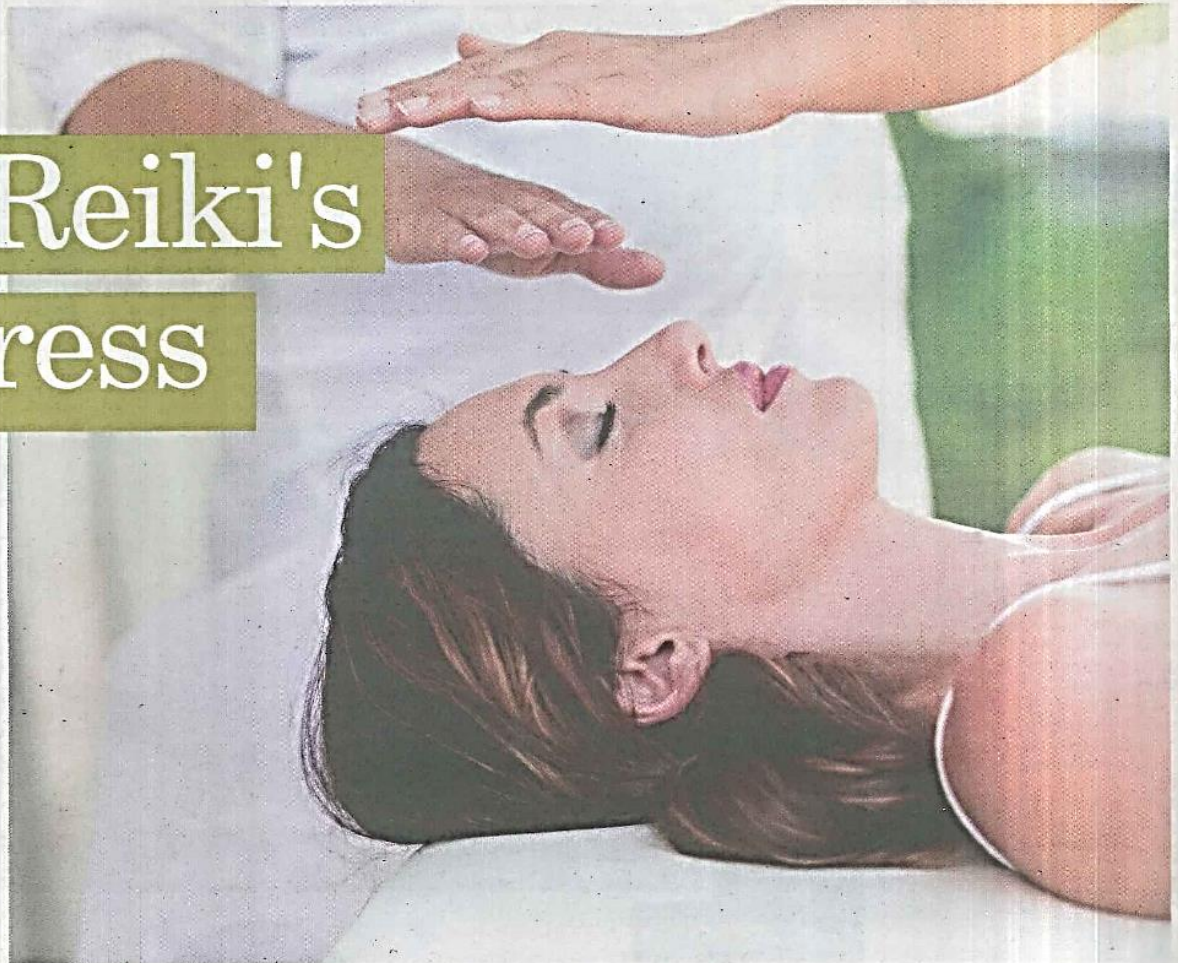


The Reiki's progress



I didn't know much about Reiki until I saw an episode of *The Affair* where Dominic West's character, an alternative medicine sceptic, was cured of his writer's block after just one treatment. Naturally, I was intrigued.

My first port of call was to find a real person, not from TV, who could introduce me to the realm of reiki. That's where Rotherhithe local reiki master Marie-Ange of Ange Harmony came in. "I'm a conduit. When I give it, I receive it," Marie-Ange says.

Time and Talents, an old mortuary in Rotherhithe Village, on a dark and rainy Friday night set a fitting scene for my first session. The complementary therapy dates back to Japan in 1922, where it was created by Mikao Usui Sensei (1865 - 1926), a scholar who studied history, philosophy, medicine, Buddhism, Christianity, prophesy and physiognomy. Mikao Usui's ultimate goal was to reach enlightenment or An-Jin Ryu-Mei, which translates to a state of peace of mind or complete stillness.

The Japanese word Reiki means Universal Life Force Energy. Eastern medicine has always recognised and worked with this energy, which flows through all living things and is vital to wellbeing, known as ki in Japan, chi in China and prana in India. Acupuncture, Tai chi and Yoga are also based on the free flow of this energy in a person. Reiki is based on the idea that an unseen life force energy flows through us. If one's life force energy is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress, and if it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy. While Reiki is spiritual in nature, it is not a religion.

The five principles of Reiki are Just for Today: I will let go of anger, I will let go of worry, I will do my work honestly, I will be grateful for my many blessings, and I will be kind to every living thing.

Reiki is a method of healing, which is activated by intention. The ancient system can be experienced by either laying on hands or by distant healing. "Some reiki practitioners will touch but it can be done without touch," Marie-Ange told me. "It can be done at a distance," she continued, likening it to Wi-Fi or skype; you can connect no matter where the person is, if you have an agreed upon time.

The five principles of Reiki are Just for Today: I will let go of anger, I will let go of worry, I will do my work honestly, I will be grateful for my many blessings, and I will be kind to every living thing. Reiki encourages physical, mental and emotional healing

as well as spiritual growth; it creates a greater inner harmony and balance and encourages a calmer response to life's challenges.

Marie-Ange advises I may feel heat or tingling as she taps the chakra energy points. Lying on my back, on a massage style table with a blanket over me, it's quite remarkable. Without being touched I feel warmth traveling up my body and at one point it feels like my whole leg is shaking and lifting on its own. This means it's working and I'm open to the reiki, Marie-Ange told me afterwards. It's very relaxing and the results last for 21 days while the body is clearing now that the energy is realigned. A usual

session lasts 45 minutes, to do the front and back of the body. People are encouraged to drink lots of water afterwards.

I wondered if reiki practitioners required special powers or heightened spirituality. "Anybody can be a reiki practitioner," Marie-Ange assured me. She got into the profession by accident, attending a training course with her friend. "Then I used it to heal myself and it worked," she said. "Reiki supports natural healing." She combines this with daily meditation.

"I use reiki on myself when I'm not feeling well, or after I'd been eating too much at Christmas or when I'm feeling stressed. It's a way of healing using what you

have within you," she said.

Whatever is released is what you can handle – no more, no less. Marie-Ange recommends following up the first session after 21 days with at least one session a month for three months.

Marie-Ange has been running her own practice for two years and been a reiki master for five years. In the past she volunteered to work on patients with breast cancer and at Streatam's Little Big Peace event.

Originally from Paris, the reiki master has been living in Rotherhithe for twelve years. She's a qualified Reiki master Teacher, member of the UK Reiki Federation, an Area Representative for London SE for the UKRF and also hosts monthly shares where reiki practitioners give each other reiki treatments. Marie-Ange is also ITEC qualified in Indian Head Massage practitioner, and practices Natural Face Lift Massage, and Hand and Arm Massage.

Reiki sessions cost £45 for 45 minutes.

www.angeharmony.com