

## Reiki News Articles

### The International Center for Reiki Training

## Reiki and the Shadow Self

by William Lee Rand

We create our own reality. This phrase is frequently repeated in the healing community, and many accept it as true. And it is easy for us to accept that when we make plans and carry them out, that we are creating our own reality. Or when positive things happen, it can be a boost to our self-esteem to accept credit for causing them, even when they seem like nothing more than good fortune.

But when calamity strikes, how many of us take credit for our misfortune. Frequently, when something negative happens to us, resentment, anger and fear begin to take over making it difficult to avoid blaming others or to blame circumstances that are seemingly beyond our control. By following this path, we sometimes gain sympathy from others, and validate our feelings of self-pity, which is a reward of sorts. And when confronted with the possibility that we have created our problems, our response is to state that we would never choose to create something so negative for ourselves. In this way, people often try to rationalize the idea that there must be some exceptions to the concept that we create our own reality, but as many have found, this is simply a way of giving up our power and remaining stuck in the illusion of helplessness.

It is possible to take personal responsibility for our unwanted experiences in such a way that we take back the power to create our lives in a healthier and more fulfilling way. The mystery of personal responsibility for all our experience begins to clear up when we begin to understand that who we are is much more than what happens in our conscious mind. We have a deeper side to our identity that most know very little about and for the most part are completely unaware. This deeper side is often called the unconscious mind. Many psychological processes take place within the unconscious that have a powerful effect on our lives. By gaining a better understanding of it, we will be better able to deal with our experiences of powerlessness and transform them into a life of greater freedom and accomplishment and in so doing, become the person we are meant to be.

As stated above, it is not just the conscious mind that is creating our reality, but our unconscious mind as well. The unconscious mind has a powerful influence on our decisions, our communication with others and especially on our body language. It also expresses directly through our energy field and by working in combination with the previously mentioned influences has a major effect on our total life experience. The unconscious mind can have both healthy and unhealthy aspects and it is the unhealthy aspects that are often called the Shadow Self. By working through the power of the

unconscious mind, the Shadow Self is responsible for creating our unwanted experiences. Therefore, the only meaningful way to prevent unwanted experiences from taking place is by getting to know the Shadow Self and then to help it heal.

One important insight is that the Shadow Self is actually created by the way we deal with our unwanted feelings and thoughts.

In our society and especially when we are growing up, if we express feelings such as anger or jealousy, or other socially unacceptable behavior, we are often told by our parents to “stop it” or “don’t do that” which is a message to take our feelings and shove them inside. At first we may not do this well, but with repeated commands from our parents each time we experience these feelings, soon we develop skill at shoving our unwanted feelings inside. Eventually, we learn to do this automatically and the process becomes unconscious. We don’t even know we are doing it.

These unwanted feelings don’t simply go away, but accumulate in the unconscious mind, still very much alive and often even more angry and resentful for having been rejected in such an uncaring way. These Shadow Self feelings take on an identity of their own, retain a great deal of energy and are intent on expressing themselves. Because the Shadow Self is in the unconscious mind, we are unaware of it and the influence it is having on our lives. It is through this process that the Shadow Self is empowered and motivated to create difficulties in our lives.

So, if we want to get to know our Shadow Self, all we need to do is look at the condition of our life. Unwanted experiences are actually a reflection of our own Shadow Self. This means that if there is someone in your personal life that you have strong negative feelings about and wish would go away, it is your Shadow Self that has attracted them to you and caused you to feel the way you do toward them. And in fact, it is likely that the characteristics of this unwanted person that you dislike the most are characteristics of your Shadow Self. In other words, you have these same or similar traits within you. This is sometimes a difficult thing to accept at first, but if you can, it becomes possible to stop yourself from directing your negative feelings toward the outer person, and turn your attention inwardly to consider your inner state and search for any aspects within that may have the same feelings or characteristics you dislike so much in the other person. This about face in your behavior requires humility, but the effort is worth it. It is a step in the direction of healing and of changing not just your inner world, but your outer world as well.

Once you begin to do this, a process of inner discovery and healing becomes possible. The Shadow Self exists because, rather than heal the feelings that have created it, for one reason or another, you chose to ignore and deny them. If you are to heal, it is necessary to reverse the process by paying attention to the Shadow Self and accept it as part of yourself. When you begin to do this, only then is it possible to heal. Once the Shadow Self begins to be accepted and the healing process begins, you will find it much easier to accept the outer person as well, making it easier to find solutions and resolve issues. Or it

may result in the person going away with little direct contact needed, or in you simply not being affected by them as you have in the past.

Reiki can be used to help this process. As an example, if there is someone in your life that is causing you grief, and you would like to use this experience to get to know your Shadow Self better and to heal, meditate on the feelings you have toward the person. Then ask yourself, "Is there a part within myself that is similar to this person?" As you do this, locate where in your body or energy field these feelings and/or the part resides. Direct Reiki energy there with your hands. Use the mental/emotional symbol along with the power symbol or the master or other Reiki symbols you feel would be helpful if you have them. As you do this, speak to the Reiki energy with your mind and ask it to show you the part of yourself that has attracted this experience into your life. This can bring up hidden aspects of yourself that you have been unaware of, but need attention. When you begin to feel the part, let it know that you are sorry for ignoring it for such a long time. Tell it you would like to get to know it better and to help it heal. This process may feel uncomfortable at first, but continue sending Reiki and it will help you work with your emerging Shadow Self. Allow yourself to have compassion toward the part(s) that come into your awareness. Continue to send Reiki and also, if you are open to it, say a prayer and ask for help from the Higher Power using whatever name feels comfortable to you. Continue sending Reiki, feeling compassion and looking into this part of yourself with the intent of understanding it and helping it to let go and heal. As you do this continue to thank the Reiki energy and/or the Higher Power for its help. You may also include an affirmation such as, "I release all negative feelings into the Reiki energy to heal now" or similar words or other affirmations you feel are right. Continue to do this until the session feels complete for now and end the session with the intension that the healing will continue as long as is needed. Repeated sessions may be necessary until you have let go of all the negative feelings and you feel at peace.

As you use this technique or variations of it, hidden parts of your personality that had been intent on creating problems for you will become allies that you can consciously direct to achieve goals and create a healthier more satisfying life. This is because the Shadow Self has what can be called a Radiant Self counterpart that becomes available when the Shadow Self begins to heal. The Radiant Self has the same abilities as the Shadow Self, but uses them to create benefits for you and to attract positive situations and experiences.

I invite you to think about these ideas and to apply them using your Reiki energy. I am sure you will find it to be an exciting, empowering experience that will bring benefit to your life as well as the lives of those around you.

[William Lee Rand](#) is the founder and president of *The International Center for Reiki Training*, author of *Reiki, The Healing Touch*, *Reiki for a New Millennium*, and with Arjava Petter and Walter Lübeck, *The Spirit of Reiki*, editor in chief of The *Reiki News Magazine*, and developer of [Karuna Reiki®](#). He has taught Reiki classes internationally for the past 12 years. © [Copyright](#) 1990-2010 The International Center for Reiki Training