

Nick and Choose {NICK ALTSCHULLER}

TOUCH OF FAITH

When Nick gets that feeling, he needs spiritual healing.



A RED FLAG GOES UP WHEN I see techniques described as ancient, mystical or spiritual. For example, it's hard for me to view cupping as anything more than light SGM with glassware, but I admit to never giving it a fair shot. On the other hand, having been punched in the face, I can attest that there's something to kung fu.

It may take a millennium, but the truth eventually comes out with these things. Consider yoga, a practice now seen as more than stretching with style. In my mid-20s, I needed a new hobby/distraction, and yoga paid dividends. The same thing happened to Christine Radice, and her enthusiasm led her to Reiki. Rising in popularity, Reiki is a Japanese form of spiritual healing developed around 100 years ago. Radice, 35, is now a master practicing Reiki, and a separate service called "angel healing," in Oak Square. Experiencing the former would only require an open mind. The latter would take a longer leap of faith than I'm currently capable of making.

As it's also known as Reiki massage, I was expecting the room in Radice's house to be all soft lighting and softer furniture—the interior design equivalent of a fluffy bathrobe. Instead I entered a small, barren space tucked into a corner upstairs; the only objects on the creaking floorboards were a massage table, two tiny, wooden chairs and a small lamp emitting a few matches' worth of light. Were Norman Bates to move to Brighton, this would be Mother's room.

Thankfully, Radice has a warm personality. Before the session began, she broke down the process. By placing her hands on or around my chakras—believed to be the major energy centers of the body—she would help rebalance my ability to absorb the

healing energy, or the stuff of life, around me. As a practitioner of a Buddhist form of Reiki called Reiki Jin Kei Do, communicating with passion is a key to her approach. It's like a laying on of hands without the scary Old Testament stuff. In home TV-repair terms, she would be the tinfoil on my rabbit ears.

The session began with Radice placing her fingers on my forehead while I lay on my back. When describing her first experience, she said it

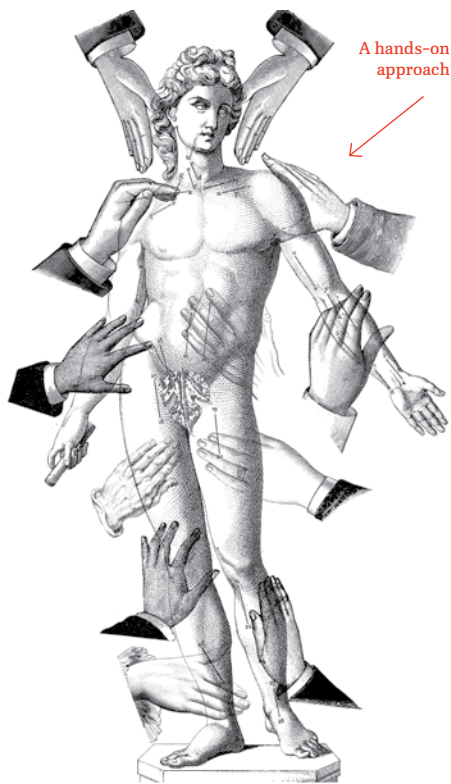
felt like someone was pouring warm oil on her face. "I didn't know this practitioner, but I felt a lot of compassion from her," Radice explained. After a while, I had an odd sensation that she was gently pushing my head through the floorboards, but it was a spell easily broken by opening my eyes. Yet the room had become less eerie (although I won't call it a product of transmissible compassion).

As Radice worked a slow circle around my body, I fell in and out of a series of naps. This might seem like an odd occurrence during a massage aimed at energizing, but when you consider the themes of my dreams: two Westerns, a war story,

something about Lawrence Taylor in the WWE and a disco song about bacon, maybe the stuff of life was channeling directly into my subconscious.

In total, the session felt like 45 minutes of intimate meditation, or some cross between prayer and a cuddle party. I can't say I felt particularly vitalized, but it's freeing to give yourself up to an hour of peacefulness. And Radice's enthusiasm is hard to miss. "It really is an honor to share it," she said afterward. "It's mostly just being connected with compassion and being present with the person." That I could feel, and whether Reiki works or not, there's nothing faulty in the intention. ***

Send your stories and suggestions to nick@improper.com.



Impersonals

BOATER FRAUD

TO THE REAL LOSER:

OK, maybe we did cut the line to stand with our friends while waiting for the 4:30 pm Quincy boat, but there were only about 30 people for a 150 capacity boat, so we didn't see the harm. We all sit in the same seats anyway, including you, so our infraction did not warrant the shrieking, belligerent outburst that you let loose. It certainly didn't give you the right to insult and yell at the poor kid taking tickets on the dock. He does not get paid enough to be treated like that by you (nobody does). Calling him a loser at the top of your lungs was not the way to get anyone to be sympathetic to your cause. You owe him an apology, a sincere one spoken in a polite tone and volume. I got a good look at you during our unpleasant encounter, and I came to the conclusion that you're like Paula Dean's disheveled, evil twin: all the butter and pork fat and none of the sugar. *Wishing people were sweeter*

To the bearded gentleman spouting wisdom from his perch behind the wheel of his prized SUV:

What does a poor college grad know about the myriad rules of the road? If it were not for privileged folks like yourself wagging your finger and shouting pleasantries at cyclists waiting patiently in line for the green light, I'm sure those a**holes [would] wallow in their ignorance. Being the stupid one, I assumed that the large, yellow "share the road" signs were for the motorists to observe, but your erudite self set me [straight]. Just FYI, a cyclist follows the same rules as any other motorist. The need for a cyclist to switch to the left lane on a busy two-lane road expecting to make the next left turn is mind-achingly obvious to everyone except your esteemed self. I hope you are generously rewarded for your rapacious demeanor before someone gets injured, seriously.

Just another dumb cyclist-commuter

Unrequited crush? Bad hair? Need to vent? Send your e-mails of love and spleen to impersonals@improper.com, or fax 617-859-1446.