



Reiki Heals a Broken Heart

BY DEBORAH O'BRIEN

*You break on the shore with such great power,
Wave after wave, hour after hour,
You crush down rock into warm, soft sand,
That is blown by the wind to another land,
Where sprouts a seed that blooms a flower,
Wind after wind, hour after hour.*

—BRENDAN SCOTT WARD

I HAVE HAD A BROKEN HEART for most of my life. I have felt unworthy to receive love. I invited my birth family's judgment. I encouraged and accepted the judgment and then blamed them for what I was experiencing. Looking back, I see this as self-punishment. A big part of me was missing.

Because of what happened to my heart when I first opened it to love, it has been challenging to trust in expressions of love as authentic and real. Reiki helped me with this. I worked intensely with Karuna Reiki® energies when I learned to use them in the fall of 2010. However, it was the introduction of Holy Fire® II Reiki that healed the deep wounds of my heart-ache and restored my self-worth. Holy Fire® II Karuna Reiki® has given me the gift of healing my heart's injuries so I could stop running from love, ease the feeling of unworthiness, and trust in love with a new partner.

I am a dancer. I love to dance. Music moves me deeply. I am also an empath. I feel my own and other people's emotions clearly and deeply. This ability has been present all my life.

I was raised in a strict Catholic way with very conservative Catholic doctrines deeply programmed into the family. It taught us to feel guilt and shame. My parents divorced when I was twelve, and there was plenty of it. Although they produced seven children, annulment of their marriage resulted, and my father was ex-communicated. Trying to appease the entity of the Catholic Church's version of a very judgmental God created a tremendous amount of judgment and shame in our family.

When I was young, I would tap into other people's emotional states, and I did not realize what was happening. Dancing helped me dispel the overwhelming feelings, the intense emotions into which I was tapping. I am grateful for rock-and-roll and my intuitive sense of a need to move with music to help me deal with the emotional overload I was experiencing. The Moody Blues, Joni Mitchell, Fleetwood Mac, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, Led Zeppelin, and others were my music for healing.

I grew up in an old Victorian house built in 1905 up on the hill in Astoria, Oregon. It had a living room with twelve-foot ceilings, a marble fireplace, and bay windows looking out over the Columbia River. Beneath those windows, there was a bench seat that held our stereo system, with speakers on either side to blast the music into the large room where I danced. At night, I could watch myself move in the reflection in the windows.

There was much discomfort among my birth family when I grew into a young woman's body. You see, I grew up with curves. When I danced, it looked too sensual and potentially sexual, even though sex had not entered my life experience yet. The judgment was there. Embarrassment. Shame. Too much!

My intense emotions were too much. I was too sensitive. I was told this repeatedly as if it was wrong for me to be that way. Since this was my natural state of being, I felt judged and made unsuitable for being who I was.

I had a few friends in public middle school. One boy I was close with, Brendan, was a lively guy who had a playful nature he freely expressed with music, dance, and poetry. We connected with music, laughter, outdoor activities, and our sensitive nature. In a very innocent way, we fell in love.

We were sixteen. I had never been kissed. Seriously! He gave me my first kiss. Surrendering my virginity to him felt safe and natural with the love we shared. It was just before my seventeenth birthday.

Then we fought about sex. While at Brendan's house, and with a couple of his friends there, he said to me right in front of them, "Drop the monkey suit, let's have sex." (I often wore dance tights under my blouses.) His words and tone angered, insulted, and embarrassed me in front of his friends. I left in anger. I waited for his call and an apology. It did not happen.

After waiting for a couple of weeks, I went to see him. He opened the door just a crack to see and speak with me. With his aloof manner, all I could say was, "I care about you, Brendan." I wanted to tell him I loved him, but the words did not come. He said, "I don't care if you care," and shut the door in my face. I was angry! I went home hurt and enraged.

Two weeks later, in the wee morning hours of his seventeenth birthday, he put a shotgun under his chin and pulled the trigger.

Later that morning, when my best friend told me the news, I went into a shock. I couldn't see as I wandered the halls of the high school with tears running down my cheeks. I felt broken into fragments. A counselor found me and took me to a nearby park to sit and talk and cry.

I felt regret for not having sex with Brendan that second time. I had guilt for having too much pride. I felt guilty for not being able to tell him I loved him. I was angry at the systems that left him feeling displaced and rejected. You see, the school had expelled him. I thought he had not been viewed or appreciated for possessing unique qualities. It was the same way that I felt.

The counselor helped me to redirect my anger, an action step, so helpful for healing! I was angry at the school systems that favored competitive sports over music, drama, poetry, and art. He encouraged me to run for student body president. He helped me to write my speech about unity in diversity. In it, I said that we should honor, fund, and support all talents and gifts equally. Also, that there should be no more class competitions and social groups splitting us; that we are all one and that our education is at stake, so we should have a say in school policies and the hiring of teachers.

When I presented the speech, the whole student body stood up, clapping, and cheering. It was so healing for me to give that speech! I felt as if I was doing something for Brendan.

When I went home that afternoon, I learned that our neighbor, who was a teacher at my school, had told my mother about the speech, casting it in a negative light. Without asking to hear the speech, my mother scolded me for giving it. That was deeply wounding. It damaged much of the healing that I had received by giving the speech.

I was running against a local judge's son and lost. I heard that they stuffed the ballots against me. It was so close that it was almost a tied election. Had I won, I would have been the first girl student body president in the history of my school. However, at that point, I could not muster the courage to care. I didn't have it in me to follow through with it all. Besides the lack of support from my family, there was another reason.

The counselor who had helped me was a twenty-four-year-old man. He was going through a divorce and had his emotional wounds to heal. Our connection felt more like an affair of the heart than a school counselor/student relationship. In my confused emotional state, I allowed him to have sex with me. As this was only my second sexual experience, it triggered his shame when he realized what he had done, and he abandoned me, going to Alaska to fish that summer, without a word. In the fall he returned

with a new wife. He invited me to their reception, which I attended, thinking it was the mature thing to do. Again wounded, I experienced feelings of guilt and shame. I still felt that my pride had caused Brendan's suicide. I felt that other women were worthy of being loved and respected as wives, but not me.

My Catholic programming was running full tilt, keeping me in that guilt and shame. Guilt and shame for women come in the form of denial of our natural sensual selves, and our empathic tendencies to be sensitive. In a predominantly masculine culture, we view these qualities as weaknesses.

I was depressed and suicidal. I repressed my feelings as much as possible. I became promiscuous. I had sex with many of my male friends. I vowed never to let anyone feel that I was too good for them. I couldn't access love. It was too painful to trust in my heart's knowledge of love or to feel the worthiness to receive it.

I put myself out in harm's way. I told God to take my life because I did not know what it was for, nor did I know how to direct it. At the same time, I was testing God. When I was nineteen, I dropped out of the university and ended up hitchhiking from Tucson to Astoria, with just a little dog. Then I went to Alaska on the farthest island, out in the Aleutians. I worked in a shore plant processing crab for shipment to Japan.

When I returned, I got an apartment in Portland by myself and worked two jobs. I was very depressed and lonely. I felt that life had lost its meaning. At the same time, I was eating healthy food and doing yoga.

Then I met a man who had been awarded custody of his little three-year-old daughter the year before. He was a logger who lived on the coast. We had an instant heartfelt connection, and I felt an immediate connection with his little girl. She called me Mommy right away. It felt safe to love a child. I could open my heart to love her and her father this way.

I felt an urgency to move in with him and help with his daughter. When I did, my Catholic family judged me as "living in sin," and told us that we were unwelcome in my family home if we were living in sin. When I asked if we could have a small ceremony in the living room of the house I grew up in, I was told "no" because I was living in sin. We ran off to marry at a small chapel in Reno.

The reason that God directed me to move in with this man and his daughter right away became clear to me many years later when his daughter was a senior in high school. She began attending a support group for victims of sexual abuse. My husband's uncle had repeatedly molested her when she was three years old, previously having abused

his daughters. My husband's aunt and his uncle cared for his little girl while my husband was at work. This situation changed when I arrived.

When my stepdaughter came out with her disclosure of sexual abuse, her father did not even act outraged. He felt that he had to cover it up, so his parents wouldn't find out. I took her to see a counselor right away. My husband, filled with anger, began drinking excessively.

I had a successful upholstery business and had just begun a career in real estate. I had received a small bit of inheritance, which was used to purchase a fixer-upper that was initially an investment property for us but ended up becoming a new home for my daughters and me when I left my husband and filed for divorce. I painted, wallpapered, and had a new carpet and flooring installed.

Once again, I faced judgment because of Catholic dogma regarding divorce. I was stigmatized, branded, and disrespected by my birth family. There were three things nobody in that family felt safe to talk about—suicide, sex abuse, and divorce. They were left to make their assessments and judgments because I was too filled with guilt and shame to talk openly about them.

Because I invited judgment, they treated me like the “bad one” in my birth family although I was the farthest thing from bad. I lived in another town, so they did not see all the good things I did in my community. I took over the disbanded Jaycees' “Christmas Trees of Giving” project. With help from my children and a few friends, I continued to run the program for five years, distributing gifts shared from the retired folks in our small town with the families who struggled in scarcity as service workers in a seasonal tourism-based economy. I also worked with the Kiwanis “Terrific Kids” program for five years, giving civil service awards to children at two different schools every month. We would have our photos taken for two newspapers with the kids smiling, holding up their certificates.

I raised my girls in a Christian manner with the teachings of Jesus as important rather than a religion. This path was how I was guided to live since I put God in charge of my life.

The deep wounds of my soul were still there. I had difficulty knowing my value. I did not know how to allow and accept love from men. I dated a bit but was more focused on my family's needs. I didn't remarry for twenty-three years.

Usui Karuna Reiki® not only guided me to find my husband, Peter, but it healed me enough to know and trust in love

again. The wounds of my heart and the deep guilt and shame have been increasingly clearing since I received the Holy Fire® II Karuna Reiki® Ignitions.

Writing this is the first time I have been able to connect with my personal story. I was so entrenched in guilt, shame, fear, and doubt that I could not access personal responsibility for my role in the suffering I created. It was too painful. I had invited judgment from those who loved me, then blamed them. These actions created a situation in my birth family that kept us from ever getting close, for which I feel sorrow.

The Ignitions of Holy Fire® II Karuna Reiki® helped to free me from the programs of guilt and shame. I've used the Spirit Attachment Release processes and Holy Love Experiences along with Karuna Reiki® energies to access deep healing.

I have forgiven myself. I have stopped judging myself, and now I feel worthy of love. Without judgment, I recognize that I created isolation from those who tried to love me. Now I can stop inviting other's opinions of me and stop projecting blame on them for what I experienced. This change opens up the potential for new lines of communication from an authentic place of love and trust.

I fully accept who I am with great love and respect. I share my life lessons and the wisdom of Reiki to guide others to do this for themselves. After all, as a Holy Fire® II Usui Karuna Reiki® Master Teacher and a life coach, I am all about helping people own their voice to express the best version of themselves. ❁❁

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