
UNDERSTANDING ATTUNEMENTS

What is an attunement?

This is an interesting question given that you don't often see the term. The act of "giving" someone

the ability to "do" Reiki for themselves and others could be thought of as a kind of empowerment or it could be thought of as a blessing that's conferred.

There are those who would use empowerment or attunement interchangeably, but let's consider the meanings of those two words:

Attunement - from the analogy of 'tuning in' a radio. In the Reiki sense, tuning the student in to the 'Universal Life-force Energy - or rather to *specific frequencies within* that all-pervasive Energy, the 'frequencies' otherwise referred to as the 'Reiki Energy'.

Empowerment - in this context, it comes from a Japanese esoteric Buddhist concept called *kanjo*. Kanjo a rite in which an individual receives a 'spiritual permission' i.e, is spiritually/esoterically *empowered* to work with a particular practice, or manifest a particular ability - in this case the Reiki ability (some folk still refer to the initiation symbol (DKM) as the 'empowerment' symbol).

So, 'empowerment' and 'attunement' are just different ways of looking at the process of 'getting' the Reiki Phenomenon, though other folk sometimes spoke of the process in terms of bringing the individual into '*alignment*' with the Reiki capability.

Yet others talked in terms of '*re-patterning*' the individual's field - as if re-programming some form of 'psychic-energy computer' to enable it to interact with the subtle energy-phenomenon that is Reiki.

So are attunements actually initiations?

But these terms/concepts mentioned above are really very modern: Takata sensei actually spoke of the process as an 'Initiation' - a sacred ritual; however, the word 'Initiation' was seemingly a bit too esoteric for some, so it fell out of favour and both 'attunement' and 'empowerment' (terms which on the surface at least had less 'mystical' connotations than Initiation) came to be used interchangeably as the standard terminology.

Then, more recently, some people started to differentiate between 'empowerment' and 'attunement' - using 'empowerment' to refer more to a *non*-initiatorial practice - simply a way of boosting sensitivity - enabling the individual to experience the feel of the 'energy' more deeply, and thus interact with it more effectively.

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The state of boosted sensitivity achieved through 'empowerment' is temporary; however it appears that, through repeated empowerment, the effects may in fact be cumulative – resulting in a permanent and progressive deepening of sensitivity. But due to the subjective nature of the experience, it is difficult to be certain if this is indeed the case.

Should we now consider attunements as a blessing ceremony?

I think not as a blessing ceremony seems to me to be a form of acknowledgement for that which we have already received, not an alignment to a new energy.

To conclude, I don't really think it matters all that much what it is called, as long as the process is respected for what it is, which to me – is a gift.

Why bother with a Reiki teacher – why not just self-attune?

Reiki ability is something, to quote John Gray (one of Takata-sensei's master level students), that is passed "Hand to hand" – i.e.: from one living person (in whom the ability is already awakened – and developed) to another (who wishes to awaken and develop the ability)

In my opinion it is not something you can self-attune to – unless perhaps, you are willing to go down the whole "21-days of starvation, prayer and meditation" route as Usui-sensei did – and maybe not even then.

Numerous others have attempted this – both before and after Usui-sensei – without achieving anything close to the same results.

Also, there is more to becoming a Reiki practitioner than simply receiving attunement I feel. It is important to remember that originally (and even in Takata-sensei's day) attunement – be it to master or any other Reiki level – was only one part of Reiki training; only one element of the process of awakening and developing the Reiki ability.

But somewhere down the line, folk began fixating on this one part, in some cases, to the almost total exclusion of the rest of the training – forgetting that in relation to Reiki, the concept of 'initiation' – in the fullest sense of the word – while it includes the energetic 'attunement', also includes the teachings accompanying it [and by teachings, I refer to more than 'information'].

Often, much of our real 'learning' comes from simply spending time in the physical company of an experienced Reiki Teacher.

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We are not merely gaining 'information' [which we could read in a book/manual], but are also gaining insights, awarenesses, understandings – in part, via the conscious process of 'observing and practising' – but perhaps more importantly, subliminally, as we interact on a subconscious level with the body–language of one experienced in the Reiki art.

The initiation ritual (i.e. the 'attunement' itself), may constitute the formal aspect of, as it were: 'fine-tuning the student to the Reiki frequencies'.

However, beyond the 10 minutes or so over which the actual ritual occurs – in fact right throughout the entire time we spend with the teacher during the course of training – we are still participating (albeit subconsciously) in a profound 'energetic' interaction that follows on from, and in my opinion, 'rounds out' the effects of, the attunement itself.

How long do I have to wait between different levels of attunement?

So many people (through no fault of their own) seem to have the understanding that it is *the length of time you wait* that is important – where in reality it is *how actively you apply and develop your Reiki during that time*.

Sadly, I've known some people who, after receiving the Level 1 attunement, essentially just 'kick back' and focus on the '*waiting*' (albeit impatiently!) for 6–12 weeks – not even bothering to *self* treat, let alone treat others – before taking the Level 2. I feel that, in their enthusiasm, too many people see the progression through the levels as some kind of *race*. It is not.

When it comes to the issue of whether Teachers should even be *offering* Levels one and two 'back to back', I feel we should keep in mind the following:

In the 'Usui Reiki Ryoho Hikkei', in response to the Question: "How can I receive the second degree [*okuden*)]...."?

Usui–sensei answers:

"....*We will give okuden to enthusiastic shoden [level1] students who bring good results, are of good character, and behave properly.*"

This in itself would suggest the need for a period of time between levels, in order for the Teacher to monitor and assess both the student's *development* and their *moral* behaviour, and thus to establish the required criteria: i.e. that the student *is* achieving good results in their shoden practice*, is also *ethical* in their practice (as well as in life generally); and amongst other

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things, that they are not boasting about their newly-awakened abilities, making false claims as to how they gained them, or attempting to instruct others in things they themselves have not yet mastered, etc, etc. [*It is a traditional approach that only when a student is perceived to have integrated a given element of a teaching - and 'run with it' as far as they can - that the next element is presented to them.]

Takata-sensei tells us that her level 1 and 2 training with Hayashi-Sensei took the form of an apprenticeship/internship - based around intensive daily practice (and monitoring) at the Hayashi clinic, and lasted well over a year. (She received the level 1 initiation in 1935 and the level 2 in 1936).

If I try doing Reiki before I'm attuned, will I be using my own personal Ki?

We are all constantly (though usually *unconsciously*) 'tapping into', interacting with and expending our own personal ki as part of the very process of living. [There is a very specific term used to describe anyone does not do so, and that term is: *dead*]

Fortunately, most of the time our system is also capable of sufficiently replenishing our personal ki levels as a part of same natural process of living.

Every time we consciously focus on our breath, we are tapping into our personal ki - and while certain breathing rhythms (whether unconsciously occurring, or consciously activated) help us *absorb* external ki - thereby replenishing our levels of personal ki, other rhythms actually cause depletion and *dispersal* of our personal ki.

Some folk (i.e. those poetically referred to as either 'psychic vampires' or 'energy vampires') seem possessed of a natural ability to 'leech' personal energy from others; and on the *flip side* of the coin, there are many from whom personal ki simply 'escapes' under certain circumstances.

Fortunately, in most cases this leakage is akin to an energetic 'slow puncture' and while debilitating, is not too serious - providing the episodes of leakage are not *too* frequent or long-lasting - thus giving the individual time to recover.

A common example of this is often seen in Reiki - where novice students find themselves tired or drained after giving treatment, simply because in their eagerness to achieve, they are trying too hard - not yet being comfortable with the concept of simply *letting go* and letting the Reiki happen - they feel the need to 'do', to *push* the energy - and in doing so are adding their own personal energy into the flow.

With all that in mind, even when attuned, if you're not allowing the Reiki to flow through you then you will be using your own Ki. This is why attunement is an important aspect of Reiki but learning to use Reiki effectively is even more important.