

# Reiki Helped Me Forgive So My Father Could Pass Peacefully

BY CHERYL JACKSON

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**O**N A SURPRISINGLY cool Florida morning, my heart beat faster than usual as I walked into the nursing home and the receptionist greeted me.

“Who are you here to see?” she asked with a friendly smile.

“My father,” I replied as I signed in on the visitor clipboard. “He’s in Room 150.”

I woke up on the morning of December 27, 2022, with a feeling—actually, it was more of an instinct than a feeling—and I needed to follow it on this particular morning. I had traveled to Florida with my 13-year-old son to celebrate the holiday season late with my family, and I had learned of some health issues my father was having before going to

Florida. However, throughout the past few years, my father had defied health-related problems, so I didn’t treat this situation with much concern, even at his age of 93.

I kept track of what was happening through my father’s son from his first marriage, David, and he kept my father’s side of the family informed daily during this last health episode. My father’s hemoglobin level was higher than normal, and his doctor wasn’t sure of the cause. However, further testing did not seem warranted at my father’s age and was against his wishes.

I was familiar with the nursing home my father had been in for the past couple of years, as this was where



my maternal grandmother spent the last couple of years of her life. The staff was so welcoming and friendly, and they took incredible care of my grandmother before she passed away. My mother drove me there that December morning and patiently waited for me in her car while I visited with my father. They had divorced when I was in college, and she seldom had contact with him in the following years.

After speaking with the receptionist at the front desk, I walked down the long hallway, reading the room signs pointing me toward my father’s room. I stopped at the nurse’s station to ask for my father’s nurse, and we intro-

duced ourselves. Angela walked with me down the hallway and into my father's room.

"Is he responsive today?" I hesitantly asked.

"Not today," she said. "But I'm sure your father can hear you when you speak to him."

My father's bed was tucked in the corner of the room behind his half-open entry door, and I saw a version of a man that resembled my father. His eyes were closed, and his breathing was labored despite his oxygen being firmly in place. Blankets covered his body. Seeing him in this state took me aback, and I asked my father's nurse if it would be okay if I held his hand. She heartily said yes and left the room so I could have time with him alone. I knelt beside his bed, and I reached under the blanket that was covering his hand. I took his hand in mine, which was cooler to the touch. My hands were incredibly warm, which I knew was from my Reiki training.

### How Reiki Entered My Life

My Reiki training began in the winter of 2020. A close friend had received the unfortunate news that her husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and would undergo chemotherapy. She was looking into Reiki to supplement her husband's treatments and called to ask me to watch an online video about it. I watched part of it and was fascinated by what Reiki stood for and what it offered.

I researched Reiki further for my friend and looked into a program at Duke Integrative Medicine. Then, I scheduled a Zoom call with Reiki Master Teacher, Deborah Dixon of Subtle Wellness, hoping to connect her with my friend. After my initial 45-minute Zoom call with Deborah, I knew right away that I wanted to take the Reiki training with the potential of helping supplement my friend's husband's chemo treatments.

Deborah offered one-on-one sessions with me as my training took place during the many months of the pandemic, and Zoom calls were the easier and safer option for both of us. From the first session of my training, I could feel a special connection with Deborah and Reiki. Her

kind and gentle spirit came through each training and settled any hesitation I may have had during my training through the Master level. With each session, I grew to love the concept of Reiki even more. Finally, halfway through my training, I could have in-person sessions with Deborah, and I took my Master level training in March 2022.

### Our History

As I held my father's hand with my right hand, I continued to notice his labored breathing. And, at that moment, as I watched his chest move up and down underneath his flannel shirt, I eased my left hand onto his forehead.

I stroked his forehead gently for a minute or two, and then something occurred to me—what if I tried Reiki to help ease his struggle?

My relationship with my father had become trickier in my adult years, involving several mixed emotions. We were very close in my early childhood and teenage years. But, as teenagers often do, they form friendships, go out more frequently with friends, and start forming a life outside of their immediate home life. Though my parents divorced when I was in college, each remarried several years later. As an adult, after years of trying to reconnect with my father and trying to have as close a relationship as we once did, I found I couldn't connect with him

that way anymore. Even when my son was born, my father had little interest in getting to know him.

As the years passed, I'd periodically call my father, send annual birthday cards, and visit whenever I returned to my home state of Florida. All the while, my attempts to connect each time, with each call, each card, and each visit, did not bring us closer. It was more about doing the right thing and setting a good example for my son.

### My Father's Last Moments

After gently stroking my father's forehead, I drew on my Reiki training and kept my left hand in place, covering his forehead and the area just above it. At the same time, I continued to hold his right hand in my right

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hand to let him feel my warmth. His closed eyes began to flutter, but they couldn't open. I gently told him I was in the room with him, how handsome he looked, and that I loved him. My eyes drifted away from his face and down to our clasped hands. At that moment, I wished I could offer more, a much longer and usual session for my father.

Initially, when I walked into my father's room, I checked our history at his door. Then, when I saw him lying in his bed, I only wanted to help ease any hesitations my father may have had in any way that I could. Finally, I genuinely wanted to shower him with love and care and let go of all the negative moments I had experienced.

I kept staring at our hands together for another minute and then glanced back at his face as I was about to remove my warm left hand from his forehead. Through his still-closed eyes, I noticed a tear running down on its way to his cheek, and I wiped it away before it fell. I had tears in my eyes as I realized that maybe he could hear what I was saying to him and could feel my warm touch. I was hoping my touch was a relaxing sensation that was washing over and moving through him at the same time.

Glancing at the clock on the wall, I realized I had been with my father for quite a while, and my mother was waiting for me. I repeatedly told my father I loved him and that I'd come by and visit again. Finally, I kissed him on his forehead and left his room. I found Angela at the nurse's station and let her know I was going to come back again the next day.

My mother and I drove to the store and bought what we needed for our holiday dinner later that evening. Then we returned to her house, and I helped her unload the groceries. As we started preparing to cook, a text message came

through on her phone. I watched her as she crossed the kitchen to retrieve it. First, her eyes searched her messages and stayed focused on her phone screen. Then, her facial expression changed from a smile to a blank stare as she read the text message from my father's son displayed on her phone screen.

"What's the matter?" I asked as I noticed her puzzled look. Saying nothing, she turned her phone screen to face me so I could read the text with the words "He's gone." As I approached her, my eyes focused on those two words, and a wave of mixed emotions washed over me. Tears came to my eyes, partly because of the shock of knowing that I had been with him just an hour earlier from when the text message came through and partly because my father was now gone. I stood in my mother's kitchen, wondering if I had helped my father let go. Had he really felt my warmth? Did it relax him so he could finally be at peace?

A week later, I was back home in North Carolina and met with my Reiki instructor, Deborah, for a session. I shared my experience with my father, and she reassured me that she felt I had given my father "permission" to let go. I had chills when she spoke to me. The years of a tricky history with my father came to light with the new wonder I had found in Reiki. To this day, I am so grateful for connecting with Deborah and for my training with her. Reiki is a powerful tool that I am thankful to have learned, and I only hope to help others in need. ■



Cheryl lives in North Carolina, is a Reiki Master and the owner of Simply Peaceful Reiki, LLC. She received her Reiki training from Deborah Dixon of Subtle Wellness. You may contact Cheryl at [cheryljackson03@gmail.com](mailto:cheryljackson03@gmail.com).

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