



Reiki and Acupuncture: Friendly Cousins

Thanks to Einstein, we know that there are only two kinds of things in the world: energy, and things that can become energy. But what is energy? We might call it an intangible essence, a spark of activity that cannot be created, destroyed, or easily defined.

The iconic choreographer Martha Graham expressed it eloquently:

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost."

This is the purpose and beauty of energy healing: to unblock our vital life force, so we can dance through life with the grace and ease that are each individual's birthright.



Reiki is the Life Energy that flows through All Living Things

For some people, simply feeling better is enough. For others, they seek a deeper understanding of the energy that shapes who and how we are. Acupuncture can help elucidate what



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The names for both practices describe what they are and how they work. Acupuncture literally means, “needle piercing”. The earliest written account of acupuncture use can be found in The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine, one of the oldest known medical texts. While acupuncture has been a foundation stone of healthcare in China for the last 5,000 years, and is generally considered a Chinese modality (hence the term TCM, for Traditional Chinese Medicine), the practice later spread to Japan and Europe.

Acupuncture turns on the principle of Yin and Yang, symbolized by light and dark swirls in a circle, which illustrate that complementary forces that need to be brought into balance for a state of good health to be restored or maintained. Yin is feminine in nature; Yang is masculine. Just as each person embodies both masculine and feminine energies, whether they live in a male or female body, the interplay of these opposing and codependent forces is central to all aspects of life: hot/cold, assertive/receptive, fire/water, solar/lunar, etc. When one force dominates, a person falls out of inner harmony.

The system of sounds and symbols that we now associate with Reiki originated in Tibet. In 1922, following a transformative spiritual experience, Japanese educator Dr. Mikao Usui rediscovered Reiki and gave it its modern name. "Rei" means "spirit" or "divine," and "ki" is "life force energy" or "consciousness." "Ki" equates to the Chinese "chi" or "qi", as in qigong, the ancient Chinese meditation and martial arts system still practiced by millions of Chinese today. Acupuncture and Reiki both regulate the flow of ki/qi/chi in the body to create or restore balance, harmony and health.

Where the Cousins Differ

One discrepancy is in patient involvement. In Reiki, the power to heal resides more fully with the client than with the practitioner. Whether a healing session takes place in person or over a distance, the individual actively participates in the healing process by drawing down the universal Source energy that is needed for healing.

In acupuncture, the client is more of a passive recipient, lying quietly on the treatment table as sterile needles are inserted into points of energy stagnation, with the potential addition of moxibustion (which warms the body to stimulate the flow of chi). The acupuncturist may also prescribe herbs in the form of pills or tea, to be taken in conjunction with a series of acupuncture treatments.

Second, because energy has a different relationship with time and space, Reiki healing can be practiced from afar. It would be difficult to insert acupuncture needles without the client's physical body being present.

Health Benefits of Reiki and Acupuncture

Whether a patient chooses Reiki attunements, acupuncture treatments, or both modalities, there are myriad physical, mental, emotional and spiritual conditions that can benefit from these non-invasive healing practices. This is because they address root causes, rather than just ameliorating symptoms.

While by no means a comprehensive list, both Reiki and acupuncture may help with:

- Stress reduction
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Headaches and migraines
- Pain reduction, management or elimination
- Grief and trauma
- Improving immunity



- Digestive problems
- Allergies and asthma
- Gynecological issues (e.g. PMS, menopause, infertility)
- Reduction of prescription drug side effects
- Relaxation pre- and post surgery
- Living with chronic conditions
- Mental, emotional, and spiritual healing

Reiki can support acupuncture much as relatives support one another in a loving family. For example, an acupuncturist can use Reiki to create greater attunement with patients in order to help them relax before acupuncture sessions, or to provide distance healing (especially useful after surgery). For more intractable health issues, this rapport may yield more effective results than either modality on its own.

Although we can't say for certain what Einstein would have opined about Reiki or acupuncture, we like to think he would have approved.

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