



Reiki and Lyme Disease

BY CORINNE FEINBERG

REIKI HAS BEEN KNOWN to work in miraculous ways. As a healing modality that never does harm and always acts in accordance with the highest and greatest good of each individual person, it can produce profound healing and instill a deep connection with one's true self. But if you had told me three years ago that Reiki would be what I needed to end my suffering and cure a disease that doctors couldn't even diagnose, I would have scoffed in disbelief. Yet, here I am today, telling you that it did just that and more. Reiki guided me to heal myself from Lyme disease a year ago, and now I work with others to help free them from the imprisoning burdens of this affliction.

In order to help clients with Lyme disease, it is imperative that there is a foundation of understanding as to how the disease came about and what it entails.¹ Lyme disease is a relatively recent discovery for researchers in the medical community and first came on the radar in the early 1970s when cases of rheumatoid arthritis occurred in children living in Lyme, Connecticut. Most of the children were living in or playing near wooded areas rife with deer ticks and their symptoms typically started in the summer, which is the peak season for deer ticks. This discovery led researchers to focus on deer ticks as a vector for Lyme disease. Before developing arthritis, several of the children experienced a rash subsequent to the bite of a tick near the rash site. It was not until 1981 that researchers at Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Montana identified the spirochete, *Borellia burgdorferi*, as the causative agent in Lyme disease and determined its connection to the deer tick.

These days, Lyme disease seems increasingly more difficult to diagnose

based upon clinical signs since there are approximately 300 known symptoms ranging from mild to extremely debilitating that can be associated with it. Some symptoms include a bull's-eye rash at the site of a tick bite (rarely seen and easily missed), flu-like symptoms, headaches, brain fog, fainting, fatigue, insomnia, joint pain, swollen lymph nodes and depression. Lyme disease can also mimic the signs seen with multiple sclerosis, Bell's palsy and meningitis. Within weeks of a bite from a tick, the disease can spread to other areas of the body affecting joints, muscles and the nervous system. Ideal conditions for the survival of the Lyme organism occur in areas of the body where tissue oxygenation is low, allowing the spirochete to adapt and multiply.

Ticks can also carry more than just the Lyme disease spirochetes, thus infecting the person with other co-infections as well. These include Babesia, Ehrlichia, Bartonella and Mycoplasma, all of which attack the immune system and can also cause gastrointestinal problems, headaches, muscle pain and depression. When Lyme disease progresses beyond the acute flu-like symptoms, it is said to have entered into a chronic state. Chronic Lyme disease immerses the body into a constant state of fight or flight, attacking the spirochete for so long that the body's organs and nervous system fail to work efficiently. This also makes the disease more difficult to treat.

Due to the long list of symptoms caused by chronic Lyme disease, it is difficult to diagnose it based on symptoms alone, especially without a history of a tick bite or bulls-eye rash occurring. Currently, blood tests are used to determine if a person has Lyme disease. The first screening test is to check for the presence of antibodies to the

spiral-shaped spirochete. However, since it takes at least a few weeks for someone infected with the spirochete to produce antibodies against it, a person may have active Lyme disease with symptoms and receive a negative finding on the screening test. In addition, the screening tests are designed to be very sensitive and this can cause some people who are not infected with Lyme disease to have a false positive test result. If the screening test comes back positive or indeterminate, a second set of tests known as the Western Blot and PCR tests (IGeneX Labs)² is performed. It is not suggested that these secondary tests be used as the first screening tests as using them alone can increase the potential for a false positive diagnosis. All of these blood tests have a more accurate rate of diagnosis several weeks after the infection has occurred, making immediate treatment nearly impossible unless the patient saw the tick bite or bulls-eye rash. If they are fortunate to have witnessed these signs, they can usually be treated with a short, two-week treatment of oral antibiotics. I happened to be one in the vast majority of people who never saw a tick bite or rash on myself, and this allowed the Lyme organism to run rampant in my body for two years without any form of treatment.

My story began in 2008 when I had finished my first year of college in Boston and was returning home to San Diego to

¹ Most of my research into Lyme disease came about through conversations and interviews with doctors and healers and through extensive research online. I have included a list of references at the end of this article for readers who wish to know more from some of the sources I used.

² www.igenex.com/innovations3.pdf.

spend the summer. I was expecting to enjoy my three months off eating home-cooked meals, reconnecting with high school friends and lounging by the pool. My summer plans changed immediately the week after my arrival as I began experiencing stomach pains, light-headedness and rapid weight loss. It seemed that anything I ate made me sick, and I began seeing doctors in hopes of finding out what was causing such a reaction in my body. I saw four doctors that summer and none could settle on a conclusive diagnosis. One doctor, a gastroenterologist, told me I most likely had either colon or stomach cancer, which thanks to the results of an ultrasound, endoscopy and biopsies proved to be incorrect.

I spent the rest of the summer fearful of my condition and disappointed at the inability of the medical community to diagnose my problem. I reluctantly went back to school without a clue as to what was causing my symptoms. Throughout the following years of college, I somehow pulled myself together enough to attend classes and live a normal life as best as I could without any treatment for my symptoms. My senior year of school was when my mysterious illness finally came to a head. I had lost a total of 35 lbs, could barely stand without feeling dizzy or fainting, had extreme gastrointestinal upset, and was losing my hair. I could sleep endlessly but never felt well-rested.

Two years later, in August of 2010, after seeing a specialist in Rheumatology and Internal Medicine, I was finally diagnosed with chronic Lyme disease. In that two year time span, my immune system was not only under severe attack from the Lyme spirochete; I also had contracted Mycoplasma, Streptococcus, and had early symptoms of an autoimmune disorder, Sjögren's syndrome.³ My immune system was in shambles, and I was faced with the decision of which treatment protocol to undergo. My Western med-

ical doctor recommended a common protocol of taking three different oral antibiotics, as well as undergoing intravenous antibiotics for up to 16 months. Something about this proposed treatment did not sit well with me. I felt this physical sensation in my stomach that made me apprehensive to commit to this treatment. This was my intuition telling me to go another route, and fortunately, my parents supported my gut reaction.

The side effects of being on antibiotics for extended periods of time can be detrimental and may require ceasing treatment for Lyme disease in order to treat the side effects caused by the antibiotics. Possible adverse reactions to antibiotics include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, *C. difficile* infections and yeast infections in the mouth, intestines or vagina. Antibiotics also destroy a wide spectrum of bacteria in the body, unable to discriminate between the good bacteria our body needs to uphold our immunity from the foreign or destructive bacteria. This mass sweeping out of bacteria causes an eradication of yeast and beneficial bacteria (also known as normal flora) from our intestines, mucous membranes and skin. A lack of normal flora can lead to vitamin deficiencies and further immune suppression, making it all the more difficult for the body to fight off Lyme disease. Long-term use of pharmaceutical antibiotics also puts one at risk for antibiotic resistance, which is the inability of the antibiotic to inhibit growth of certain types of bacteria, rendering antibiotic treatment useless in treating infections caused by that particular bacterium.

All this research provided me with the reassurance to trust my intuition and explore alternative ways of treating Lyme disease, while supporting my system in the meantime. I tried a multitude of treatment forms including acupuncture, juice cleanses, extreme dietary modifications, colloidal silver, homeopathics, essential oils,

naturopathic supplements, nutraceuticals, Chinese medicine and herbs, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, infrared sauna and Rife machine treatment. The interesting thing about any treatment of Lyme disease is that if it is effectively killing the spirochete, you will experience a Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction.⁴ This occurs when the spirochete dies from treatment and toxins are released into your system causing your symptoms to flare up. Therefore, in Lyme disease treatment, it is a good sign if you are feeling worse; however, this makes for poor motivation to continue treatment.

With each alternative treatment I tried, I gained a better understanding of what made me feel worse and what made me feel the same; or in other words, what was effective and what was not. Some forms of treatment produced mildly increased symptoms. Others made it painfully obvious that the spirochete had infiltrated my neurological system and had affected my speech articulation. Ultimately, I was hoping that my treatments caused a worsening of symptoms because that was the only way that I knew the treatment was effective. However, it was not until I found Reiki that I realized there was a different way to go about treating my symptoms.

I had stumbled across the healing modality of Reiki at a yoga studio in San Diego that combined the energy healing practice in a yin yoga class. I was living with my parents at the time and had dedicated the previous six months to experimenting with different forms of Lyme disease treatment. After finishing 42 consecutive days of hyperbaric oxygen therapy, I was feeling the positive effects oxygen was having on my symptoms and I wanted to reproduce the same experience of connection with my breath outside of the chamber. I had hoped to find my breath at yoga, but never thought I would experience such deep relaxation as I did once the Reiki practitioner worked on me in class.

Lyme disease had turned on a switch in my body that overworked my organs and kept my body in a fight or flight mode. I honestly felt as though Reiki turned that switch off and my body was finally able to begin to heal itself.

After experiencing Reiki in only one class, I somehow knew that this state of relaxation was what I needed to feel on a regular basis, not only for the sake of my pain, but for my sanity too. As fate would have it, there happened to be a Reiki Level I training advertised at the studio that same month and I decided to enroll. I was longing to feel that warm exchange of energy that I had experienced in the yoga class, and I was ecstatic that I could learn how to facilitate this feeling with self-treatments. I learned both Reiki Levels I and II in a span of two months, and I began giving myself 30-minute treatments twice a day, every single day. I invoked Reiki both before I got out of bed in the morning and before I went to sleep at night. I had private healing sessions with Reiki Masters during this span of time, but relied heavily on the constant supply of healing energy at my fingertips, which I had gained from my Reiki training. I also used Reiki continuously throughout the day to manage sore muscles, waves of nausea, headaches and periods of high stress. Any flare up of Lyme disease symptoms was treated with my own hands facilitating Reiki, and I was truly feeling its positive and gentle effects.

After three months of twice daily Reiki self-treatments, I was miraculously symptom-free and had made the decision to take myself off the almost 50 daily supplements, homeopathics and nutraceuticals. It was a decision that I felt once again from my intuitive gut and since it had served me well the first time, I was not

going to ignore it the second time. I was feeling healthier than I recalled ever feeling, and had so much energy. I finally felt like the 22-year-old I was! However, to feel healed is different than being cured.

Although I knew I was completely healed and released from the burden of my symptoms, my parents were curious what the Lyme disease tests would show as far as my progress was concerned. I agreed to get the tests but I detached myself from what the results showed, trusting that I cared more about how I felt than what the blood test detailed. Two months passed without a call from the doctor's office regarding my results. Finally, on the day of my 23rd birthday, I decided to call the doctor and see if my results were in. The response on the other end of the line was "Oh, I see them here. They came in three weeks ago. Yes, the test came back negative. I guess no one had called you because we don't need to schedule a follow-up appointment for you to see the doctor." I was speechless and still am whenever I think about that phone call.

A year has passed and I continue to feel phenomenal and completely released from any residual remnants of Lyme disease. It is no longer a part of me but that does not mean I forget the ashes I have emerged from. I am completely grateful for my intuition, my instinct to listen to it, and for finding Reiki at the time that I did. The practice of Reiki allowed me to see myself as whole and remove the title of "Lyme Disease Victim" from my persona. It gave me the tools needed to communicate with my body and the opportunity to look inside myself in deep introspection. Reconnecting my body, mind and spirit as one whole being allowed me to see my true self and work on the lesson I was being called to learn from this disease.

Now, being on the other side of things, I bring my experience healing Lyme disease with Reiki to clients in my own practice. I have found that my

clients who are ready and wanting to be healed, and are willing to do the necessary internal work, experience wonderful and freeing results. Reiki works to soothe the physical pain of Lyme disease symptoms without any habit-forming side effects, and works in subduing Herxheimer reactions caused by alternative or pharmaceutical forms of treatment. Reiki does wonders to soothe nausea, chronic fatigue and insomnia. It also works on an emotional level to shed light on traumas or patterns that are inhibiting the client from healing. Mentally, Reiki works to calm the mind so that deep relaxation can occur and the body can begin to heal itself from the inside out.

I have found that my clients with Lyme disease have blockages specifically in the root and sacral chakras, as a sense of belonging and emotional release have been recurring themes in my sessions. The solar plexus can also be an effective chakra to focus Reiki energy on, not only because of the havoc Lyme disease wreaks on the intestines and stomach, but also because a sense of self-power and belief in one's self is usually low or lacking. I have found aura clearing to be very effective in clearing out both living and dead spirochetes, especially in the brain. But the key to working with Lyme disease clients is consistency. Keeping their energy replenished, clear and positive provides a physical and mental environment that the spirochetes usually find inhospitable. There is no room for all that negativity to survive when the body is flooded with pure light consciousness and awareness. It is especially important to offer a Reiki session if a client is experiencing a Herxheimer reaction or healing response after a previous Reiki session. Usually, one session tends to be focused on cleansing and clearing, while the following session is more supportive and regenerative. I also encourage clients who feel a strong connection with the healing practice of Reiki and who want to experience this level of

³ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sjögren's_syndrome.

⁴ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jarisch-Herxheimer_reaction.

deep relaxation more regularly to learn Reiki from a teacher that truly resonates with them. Doing self-treatments is tremendously helpful when a client suffers from waves of increased symptoms throughout the day. I found great success giving myself twice daily self-treatments and seeking professional sessions. However, as miraculous as Reiki can be, not everyone with Lyme disease is meant to have the same outcome as I had. It is not a guarantee so much as it is a determination of one's personal karmic path. The best you, as a Reiki practitioner, can provide is a supportive, compassionate and loving connection where the client feels seen as his or her potential self; the self that is beyond the ailments of Lyme disease.

Think of Lyme disease as a call to action—a sacred opportunity for self-reflection and for getting to know one's self more deeply. Only after connecting with the true, perfect and whole self can one begin to heal and do so in a way that is specific to the needs of each unique individual.

Testimonials

My Reiki practice allowed me to really go deeper and sense what my body needed from a mind, body and spiritual perspective. The guidance that came through due

to my gifts opening up after my Reiki Level I attunement was invaluable in choosing the right treatments for my healing. In addition the next attunements and daily self-sessions really deepened my practice and brought up the many emotional issues that were hindering me from healing. I consider learning Reiki the most important turning point in my life for healing my Lyme disease as well as in every other aspect of my life. In turn, from seeing the amazing results in my own life, it provided me with the enthusiasm to teach others to heal themselves with beautiful Reiki energy.

—TAMI DUNCAN, CA

The Reiki methods used during sessions allowed me to tap into my inner healing capabilities in order to free myself of Lyme disease and the associated symptoms that plagued me for years. After being attuned to Reiki, self-healing techniques have allowed me to stay centered and grounded on a daily basis. Reiki is a very powerful healing modality that is very comforting to me. If I go one day without a treatment, I feel off-balance. I am HOOKED FOR LIFE!

—KARI KAMMERZELL, MT

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