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The Science behind Reiki

During the 1980's, Dr Robert Becker, Dr John Zimmerman and Max Cade each investigated what happens whilst people perform therapies like Reiki. They found that not only do the brain wave patterns of practitioner and receiver become synchronised in the alpha state, but they pulse in unison with the earth's magnetic field, known as the Schuman Resonance. During these moments, the biomagnetic field of the practitioners hands is at least 1000 times greater than normal and not as a result of internal body current. Toni Bunnell (1997) suggests that the linking of energy fields between the practitioner and earth allows the practitioner to draw on the 'infinite energy source' or 'universal energy field' via the Schuman Resonance. Prof Paul Davies and Dr John Gribben in *The Matter Myth* (1991), discuss the quantum physics view of a 'living universe' in which everything is connected in a 'living web of interdependence'. All this supports the subjective experience of 'oneness' and 'expanded consciousness' related by those who regularly receive or self- treat with Reiki.

Both Zimmerman (1990) in the USA and Seto (1992) in Japan, further investigated the large pulsating biomagnetic field that is emitted from the hands of energy practitioners whilst they work. They discovered that the pulses are in the same frequencies as brain waves, and sweep up and down from 0.3-30Hz, focusing mostly in 7-8 Hz, alpha state. Medical research has shown that this range of frequencies will stimulate healing in the body, with specific frequencies being suitable for different tissues. For example, 2 Hz encourages nerve regeneration, 7 Hz bone growth, 10Hz ligament mending and 15Hz capillary formation. Physiotherapy equipment based on these principles has been designed to aid soft tissue regeneration and ultra-sound technology is commonly used to clear clogged arteries and disintegrate kidney stones. Also, it has been known for many years that placing an electrical coil around a fracture that refuses to mend will stimulate bone growth and repair.

Becker explains that 'brain waves' are not confined to the brain but travel throughout the body via the perineural system, the sheaths of connective tissue surrounding all nerves. During a treatment, these waves begin as relatively weak pulses in the thalamus of the practitioner's brain and gather cumulative strength as they flow to the peripheral nerves of the body, including the hands. The same effect is mirrored in the person receiving treatment and Becker suggests that it is this system, more than any other, that regulates injury repair and homeostasis. This highlights one of the special features of Reiki (and similar therapies) that both practitioner and receiver obtain the benefits of a treatment, which makes it very efficient.

It is interesting to note that both Becker and Cade carried out their research on a wide array of cross-cultural subjects and no matter what their belief systems or customs, all tested the same. Part of Reiki's growing popularity is that it does not impose a set of beliefs and can therefore be used by people of any background or faith. This neutrality makes it particularly appropriate to a medical setting.

Zimmerman's studies show that the brain wave patterns of both practitioner and receiver are not

only synchronised in the alpha and theta state but become left-right balanced, both indicators of deep relaxation and meditation. This experience is typical of Reiki. The effects of regular meditation on health have been extensively studied at more than 200 universities, hospitals and research institutions in over 27 countries. The most important contribution to health appears to be in primary prevention. Over a 5 year period, meditators consistently had fewer than half the number of doctor visits and days in hospital, compared with controls. Hospital admission rates for medical and surgical conditions were 60-70% less in the meditating group, with 87% less with diseases of the heart and blood vessels, 55% for tumours, 73% less for respiratory disorders, 87% less neurological problems and 30% less for infections. Notably, the meditating group showed relatively little increase in need for health care with increasing age, whereas this trend was clearly seen in controls, as would normally be expected. Further studies showed effective relief from stress, a significant reduction in use of alcohol, cigarettes and non-prescribed drugs, and significant reduction in medical expenditure.