

Teen Spirit

Touch editor **Deb Hoy** learns about the profound effect that Reiki is having on our future generation. Anoushka Mangan, 19, tells her how Reiki turned her teenage life around.

DH: How old were you when you learned Reiki?

AM: I was 16 when I learned Level 1, I was still in college. I was 18, just at university, when I took Level 2.

What got you interested?

I was in a girls' school, having a hard time studying my A-levels and struggling with panic attacks. I couldn't relate to others the same age as me. I made a lot of changes in my lifestyle, as well as learning Reiki. I switched to a 6th-form college and my life got a lot more positive. Reiki gave me a better outlook. It was a way of keeping me calm physically and emotionally and a channel for meeting other like-minded people.

So how did you find your teacher?

She lives close by in The Wirral. I'd known her since I was quite young, because she's a homeopath, but I'd never tried Reiki before the first class. I think the other people in the class were quite surprised by how young I was, maybe they thought I wasn't going to be serious about Reiki or able to understand it, but as the class went by, we got to know each other and I felt really accepted by them. Now I love going to Reiki shares where everyone is reunited. It's really important to me to share positive thoughts and ideas together in a group.

What did your Mum think about you learning Reiki?

Well, we've always known people who do Reiki, but when Mum noticed the positive changes in me she became really interested and wanted to learn Reiki too. She thought it would help her in her job as a nurse as well as in her personal life. We each took a different journey to get to Reiki 1 and it was

nice for me to have the confidence to do the first class on my own, but when it came to learning Reiki 2, we took that class together, which was a really excellent experience. It's definitely made us closer and it's changed my Mum's perspective on things too. Now she's running a mobile business as a complementary therapist.

How do you currently spend your time?

I work full-time as a waitress and I'm learning Indian head massage. I want to go into business with my Mum. She offers Reiki, Indian head massage, aromatherapy and Swedish massage. At the moment she is still nursing part-time but our plan is to build a mobile holistic healing business together.

“(Reiki) can be used as a coping strategy that focuses on care of the students”

I also do a lot of sport. I used to compete in gymnastics but I couldn't keep up with it when I was doing my A-levels. I still have to do exercise every day, it helps me to stay grounded. I go out for a run or to the gym each day before work. It's the basis of my day, it sets me up. Getting out in the fresh air is so important to me.

How do you use Reiki in your life?

If I've had a stressful time or I'm feeling sleepless or agitated giving myself Reiki is deeply relaxing. I do it most nights before going to bed. It also helps me to rationalise things and overcome anger.



I've also noticed how much my dog loves getting Reiki – animals are definitely drawn to me and I think I'm drawn towards people who need Reiki. Sometimes I have to stop and ground myself but it comes naturally to give a bit of Reiki to people. I give treatments to family and friends sometimes.

What do your friends think about Reiki?

None of them knew what it was at the beginning, even after I explained it to them. Young people really aren't that educated about these things. Reiki should be offered in schools and colleges because lots of young people and children suffer from mental health issues and there is still such a stigma around it because people aren't taught how to manage their emotions. I think adults are scared to introduce things like Reiki because it's not exactly a medical practice; it's a way of life so really it can be introduced at any age, even to really young children.

It's good that things are evolving - Reiki is used in hospitals and palliative care so it could be introduced into schools through the PSHE curriculum (Personal Social and Health Education), practised in lesson time

“If everyone had a bit of Reiki in their life it would make the world a different place. People could connect with one another on a deeper level”

by teachers who have been trained, or by a visiting Reiki master who comes into schools. Reiki should be a lot more accessible to people my age – it might even help those who are struggling to stay in education - it can be used as a coping strategy that focuses on care of the students. Everything shouldn't always be target and results based.

Do you have a memorable experience from your Reiki practice?

My first attunement was a really beautiful experience. I don't think I've ever felt so much at peace with myself. It lifted me up and brought me out of my challenges.

What are your plans for the future?

I'd be really proud to become a Reiki master, when I feel ready for that. Maybe next year, after I've finished the Indian head massage training. I can't see myself ever not doing Reiki and I hope to pursue other holistic therapies too.

How do you think Reiki can make a difference in the world?

If everyone had a bit of Reiki in their life it would make the world a different place. People could connect with one another on a deeper level. There is so much emphasis on training people how to develop physically and academically, but it would make such a difference if we were schooled in how to develop spiritually and emotionally too. □

Left:
Anoushka
Mangan