



Holy Fire® Reiki and Yoga

BY CAMI COTÉ

PHOTOS BY CAMI COTÉ

MY JOURNEY TO HOLY FIRE® III REIKI has defined my life. To better reflect on this time in my life, I flipped through my first journal to see what my hopes and dreams were when I began my yoga practice. I had written, “I want to connect with my authentic self.” One of the many qualities of Holy Fire® III Reiki is that it delivers us to our authentic self. I am forever grateful for my journey, my path, and my lessons.

A Journey to Holy Fire® III Reiki: My Story

I lived a less than ideal childhood. My father passed away when I was five years old, and my mother slipped into a deep depression. I often felt unloved, unworthy and abandoned. Through these and other life challenges, I became overweight as a child. I was teased and bullied because I was different. I felt utterly alone and powerless most of the time. I was very

hard on myself, developed a knack for negative self-talk, and had a myriad of body image issues.

As I grew older and became an adult, I tried to find ways to control my life. My primary outlets to help me gain control were diet and exercise. This focus did little to help me feel in control. I’d lose weight, but then I’d gain it all back. This cycle only contributed to my feelings of self-hate.

On one of my, “I will lose this weight,” cycles, I joined a local gym. One benefit of joining the gym was receiving a few complimentary sessions with a personal trainer. My trainer recommended that I try a yoga class. I had always been interested in yoga but didn’t think I could do it. The personal trainer was encouraging, so I tried it. After that first class, I was hooked and started attending as many yoga classes as possible. I learned that for the 90 minutes I was in class, I could let go of control, negative thoughts, and feelings of self-hate.

As I went deeper into my yoga practice, it brought up feelings of unworthiness. I had learned enough to know that yoga is a personal practice in that we weren't supposed to compare ourselves to the other students, but I did exactly that. There was a part of me that wanted to be like the other yogis. I thought if I were thin and able to do all the advanced poses, I would finally be confident and happy.

As time went on, I became desperate to lose weight. I just knew that everything I had ever wanted would be mine if I could maintain a smaller body size. I cut my calorie intake drastically and started spending three or more hours at the gym every day doing cardio and yoga. I saw the results. I lost over 100 pounds in less than nine months. However, even after losing weight, I didn't feel better. I hadn't dealt with my past and emotional pain.

In 2013, at the urging of one of my yoga students, I signed up for my first Usui/Tibetan Reiki class. Afterward, my student asked what my favorite part of the class was, and my response was, "I can touch the chakras!" As a yoga teacher, we rarely did much hands-on work with our students, so I found Reiki to be an exciting and new way for me to create a deeper connection with my students.

Another highlight of Reiki training was learning Distant Reiki. This concept opened the idea that I could heal my past with Reiki. Sending Distant Reiki to the past is a simple process where we use the Distant symbol and remember past trauma and ask for Reiki energy to flow back to heal those traumas. I began diligently doing self-healing and started seeing many positive shifts in my life. Most importantly, I noticed that those traumas had a lesser hold on me than they once did.

My Reiki and yoga practice began to fuse organically. I started giving Reiki to the students that came to my yoga classes, and the response was favorable. The presence of both yoga and Reiki swiftly became a lot of my students' favorite aspects of the class. By practicing Reiki and yoga together, the effects of my Reiki healing energy became amplified, and this benefited both myself and my students. The more I practiced, the more I felt my Reiki energy activate. As my connection to Reiki grew deeper, I took my Reiki energy to the next level and took the Usui/Tibetan Reiki Master course in the fall of 2014. At this point of my self-exploration, I never planned to teach Reiki. It pleased me being a yoga teacher and infusing Reiki into my classes.

In 2015, I had what I like to refer to as my "cosmic wake-up call." I was teaching a yoga class and ruptured my Achilles tendon. It changed my life drastically. I felt like I lost everything—I couldn't practice and teach yoga while my Achilles tendon was healing. I was on crutches for eight

weeks and in a walking boot for 16 weeks, which put aerobic exercise and yoga practice on hold. I slipped into a depression. In a desperate moment, I asked God, "What can I do?" The answer I felt was Reiki. I listened and trusted the answer. I began seeing clients professionally and started teaching Reiki immediately.

In 2016, I was guided to take the *5-Day Reiki Membership Association Professional Member Training* with Colleen Benelli. As I received the Holy Fire® Reiki energy, I felt like I had come home. Holy Fire® just made sense to me. Flash forward to today, I'm a Holy Fire® III Karuna Reiki® Master and am now a Licensed Reiki Master Teacher with the International Center for Reiki Training, teaching Levels I and II, and working toward meeting the requirements for the next level of the program. As an Experienced Yoga Teacher, or E-RYT 500, with the Yoga Alliance, I experience my life enhanced by both modalities.

Holy Fire® Reiki has helped me connect with compassion and make peace with my body and mind. My injury ended up being a defining moment in my life. Isn't it interesting how injuries become our greatest teachers? I had to give up my active practice to take the time necessary to heal myself. Because of that healing time, I developed a softer, more inwardly-focused practice. I began to meditate seriously and found a more profound joy in Reiki. I started seeing clients and teaching Reiki. I noticed so many benefits as I embodied Reiki as a way of life. I began to develop a clearer mind, body, and spirit to channel the highest frequency of energy. This energy has not only served my Reiki practice but enhanced my yoga practice. Between Reiki, yoga, and an Achilles tendon injury, I learned to make peace with my body, mind and spirit. Best of all, I connected with my authentic self.

A New Trend in Combining Reiki and Yoga

I've noticed a trend in Yoga Teacher Training offering Reiki Level I and II training as a part of their curriculum or as an à la carte option for their 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training. I celebrate this trend. I have enjoyed several excellent opportunities to teach many yoga teachers Reiki. It makes sense to combine Reiki and yoga, as they are healing modalities that combine easily. Reiki and yoga can heal us in unexpected ways and move energy. I believe that learning to channel Reiki is a beautiful way for a yoga teacher to gain a deeper understanding of the energy body, a sensitive touch, and an awareness of how to hold space for themselves and their students. Practicing and teaching yoga often can release emotional responses. If yoga teachers train in Reiki, they can use Reiki to help their healing process.

When Reiki and yoga made their way to the West, they were simplified to fit into the western world. In yoga, many people focused primarily on asana—the physical practice of yoga. However, asana is just a small part of the *Eight Limbs of Yoga* system. By focusing on the whole system of both Reiki and yoga, I see an opportunity for Reiki to enhance the yoga experience and vice versa.

As we learn Reiki and incorporate these ideals into our daily lives, we embody and live our Reiki! Yoga philosophy teaches the Yamas and Niyamas, which are foundational concepts for your life. *The Reiki Ideals* and the Yamas are both foundational concepts, encouraged as ways of life for the prospective practitioner. The first Yama is Ahimsa. This level is the highest ranking among all the Yamas and the practice of nonviolence. It is the key to maintaining harmonious relationships and tranquil inner life. The first Yama also leads to the awareness of our

true nature. We begin to see that the inner self in others is identical to our inner self, and we wish no harm to come to any being.¹ This philosophy and others can connect with *The Reiki Ideals*; the guidelines suggested for Reiki practitioners to strive for and live by daily. Combining Reiki with yoga allows us to embody our Reiki energy to promote a healthy way of living.

Reiki and Yoga in Practice

In conclusion, I'm offering a Reiki-Infused Yoga Practice that will use the *Five Reiki Precepts* as affirmations to help release stress and connect with inner peace—a simple practice. I believe that yoga is for everybody. There are images of each pose both in its full expression and a modified version of each pose in a chair. If the body cannot practice any of the poses physically, I suggest visualizing the posture as the power of intention is the essential aspect of this practice.

Reiki-Infused Yoga Practice

Sequenced by Cami Coté

1) Simple Seated Pose with Gassho Meditation: 1 to 5 minutes.

Say aloud or think—Just for today, I will let go of anger.



- ♦ Find a comfortable seat.
- ♦ Bring your hands together in Gassho and feel your energy activate between your palms.
- ♦ Close your eyes. Release your body into the earth and allow it to feel heavy.
- ♦ Lengthen up through your spine and gently squeeze your shoulder blades together to allow your collarbones to broaden and your heart to open.
- ♦ Extend the crown of your head toward the sky.
- ♦ Bring your awareness to your breath. Feel the breath expand your body with your inhale and soften your body with your exhale.
- ♦ As you tune into your body - ask it how it is today and listen without judgment.

2) Cat/Cow: Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Say aloud or think—Just for today, I will let go of worry.



Cat pose:

- Begin on all fours or sitting in a chair.
- On your exhale, tuck your tailbone underneath you and let your lower back lengthen.
- Invite your upper back to spread and round like an angry cat.
- Move your chin gently toward your chest.

Cow pose:

- On your inhale, let your tailbone move back and up.
- Slightly lift, so an arch comes into your lower back.
- Allow your heart, belly, and hips to release toward the earth.
- Continue the cat/cow movement with the breath:
- Exhale into cat. Inhale into cow.
- Move back and forth with your breath 5–10 times.
- Keep your awareness on your spine as it flexes and extends.²

3) Mountain Pose with Sun Breaths: Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Say aloud or think—Just for today, I will be grateful.



- ♦ Come to standing, place both feet on the earth with your feet parallel.
- ♦ Bring your hands to Gassho.
- ♦ Release your hands to hip level.
- ♦ On your inhale, sweep your arms up overhead to your comfort level and bring your hands together over the crown of your head as allowed.
- ♦ Connect with the feeling of being showered with Reiki.
- ♦ On your exhale, sweep hands back down to hip level and return your hands to Gassho.

4) **Warrior II:** Hold for 5 to 10 breaths on each side.

Say aloud or think—Just for today, I will work hard.



- Widen your feet so they are parallel and there is room between your legs.
- Let your left foot move forward and bend your knee comfortably.
- Be mindful to keep your knee from extending past your ankle.
- Lift your arms straight up into the 'T position' and turn your gaze forward to look past your front arms.
- Breathe deeply into your lungs and feel your rib cage expand as you feel the effort and power of this pose.
- Feel the vitality in your body as you hold steady like a great and mighty warrior.
- Stay in the pose for 3–10 breaths.
- Listen to your body and come out of the pose when you are ready.
- Switch sides and repeat.