



**My
spiritual
journey**



Jane Martin shares her spiritual explorations

A few years ago I attended some spiritually enlightening training delivered by Sue Owen, an Angelic Reiki Master. The 10-week Lotus Chakra course challenged many of my previous beliefs and changed my life. As a child, my mum had taken me to church each Sunday, but this hour had seemed disconnected from the rest of my life. As I grew older, I opted out of what I started to feel was a guilt-based ritual. I was ready to seek out more exciting ways to find love.

Fast forward through a few decades of life experience: married and with a family of my own, I was a registered social worker and play therapist employed as therapeutic manager of fostering by a private childcare company. I considered myself to be blessed at work and home but was always busy, always searching, and embroiled in an automated time-based reality. So when I was invited to a party and met two charismatic practitioners, Annie Whittaker (a Shaman) and Sue Owen, my head was buzzing and I was eager to discover more about these less traditional forms of therapy. So, with my usual enthusiasm, I booked myself in to do a spot of personal research. I remember the similarities in both were that I got to lie down, and in both cases I experienced a deep level of relaxation.

Nothing sensational there, some would say, but for me, lying still for 30 minutes was a minor miracle. When I shared my experiences with others, I met with some interesting responses. My mother feared I was dabbling in the occult and that I might be at risk of being kidnapped by a religious cult. However, her fears abated when she noticed that I still looked the same afterwards, and she was relieved to know that I had not been encouraged to take any mind-altering drugs or been led off into the sunset by a swami guru on the back of a camel.

I later signed up for the Chakra course and enjoyed taking two hours out of each week to process the material, with no expectations or deadlines and no sense of urgency. I loved the guided meditations and having the time to just be. I look back and see how, in spite of my therapeutic training, clinical supervision and therapy, I had not been living in the present, nor had I mastered the art of anchoring awareness into my physical body or slowed down my ever-active mind. This reminds me of Michael Brown's writing.¹ Yes, I spoke about living in the present moment, but the reality was that I was not actually practising what I preached... I was much too busy to be living in the power of now as described by Mr Equanimity himself, Eckhart Tolle.²

So, during this training I luxuriated in the protected space and pondered on all this 'new' information (that has been around since the time of the Hindu vedic texts) and found myself marvelling at many of the comparisons with other religions, attachment theory and neuroscience. Throughout the course we were encouraged to accept that which resonated with us and to ignore that which didn't, and as a muggle* who to date has still not discovered any extrasensory powers (apart from the universal power of love), I did ignore some sections. However, by the end of the 10 weeks, something within me had shifted and I could see the value of this ancient approach in helping us balance our energy. I could not believe that by week two, we had already broached the 'mother issue'. It felt like directive speed therapy, and I have to confess to feeling uncomfortable to begin with. It was all very emotional, and as is often the case when we unravel, we learn much about ourselves – this process certainly proved cathartic for many, and the support provided by the facilitator and other group members was exceptional.

I thoroughly enjoyed the benefits of the guided meditations that ended each week and I also appreciated the gentle acceptance of 'what is' and the lack of rigid dogma. The teachings felt real and I could see them being integrated/ adapted into my personal life. However, I could not see this happening at work and began to realise that it was time for a change. This was radical and initially alarmed my family because I had spent the previous 10 years working my way up to the position of manager and had

always enjoyed working with my team, carers and all the young people. It was not an easy choice and I experienced guilt, worry, fear and sadness, while at the same time knowing that it was the right thing to do. I handed in my notice and began the painful three-month exit period and to work out the practicalities of setting up in private practice at home (in the middle of a recession, at a time when therapy was being viewed as a luxury).

Two years on and I can honestly say it was the best thing I ever did. My dream to work more holistically has paid off and I now receive referrals from the local authority as well as privately. Social workers, teachers and carers come to me for various relaxation techniques. After the course I went on to complete more spiritual training and am now a qualified Reiki Master, Chakra instructor and have completed my Soul Midwife training with the visionary Felicity Warner. Felicity spoke to us about the importance of being able to offer holistic therapies such as reiki, visualisation and sound to help create a calming, dignified atmosphere.³ I feel that working and living mindfully provides me with the space to stop thinking and to empty my mind. I am now more accepting of the inevitable cycles of loss and beginnings that surround us, and am braver than I used to be. Of course I still get lost and feel sad, but it all seems so much more balanced now, and when I practise/ receive Reiki or meditate, I experience a profound sense of stillness that links me to my higher self, and provides a little respite from the challenges of daily living.

The well-known Zen saying: 'When the student is ready, the teacher will appear' certainly seems to have applied to me. The course helped me to reconnect with spirit and see how my etheric energy centres affect my body, mind and emotions. It helped me to grasp the concept of ego and to see how it thrives in fear and drama. I now feel the benefits of living a more simple life that is guided by spirit. I see the value of taking time out to appreciate what I have so that I can tap into the infinite flow of love and joy that systematically organises our universe.

*A term used by JK Rowling in the Harry Potter books, to mean someone born from parents who do not possess any magical powers.

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Biography

Jane Martin is an experienced play therapist and registered social worker currently running a private practice called Creative Healing in Fareham, Hampshire.



<http://www.creative-healing.co.uk/>

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References

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3. Warner F. The soul midwives handbook. London: Hay House; 2013.

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