



Reiki in the NFL

BY RAVEN KEYES

ON A SNOWY MARCH MORNING IN 2001, after an all-night blizzard, I was one of just a few people traveling the slippery roads between Manhattan and New Jersey. I was in a lone taxicab with my business partner, Reiki Master John Keane, and we were on our way to Giant Stadium. The piles of freshly plowed snow rose in pretty white peaks along the sides of the highway, and not even one jet graced the skies over Newark Airport, which was closed due to bad weather.

Our cabdriver did his best, maneuvering the treacherous roadways while straining to see through the wipers scraping over the icy windshield. "Hey, why didn't you re-schedule this thing until tomorrow?" he asked.

Well that, ladies and gentlemen, was a very good question with a very simple answer: *Getting this appointment was one of the hardest things we had done in our Reiki careers!* ... And Charles Way of the New York Giants Football Team had already called to say he was waiting for us, in spite of the weather!

Our invitation to meet with Mr. Way had come about because our company, Pro Reiki, had sent a brochure to the head coach of the Giants. Since it came with the stamp of approval from Dr. Mehmet Oz, our brochure was eventually turned over to Mr. Way. Everyone in sports knew of Dr. Oz

because he had performed a successful heart transplant surgery on Frank Torre, brother of Yankee manager Joe, during the 1996 World Series Championship. As Director of Player Development, Charles Way was given the responsibility to determine how Reiki could benefit the players of the Giants and whether it could help them to win a Super Bowl. (They had just lost that prize to the Baltimore Ravens a few months before.) Then, after many phone calls back and forth, Mr. Way was able to pluck this day, and this day only, out of his frantic schedule for a meeting with us.

Personally, I don't know a linebacker from a receiver, but as an athlete himself, John had that covered, so I wasn't nervous about how we would answer the sports questions that would be presented. And I certainly knew the underlying value of Reiki for anyone, especially for physically overstressed professional athletes, no matter what the sport.

Mr. Way met us in the lobby of the business offices, and once he settled us into the Giants conference room, the grilling began. The first thing he wanted to know was whether Reiki conflicted with his strong Christian beliefs. I explained that Reiki isn't a religion, but since it is universal power, he might consider it to be a "laying on of hands." This reassured him, and

then his attention turned to sports. He asked John one question after another about how Reiki might benefit the players of specific positions on the team, listening intently to everything that was said.

It was then that he began to share his own story with us. It was a very personal one about his struggles to heal after a debilitating injury. This wonderful young man, “Charles,” as we came to know him, had been an all-star player with the Giants. In the press, they had dubbed him “Out Of My Way.” But that was before he sustained a career-ending injury. Charles was such a great person and so loved by the Giants that when he was forced into retirement, they turned the position of Director of Player Development over to him. But he still had the burning desire to play football locked inside him. Charles told us of his pain, of how he had had three major operations, one in which he made medical history by receiving the cartilage of a cadaver, which later had to be removed. All the surgeries had been failures. So here he was, almost two years later, and his knee was still hurting him badly, plus it was very swollen. He was only 26 years old, and to him, it looked as if a life full of pain stretched out before him.

Charles said that if we could help him, he would help us to bring Reiki to the Giants.

We accepted the challenge; what did we have to lose? Within minutes, I found myself inside the locker room of the New York Giants—a shocking place of metal and steel. I was flabbergasted to see the shiny metal bathtub where players sit packed in ice after games. That’s how much pain they are in every single Sunday night!

We set up a massage table and began to work on Charles. It was a very powerful session. He was soaking in the Reiki as if he were a sponge. Charles was so energetically depleted from all the trauma his body had been through that the feeling of giving him Reiki was like mild electrocution! “No wonder,” I thought to myself. “This young man was severely injured, and I surely remember the revelation made by one of the Denver Broncos when he said: *‘The last time I felt really great was the moment just before the first down of my first game in the NFL!’*”

A high level trainer showed up while Charles was on the table, and he was not pleased at all that we were in “his” locker room. With his physical therapy point of view, it must have seemed odd to him that we were doing something so gentle. He looked at us with skeptical and wary eyes.

Thus began a secret trial of Reiki that was conducted by Charles in our private offices. After that first session, his knee went into a healing crisis, and it hurt more than ever for a few days, but once he got Reiki again, the increased pain quickly subsided. By the third session, Charles had come to love his Reiki sessions. He fell asleep on the table. John was holding his knee between two hands while I worked over his kidneys. Suddenly there was the sound of a loud “crack” that came out of his knee—so loud it rattled the drawers in the filing cabinet! It was utterly astounding to hear something so extreme explode out of a body part, and it was equally amazing that Charles didn’t wake up!

As things turned out, that “crack” was the breakthrough moment to “Reiki miracle.” After that, all the swelling went down in Charles’ knee, and every bit of his pain disappeared. He started to do football drills again, plus he was working out in the gym more strenuously than he had been able to since before his surgeries. Session four just a week later found him pumped up with muscles that were obvious even through his jacket.

Then during session five, he told us that he now had an appointment with a sports orthopedic surgeon, and if this doctor approved his return to football, he was going to have his agent contact his hometown Philadelphia Eagles to see if they would like to have him on their team. “If I go to Philadelphia,” he said, “you’re coming with me! I will want you to be my personal Reiki Masters.”

When he went to the doctor, Charles’ knee was so greatly improved that he was given a clean bill of health, with permission to play. It was a miracle. Nothing like this had ever happened before in the history of football.

After thinking long and hard, Charles came to tell us he had made a decision. He had decided to keep his job as Director of Player Development for the New York Giants, but this time it was his own decision, not something that was forced upon him. He expressed how much he wanted to *stay* in football, and he realized that to play meant that the prospect of eventual serious injury was just around any corner. With gratitude for all we had done, he told us that to stay in football, the wisest choice was to keep his current position, rather than be forced out altogether due to injury. As his professional playing career had already taught him, debilitating injury could end a career on any day. The most profound part of his talk with us came at the end of our conversation. It was humbling when he went on to say that his Reiki experience had brought him closer to God. He said he felt God had brought us all together in order to show him that life holds many miracles.

True to his word, Charles did make it possible for us to work on other players, but confidentiality issues prevent me from naming them...And the trainers continued to be problematic for us, opining that Reiki was just too gentle to do the players any real good.

But before we could break through to get the trainers to accept Reiki, 9/11 came, and our focus shifted from football to helping our city. John and I became part of the teams of volunteer therapists working with the fire department, the police, and family members of victims.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank Charles Way for giving us the chance to know him and the opportunity to work with the New York Giants. I truly believe that because of Charles, one day all professional teams will have Reiki Masters in their locker rooms, insuring that players are full of pure energy, reducing their injuries and giving them the power to play at the top of their game.



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