



Reiki in the Operating Room with Dr. Mehmet Oz

BY RAVEN KEYES

IN THE VERY EARLY morning hours of Election Day, 2000, I found myself in a place I'd never thought to be. My client was lying before me on a gurney in a dimly lit hallway outside the operating room in Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. We were waiting for the illustrious Dr. Mehmet Oz, who was about to perform her open-heart surgery.

Suddenly there he was, coming so quickly around the corner he seemed to be almost flying. Dark-haired, handsome, and exuding positive energy, he firmly shook my hand while saying, "Nice to meet you, Raven. We have to hurry. I need to get you into scrubs."

Assuring Susanna that we would be back soon, he took my arm and hurried me down the hallway, around many corners, and finally through swinging doors to a station filled with nurses. "Get this woman into scrubs for surgery," he called out. Someone grabbed my hand and rushed me into a place for changing. She handed me an entire suit to go over my clothes, a cap for my head, and booties for my feet. "Hurry up," she said, "Dr. Oz is waiting for you." Dressed from head to toe in OR blue, I flew out the door and now I was running, lickety-split, next to one of the most famous doctors in the world through a maze of hallways in one of America's finest hospitals. We sprinted back to Susanna, where Dr. Oz left me as he peeled off in another direction. "See you soon!" he called out as he sped away. "Susanna, don't worry, everything will be fine!"

Am I dreaming?" I asked myself. I couldn't help but wonder. This had all come about so quickly—it had only been one week to the day since Susanna had

come to have a Reiki session. Upon her arrival, she told me the bad news: her cardiologist said she needed surgery. During previous Reiki sessions, I had felt tightness in her heart region, but I never imagined she would need an operation!

Susanna discussed with me her interviews with surgeons. "But there's one who believes in using alternative methods along with regular Western medicine," she confided, "his name is Mehmet Oz, and because of changes in my medical insurance, if I choose him, I'll have to get my surgery next week." We discussed the article in the *New York Times* we had both read. Written five years earlier, it described how Dr. Oz was allowing non-medical people into the operating room to send energy along meridian lines, something unheard of in any other hospital at the time. I went on to say I had also read Dr. Oz's book, *Healing from the Heart*. Because I was so impressed with him, right then and there, Susanna chose him to be her surgeon.

And then, much to my complete and utter shock, the very next day he approved my presence in the operating room as her personal Reiki Master!

To be with my client at a time of such overwhelming circumstances in her life changed both of us—and for me, in ways that I never could have predicted. I am very squeamish and can't stand the sight of blood. When Susanna first asked me if I would go into the OR with her, I said no, because I didn't think I could handle it. But then during her Reiki session, I realized how badly she needed whatever support I could give her, so after the session was over, I told her I had changed my mind—never in a million years believing

that Dr. Oz would agree! I was certain there had to be hospital rules against it, and besides, I assumed he had his own people who were already working with him, so I was stunned to get the phone call saying he wanted me to participate.

When Susanna and I first entered the operating room together, I was walking next to the gurney as the orderlies wheeled her in. I had to introduce myself to the head operating room nurse, who had a letter from Dr. Oz stating that I was to be there. Just to walk into the OR assaults the senses—it's kept freezing cold, the lights are glaringly bright, and there are scary instruments everywhere you look. Susanna was very frightened, as anyone would be, and it was deeply comforting to her that I was right there, holding her hand. I'll never forget how hard it was for me not to cry when she looked imploringly into my eyes and said, "Raven, I know these people are all great at what they do. But you're the only person here who KNOWS me! I want to live. Please hold a place for my life here. Promise me you'll hold a place in this room for my future." I promised. And then she succumbed to the anesthesia that was being shot into her arm while we talked.

If you've never witnessed what takes place in an operating room, I have to tell you, it's really more violent than you can begin to imagine. Oh, yes, the final parts of the surgery require a touch softer than butterfly wings. But getting to that point is terrifyingly brutal. Susanna was so anesthetized that she seemed dead—she flopped around like a rag doll when they transferred her to the operating table. Magic markers were used to indicate places where lines were later jammed

into her body with so much force it looked to me like she might jerk off the table. I couldn't stand to watch it. I had to turn away while they continued to get her ready. Sitting on my appointed cold metal chair by the door, I spent the prep time praying to the angels to give me strength, while calling in the Reiki Masters in Spirit to protect Susanna and to keep her safe.

And then Dr. Oz entered through the swinging doors. "All right, is everybody ready?" he asked. As I felt the tide of emotions flowing through everyone in the OR rise to a fever pitch, he told me to go up to Susanna's head next to the anesthesiologists. I stepped over and around lines that connected her to machines. There was a metal frame that looked like a roll bar of tubing around her head over which blue plastic flowed down, covering her from head to foot, with a flap that opened over her chest. But I didn't want to look over the bars; I was glad I could just sit on the stool that was placed there and gaze directly at the floor while I sent Reiki through the top of Susanna's head.

One of the worst moments came when the electric saw started up and Susanna's chest cavity was cut open. Violent. The smell of bone. And yet, there was only peace flowing through me—the peace and healing power of Reiki, which was a balm to the both of us. Even with Susanna deeply under the influence of anesthesia, I could still feel her body calmly drawing in Reiki, her life force strong, beautiful and divine!

Time went by during which I sank into a beautiful wash of Reiki energy, serenaded by the beeps and hums of all the machinery to which Susanna was now connected. Sometimes I could feel her panic, and then I would ask to open myself further in order to channel even more Reiki into her. Everything was working like a charm. I was so calm in the bliss of Reiki that it didn't even bother me as I gazed at the floor and saw splatters of blood dropping onto the white rubber OR clogs that Dr. Oz was now wearing.

Columbia Presbyterian is a teaching hospital. A group of "doctors in training" entered, and Dr. Oz was showing them that Susanna's heart valve was a textbook case of damage done by the childhood disease of rheumatic fever. He introduced me to the room at that point and asked that I give a brief explanation of Reiki, which I felt was so generous of him! It surprised me to be asked, but I had in fact noticed that other technicians and doctors in the OR were looking at me out of the corners of their eyes like I had three heads. It wasn't until about two months later that I found out why.

The answer to that came through another unexpected set of circumstances that followed Susanna's surgery: I was invited to join Dr. Oz's Complementary Alternative Medicine program (CAM). This was a group that met every Tuesday morning in the conference room of Dr. Oz's office at the hospital. Before the meetings began, I would sit at the shiny round table, looking at the names on all the little white cards identifying each person present. "Dr. This" and "Dr. That" cards sat on either side of mine saying "Reiki Master." Since I felt a close bond with the director of alternative therapies, I confided in her that I was shocked and utterly amazed at having been asked to sit with such famous research doctors.

It was then, while everyone was dispersing, that she took me aside and quietly told me that it had actually been years since any energy healers had been in the operating room. In hushed whispers, she relayed how that 1995 *New York Times* article that Susanna and I had discussed in her decision-making process had been the cause. It had not been well received by the administrators of the hospital. She led me to believe that Susanna's request for me to be in the operating room with her had presented Dr. Oz with a perfect opportunity to once again open the doors to using what he calls "energy medicine" during surgery. To my knowledge, I was the first Reiki Master to ever enter an operating theater in Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. But I wasn't to be the last.

For me, it was a humbling experience to assist my client in navigating through the dangers and emotional terrors of open-heart surgery. After the operation was over, I was told I could visit Susanna in the ICU the next morning, where she was expected to stay for quite some time. When I arrived, she had already been transferred to another room. Reiki had accelerated her healing so beautifully that she had been transferred out of ICU just hours after surgery.

Susanna's healing was quick and complete, and I'll never forget her excitement six months later as she described to me the trip she had just returned from. Susanna is a life coach, and she had just come back from leadership training in California, where as part of the program she had been bungee jumping out of Redwood trees to "face up to her fears." She laughed with delight as she told me the story, proclaiming, "I've already had open-heart surgery! How could I ever be afraid of a tree?!"

It's now 10 years later and Susanna Schauer is more beautiful than ever, joyfully coaching her clients, loving her life and savoring it with abundant joy. As for me, one thing I learned from this experience is that if I ever need surgery, I am going to call a Reiki Master, just as soon as I find a doctor who will let one come into the OR with me. After what I have seen and heard with my own eyes and ears, I will never, ever get surgery without the presence of a Reiki Master. This is something that I am absolutely sure of, and I will advocate for Reiki to be in operating rooms with all my heart to anyone who will listen.

I give deep thanks to Dr. Oz, who continues in his devotion to Reiki. As a matter of fact, luckily for him, his wife is now a Reiki Master!



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