



Reiki in a High-Pressure Workplace

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THERE'S A QUIET truth I've come to know, not in theory, but in practice, through days that drained me without refilling, in a system that took more than it ever returned.

My time at the Moscow branch of an Asian international bank was a rigorous, ego-shattering experience unlike anything I'd ever known. It was the most intense lesson in humility I'd ever faced, in which my sense of self, my pride, and my need for recognition were persistently, and sometimes painfully, undone.

led me there, and I had little choice but to go through it. But what I did choose, moment by moment, was how to respond. And in that space of choice, Reiki found its way.

Externally, I was calm, polite, and obedient, the perfect employee. But inside, something shattered every morning when I walked into the fluorescent silence of the bank, each time my supervisor's shadow fell across my desk. It was unusual that she wasn't Asian, but her long tenure as a local manager had given her considerable internal influence. As the head of the General Affairs Department at

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Have you ever had a boss who watched your every move, monitoring not just your actions but seemingly your breath, your pace, your silence?

Have you ever felt like your nervous system was a stringed instrument—each nerve a taut chord, plucked again and again to produce a dissonant melody only stress could compose? That's precisely how that job felt.

It was a two-year temporary contract. I was replacing an employee on parental leave. The competition for this position was fierce, but I was selected. I was happy, and the contract stipulated a clear termination.

But no one warned me about the soul-deep toll it would take. I didn't take that job out of passion or calling. Circumstances

the bank's Moscow office, she had complete authority over our daily operations, with little oversight from the home office. A woman in her late forties with sharp eyes, sharper heels, and a voice that could shatter glass. She didn't just supervise; she hunted. And I was her favorite prey.

Small in stature, but immense in presence, she moved like a shadow—soundless, sudden, always watching. Her eyes missed nothing: a crooked folder, a delayed email, or a single second of hesitation. She treated every small mistake like a personal betrayal in her world, where anything outside her logic was a flaw, even a crime.

Every single morning began the same way. The moment I walked in, with my back straight, shoes aligned, and

business suit flawless, she would appear like a storm rolling in from the east.

“You’re late!” she’d scream, even if I’d arrived five minutes early. “Do you think this is a tea ceremony? This is a bank! Precision! Discipline! Not your personal walk through the park!”

And then, in front of everyone, as colleagues froze at their desks, avoiding eye contact, she’d list my crimes: a misaligned stapler, a delayed memo, a tone in my voice she deemed “too soft,” “too slow,” “too loud.” But the most crushing accusation always came last, delivered with a sneer: “You have no sense of priorities!”

She’d wave a stack of papers, tasks she’d dumped on me minutes before a deadline, with no context, no instruction. “You should have done this first! How can you not understand what’s important? Are you blind? Or just careless?” As if I could read her mind. As if importance wasn’t defined by clear direction, but by some invisible, ever-shifting code only she knew. I’d stay late, reorganize my entire workflow, try to anticipate her whims—only to be told the next day that I’d “still” misunderstood.

The irony was cruel: she overloaded me, scattered my focus, then punished me for not being focused. She created chaos and then blamed me for drowning in it. And yet, even there, especially there, I returned to the Reiki Principles: Just for today, do not anger. Do not worry. Be grateful. Do your duties thoroughly. Be kind to others. They were not just words. They became my anchor.

Each morning, as I walked into that office, I whispered the first principle like a mantra: “Just for today...” And for that day, I was free.

Just for today, I chose not to anger.

When she screamed, twisted facts, turned kindness into betrayal, I breathed. I placed my hands lightly on my lap, under the desk, unseen. I sent Reiki to my heart, solar plexus, and the knot between my shoulders. Not to suppress the anger, but to hold space for it, so that it wouldn’t consume me. Reiki was not an escape. It was presence, the quiet act of staying human in a place designed to erase you.

She always watched me like a hawk. If I blinked too slowly, sighed, or if I dared to stretch, she would snap, loud enough for all to hear, “You can’t handle this? Maybe you should look for an easier job.” She’d shout as if I were a child caught stealing candy. As if I had no dignity. As if I were nothing. And every time, in front of everyone, I

would bow and say, “I apologize. I will improve.”

Inside, I was learning a different lesson. Not about priorities. But about power. And survival. And the quiet, unbreakable space within me where no scream could reach.

Just for today, I chose not to worry.

Not because there was no reason to. But because worry would have swallowed me whole. Each time after my supervisor exploded over a misplaced comma or a delayed signature, the silence that followed was worse than the storm. I would sit there, trembling, breath shallow, mind replaying every word like a cursed mantra. She would calm down instantly, as if flipping a switch, while I remained shaken, my focus shattered. Again and again. Day after day. A ritual of control disguised as discipline; in essence, energetic vampirism.

And the worst part? The work never ended. Just as I finished one report, three more appeared: “Urgent. By lunch.” Then “Now. Before the meeting.” Deadlines stacked like bricks on my chest. Sleep became a memory. My hands trembled with caffeine and fear.

Then came a moment, one I still remember with quiet pride. During an inventory check, she asked me about the two safes in the cash vault, something I had no access to. Again, she began to shout: “How can you not know this? These are safes! There’s money inside!” And then, after months of silence, of bowing, of absorbing blows, I replied calmly and steadily: “I don’t know because I don’t have access to that area. And after all, we are a bank. Of course, there’s money.”

It wasn’t defiance. It wasn’t anger. It was the truth, spoken with quiet dignity. And at that moment, something shifted. Not in my supervisor who kept shouting—but in me.

Just for today, I chose to be grateful.

I was grateful for the rhythm of my heartbeat and the air that still filled my lungs. For the floor that held me when my legs forgot how to stand, and for the one person who noticed and quietly said, “You’re holding up.” Gratitude did not erase the pain. But it reminded me I was still alive. Still whole. Still here.

Sometimes, she’d walk over and whisper, loudly enough for me to hear, about how I was “too slow,” “too emotional,” “not cut out for this environment.” No confrontation, and no chance to respond. Just poison, drop by drop.

And every time the president walked by, she'd turn to me with a smile, sharp as a scalpel, and ask an obscure question, something buried in a document from three years ago. She watched my hesitation like a predator. Then, in front of him, she'd sigh, shake her head and state, "We're still working on this one." Humiliation in the presence of power. And the message was clear: I was barely keeping up and invisible unless I failed. I was *expendable*.

But deep inside, beneath the shame, something quietly rebelled, and I was handling it. Despite every scream, impossible deadline, and humiliation, I was still here. Breathing, standing, and holding my light. And every night when I came home, I sat in stillness. Hands on heart, hands on belly, whispering the five Reiki Principles like a prayer, the five lines the thread I followed to keep my soul above water. And then, "Thank you, Reiki. Thank you for carrying me through."

Just for today, I chose to do my duties fully.

Not to please her. Not to survive. But to stay true to myself. Even when no one saw or cared.

She never explained anything. "Figure it out yourself," she'd say, as if understanding the intricate, unwritten systems of a foreign corporate culture were as simple as reading a label. Of course, it took ten times longer. Of course, she seized every chance to accuse me of slowness, inefficiency, and lack of initiative. She had designed the traps to be inescapable.

Once, I found a logbook that required daily entries for compliance. No one had told me the responsibility was mine. When this became known, my supervisor exploded. Screaming. Accusing. And her justification? "You could have guessed this yourself!" As if intuition were part of the job description. As if I should be an oracle, not an employee.

And if she caught a colleague helping me, whether answering a question or showing a template, she would erupt. Not at them directly. But with a glare, a hissed comment, a private reprimand. She blamed me. I had "disrupted the workflow." Her wrath was a web, and I was always at the center.

No one spoke up. No one dared. We all knew that anyone who helped me could become the next target. But I did my work with care. Not because my supervisor deserved it. But because I did. Reiki taught me that integrity

is not a reaction to others. It is an inner alignment. So I worked not with fear but with presence.

Just for today, I chose to be kind.

Kind to myself. When I wanted to cry in the bathroom, I placed my hands on my cheeks and let Reiki flow, a silent vow to remain unbroken. When she whispered poison to others, I did not return hatred. I sent her silent Reiki: "May you be free from suffering." Not because she deserved it, but because I deserved peace. And though no one knew I practiced Reiki, no one saw me place my hands on my lap, or heard me whisper the principles in silence, they felt the effect.

Colleagues would pause near my desk, as if drawn by the stillness. One once said quietly, "Being near you...it calms my nerves." Another left a note: "Thank you for not adding to the tension." They didn't know why, but they sensed it, like water in a desert, a quiet field of calm in the middle of the storm. Not loud. Not performative. Just present.

The last day came. My contract was ending. The team gathered to say goodbye: cakes, smiles, and kind words. My manager stood among them, composed, professional, even gracious. "Thank you for your work," she said, loud enough for everyone to hear. "You did your best." Then she approached me personally and said, "Honestly, many here envy you." I replied, "Honestly, I've known that all along."

Then, as the room emptied, she approached me quietly, deliberately, close enough that her breath hit my face. "Forgive me," she whispered. I froze. Was it real, or another performance? I looked into her eyes; no warmth or remorse, just tension. And her breath was rancid, sour, like something rotting behind closed teeth that nearly made me vomit. I clenched my jaw, swallowed the nausea, and offered a hollow smile—a final performance. But I understood something at that moment: Her cruelty was not my failure. It was her emptiness. And me? I had survived. Not by becoming like her, or by breaking. But by holding, every single day, to something she could never touch—the quiet, steady pulse of my own spirit. The Reiki within. The light that no shadow, no matter how long, can extinguish.

And in the midst of that pressure, I found something unexpected: a quiet space within myself where Reiki continued to flow, not as a practice confined to healing sessions, but as a living presence, a silent companion through long

days of scrutiny and silence. Although life placed me in that difficult job situation, I chose each morning and moment to return to the Reiki Principles. I returned to gratitude, even when I felt empty. To kindness, despite being treated poorly. To presence, even when I wanted to disappear.

Reiki didn't rescue me from that bank. But it stayed with me inside it. And in the end, that was enough. Sometimes, healing isn't about escaping the storm. It's about remembering who you are quietly, gently, and fiercely, while standing right in the middle of it.

A few months later, I was offered a new position—not just any job, but one at a higher level. More responsibility. More trust. More space to lead, not just comply. My new employers didn't ask about that supervisor. They didn't need to. They saw something in me—calm under pressure, clarity amid chaos, qualities I hadn't fully possessed before, but had been carved into me, day by day. I didn't get promoted *despite* that experience. I was promoted *because* of it.

The cruelty, the pressure, the soul-testing silence—they didn't break me. They refined me. Like fire purifying gold, that job burned away my need for external validation and revealed a core of quiet, unshakable competence. I learned to trust my intuition, not as a mystical gift, but as a skill honed through surviving impossible expectations.

I learned to lead with compassion because I knew what it felt like to be led without it. I learned to set boundaries, not with anger, but with dignity.

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Today, when I place my hands in stillness, whether on my own heart or on the shoulders of someone in pain, I no longer whisper the Reiki Principles to survive. I whisper them to thrive. To honor the woman I was—trembling at her desk, containing the collapse, holding back tears—and to celebrate the woman I became, centered in her power, speaking clearer, leading with quiet light. ■

Just for today, I am grateful.



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