

STAN THOMPSON LOS OSOS

He's telling the story of his spiritual search

Charlie IronEyes searched a lifetime for spiritual meaning, only to discover, says the 83-year-old, that "We each have within us the answers to all our life questions. What is needed is a means of accessing that knowledge."

To that end, IronEyes became a Reiki master. Reiki practice, he explains, "is based on the idea that an unseen 'life force energy' flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. If one's life force energy is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress. If it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy."

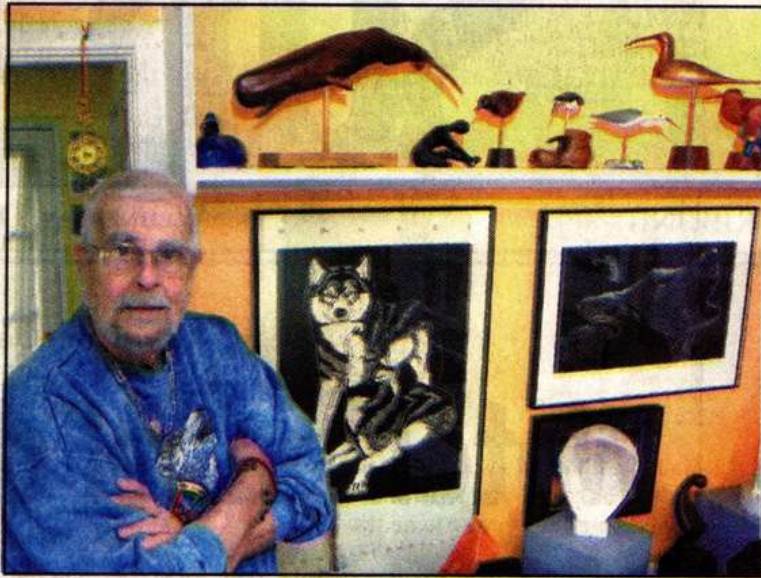
IronEyes has created a do-it-yourself kit — Reiki Vision Cards — which helps anyone use Reiki concepts for personal growth, self discovery and contemplation. The kit includes 45 "vision" cards that you select from, or deal to yourself — like in Tarot card reading — plus a 100-page hardbound guidebook to interpret the cards.

This method, according to IronEyes, "provides simple and direct ways to ask the questions, then you quietly listen to directions from within. Whether you act on those directions depends on your personal judgment.

"A therapist teacher once told me," IronEyes adds, "that we're all lost in the woods and don't know how to get out. Some of us know a little more than others. We'll walk with you while you find your way."

Born and raised in Los Angeles, IronEyes is one-half Cheyenne, on his father's side. The name, he says, "means 'stubborn.'" When he was 12, his father left him alone in an Idaho forest for three days "to find my vision," says IronEyes. "It was the wolf, my 'totem.'"

He graduated from Beverly Hills High School, where he'd learned photography. With the draft board breathing down his neck, he submitted his portfolio to the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences that was screening photographers for the Army. He was accepted at sergeant level, but failed the physical because of a bad eye.



Charlie IronEyes, who is one-half Cheyenne, relaxes in his Los Osos home with some of his wood carvings and stone sculptures. The wolf images reflect his 'totem,' bestowed on him during his childhood rite of passage.

SUN BULLETIN PHOTO BY STAN THOMPSON

When physical restrictions were loosened, IronEyes was reclassified and drafted, this time assigned to the Signal Corps that "provided eyes and ears for the Supreme Allied Headquarters." Attached to the 7th Army, he photographed throughout Europe, sending film in on a daily basis.

IronEyes was ordered to France for his deployment to the South Pacific. His orders arrived late. He missed the ship. Ever enterprising, he sought out the Army Picture Service in France, and stayed on there until the Army's Criminal Investigation Division drafted him and his cameras.

"There wasn't much to do at night," IronEyes recalls, "so I'd go out with the agents and play Dick Tracy." Because of his involvement in a big bust, he was promoted to agent status.

After his discharge in 1948, "I was totally unprepared for what to do," IronEyes says. "I kept photography as a hobby, and worked odd jobs for the next 20 years. My life wasn't turning out like I wanted." He began studying various spiritual approaches — even attended an institute of religious science — "to find my way," he recalls.

IronEyes was selling cars in Santa Barbara in the early '70s when he met and married Fé, a co-worker. When the business was sold, the couple decided to make a major life change and moved to Los Osos.

"In those days," IronEyes says, "Los Osos was only sand and little houses."

In the meantime, "I had gotten interested in wood carving and sculpture," says IronEyes. "Took classes. Bought books." Fé made Navajo weavings and wall tapestries. Combining their talents and crossing their fingers, they opened Ocean Toad Studios. "It wasn't totally making a living for us," IronEyes says. "We also delivered newspapers, and I remodeled houses and sold cars part time."

IronEyes discovered Reiki through a bulletin board poster and was so taken up that he became a Reiki master. He has since taught hundreds of students.

While he immersed himself in his passion of carving and sculpting, Fé went on to do massage therapy, home care and bookkeeping. "She keeps the boat afloat," he says.

Then came tragic news. Prostate cancer. Treatments have sapped IronEyes's stamina to the point that he's been forced to give up his carving and sculpting.

"I hung onto my tools for a long time," he says, "but have now given them away to friends. Along with my prize stone — an alabaster rock from Italy. And my unfinished carousel horse."

"I miss it," he says. "It's so freeing."

IronEyes instead turned his attention to producing and

marketing his Reiki Vision Card program. Through his 6-month-old Internet Web site, www.reikivisioncards.com, he has already marketed his program across the country and overseas.

IronEyes is also writing about his spiritual search.

"I have 40 shelf feet of self-help books," he says, "and I've discovered there is nothing to learn. You are what you try to be."

Charlie IronEyes will be signing his Reiki Vision Cards book at Coalesce Book Store and More on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 1 to 3 p.m.

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