

# THE RISE OF THE HIGH CLASS HEALER

'Mama Medicine'  
Deborah  
Hanekamp gets  
hands on with Ruby



New Age treatments like reiki and crystal healing have had an upmarket upgrade with high-achieving women turning to 'Now Age' practitioners during tough times. [Ruby Warrington](#) reports



When my friend Kirsty was leaving a well-paid marketing job to go freelance, it wasn't a coach or career expert who helped her through the transition – it was her hypnotherapist. Then there's Sam, my PR pal, who regularly says, 'I swear, reiki is the only thing keeping me sane!' Or Louise, who WhatsApp'd recently to ask if I knew a good psychic to help her make sense of a messy break-up.

Sound 'woo-woo' to you? These are high-achieving career women like us, for whom a new breed of high-class healers is becoming part of a fully rounded well-being repertoire. Having a session is as common as going to see your colourist, get a wax or unwinding with a mid-week yoga class.

For my part, as founder of 'cosmic' lifestyle platform The Numinous, I've made it my mission to investigate the practices and philosophies fuelling what I call the Now Age – think New Age but given a thoroughly modern upgrade. As well as charting the resurgence of astrology, yoga and meditation into the mainstream, this has also meant diving headfirst into the world of the high-class healers – shamans, energy workers and reiki masters, offering emotional and spiritual well-being to balance our hectic day-to-day lives.

Take my first 'medicine reading', with Deborah Hanekamp, aka Mama Medicine. With a reputation as NYC's premier 'seeress' (or prophetess), Deborah is one of the few Western women to have trained with the indigenous shamans of Peru, and her signature treatment can only be described as 'otherworldly'.

Beginning with a discussion about the issues I was facing, I then lay back on her massage table while she administered various therapies – reiki (a form of hands-on healing designed to disperse blocked energy in the body), sound healing, crystals and essential ▶

oils – while singing traditional 'icaros', which are Peruvian medicine songs.

Coming round afterwards felt like returning from a psychedelic trip to the farther reaches of my psyche (no substances required), armed with deep insights about the issues I was facing at the time: namely, a panic-inducing fear of public speaking. It's an experience I'll never forget. And if it sounds far out it's worth noting that Deborah was recently named 'fashion's favourite healer' after US *Vogue* included her medicine readings in its Christmas gift guide.

So why now? Through my research, I see these holistic therapies as the missing piece in the current wellness revolution. Meaning, you can do all the yoga and drink all the green juice you like, but the effects won't stick if you don't address what's below the surface.

The medical profession is paying heed. A 2017 study from Stanford University School of Medicine has proved that breathing techniques used in yoga and meditation can have a significant impact on stress levels, and be useful in reducing anxiety. Meanwhile, according to a University of California, Los Angeles study, more than 60 American hospitals have adopted reiki as part of patient services, with reiki education (how to treat yourself) offered at 800 hospitals.

Dr Anthony Lyon, medical director at upscale Manhattan clinic The Ash Center, where alternative therapies are offered alongside mainstream medical treatments, says, 'It's extremely exciting to finally be practising at a time where we can measure the outcomes when such centuries-old therapies are integrated into more mainstream medicine.'

Marika Messenger, a former financier turned 'success and happiness coach', explains how shamanic philosophy (which uses hypnosis, herbs and other natural remedies) balances the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual bodies because, 'Being in a state of emotional peace allows for mental clarity and focused action.'

As I'm based in New York, I saw London-based Marika for a Skype session, during which she talked me through a guided hypnosis to meet my 'spirit animal'. During the session, her words prompted me to 'look out' for different animals appearing in my mind's eye – the most vivid of which was a black stallion, symbolising an unshakable inner strength I needed reminding of at the time. Even from the other side of the Atlantic, I was covered in goosebumps and had tears streaming



**COMING ROUND AFTER FELT LIKE RETURNING FROM A PSYCHEDELIC TRIP TO THE FARTHEST REACHES OF MY PSYCHE**



Deborah, who has trained with Peruvian shamans, is New York's premier prophetess

down my face – always signals, for me, that whatever my healer is doing is working.

Cynics, I'm sure you're having a field day. But when I subsequently organised a live, face-to-face event with Marika in London and invited some of my more sceptical friends, every person in the room reported a similarly vivid experience.

Jody Shield is one of London's best known healers, and author of new book *Life Tonic*. She says her clients 'often spend all their time racing to the next thing – they crave clarity and feel they need to keep up with their male peers'. I've seen Jody twice, once in person and once over Skype. During our remote session in particular, it was a case of 'just trust', as Jody told me she was helping clear pain and trauma from my family lineage, using her own psychic powers to remove blocks from my energy field. And while the effects weren't instant, over time I've found Jody's work has been hugely healing for my relationship with my mother.

Meanwhile, Marika thinks our culture of instant gratification is fuelling the rise of high-class healers. 'For example, splurging on another pair of shoes might be taking you further from your overall well-being if you're using it to temporarily numb any emotional discomfort,' she says. Meaning, if you're bored in your career, a new handbag might make you happy for minute, but the feelings of frustration about your job are your soul trying to direct you towards a longer-lasting 'fix'.

Back in NYC, Deborah Hanekamp recently opened a new healing centre, Space by Mama Medicine, in the heart of SoHo – a chic studio filled with light and crystals, with large windows from her treatment room overlooking the Marc Jacobs HQ. All the better for servicing her city-slicker clientele.

'They work in fashion, PR, finance, the medical field. I'm hoping the politicians will be next,' she tells me, with a twinkle in her eye and a nod to the bigger picture of our collective well-being journey. Are you ready to see where a session with a high-class healer might lead you? ■

*'Material Girl, Mystical World'* by Ruby Warrington is out now (£12.99, Harper Thorsons)

**'REIKI REBUILT ME'**



says **Grazia's assistant editor – and former hippy dippy cynic – Emily Maddick...**

My journey into the 'Now Age' started with an introduction to the powers of crystals on a Goan beach. Acupuncture then saw me through a bad back, followed by reflexology for anxiety (the amazing Paolo Lai). Meditation came next, via the Headspace app. But reiki? That was a hippy dippy bullshit move too far. Until, that is, I met reiki master Susie Anthony in 2015. An excruciatingly painful hip had stopped me running for over a year. I'd had months of physio and spent a fortune on sports massage. Susie pinpointed the pain as starting around the time my father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She explained that women hold emotion – especially trauma – in their hips, and the pain was directly linked to his death. She shifted it in 90 minutes. I was flabbergasted. I have been seeing Susie once a month ever since for general maintenance and always feel rebuilt and refocused afterwards. **Susie Anthony: [psalifemastery.com](http://psalifemastery.com)**

**HEALERS FOR HIRE**

- Acupuncture:** Liv Inge; [livinge.co.uk](http://livinge.co.uk)
- Energy DNA healing:** Lidia Frederico; [lidiafrederico.com](http://lidiafrederico.com)
- Crystal healing:** Monica Chouhan; [crystalforest.co.uk](http://crystalforest.co.uk)
- Sound bathing:** Jasmine Hemsley & Toni Dicks; [soundsebastien.com](http://soundsebastien.com)

Hair and make-up: Robert Huitron at Mark Edward. With thanks to Space by Mama Medicine. Deborah Hanekamp: [mamamedicine.nyc](http://mamamedicine.nyc). Jody Shield: [jodyshield.co.uk](http://jodyshield.co.uk). Marika Messenger: [marikamessenger.com](http://marikamessenger.com)