

# Journey of self-discovery leads dentist to innovative patient care

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Although his name may sound painful, dentist Paul M. Hertz has a unique way of alleviating his patient's stress, not typically found in those trained in Western medicine.

Dr. Hertz, who inherited his father's practice and has been practicing dentistry in Riverdale for 27 years, is also a Reiki practitioner and hypnotherapist. Raised in Ardsley, he has lived in Riverdale for the past six years. He began taking classes in hypnotherapy during his free while studying at University of Pennsylvania, and recognized the positive effects of the therapy almost immediately.

"It allowed me to retain so much, work so much less, and worry so much less," Dr. Hertz said. "It just frees your mind of those anxieties and apprehensions we create."

Hertz became fascinated with Reiki years later, while vacationing in Costa Rica. An experienced wind surfer, Dr. Hertz ventured to Lake Arenal,

a freshwater reservoir. He was caught off guard by 40-plus knot gusts of wind and thrown off his surfboard soon after getting into the open water.

Caught in the middle of the lake and struggling to stay above the waves, Dr. Hertz said he was saved by a French Canadian who managed to drag him back to shore in what he called "the most amazing feat of wind-surfing I'd ever seen."

The experience left him downcast, but the owner of his hotel noticed his negativity and offered him the help of Reiki specialist. Reiki is a Japanese form of alternative medicine, which relies on harnessing positive energy to improve various aspects of the patient's mind and body.

"The change in me was so unbelievably dramatic that I felt that I had to do it again, and I did it everyday," he said. The Reiki sessions helped Dr. Hertz overcome the dread he felt going back to the lake day after day.

After he recognized the potential benefits of Reiki therapy, Dr. Hertz began studying Reiki so he could use the methods on

himself.

"Directing positive energy is very valuable," he said. "I know it works for me, therefore it has become a part of my life. I won't go a day without using it."

"I feel that this helps me reduce fear and anxiety," he said, adding that he sometimes uses his techniques to reduce anxiety for his patients as well.

He says hypnotherapy, in conjunction with Reiki treatments, has invigorated his mind and increased his daily functionality. He combines alternative medicine with Western medicine for maximum effect.

Dr. Hertz is dedicated to his profession and has pioneered a number of new techniques in cosmetic dentistry, but still finds time for other pursuits. He's an accomplished artist whose paintings line the walls of his offices at 6011 Riverdale Avenue.

And he joined the Briarcliff Manor fire department in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. "I realized how important it was for the community to be involved and to be active," he recalled.