

UNDER  
STANDING

The Healing Qualities of the Chakras



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## Introduction

Have you ever wondered if the universe was trying to tell you something? The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the word understand as to comprehend or to fully grasp the meaning of. I have a different meaning. It is to simply “STAND UNDER”. Sometimes the universe makes us stand under something until we comprehend it or grasp it fully. It will not allow us to move forward with our lives until we do. The universe does not speak our language so the universe must find other ways to communicate with us, one of which is the topic of my thesis. When we become ill in our bodies it is often, if not all the time, the universe communicating to us. We need to learn to listen to our bodies and be willing to make the necessary changes to heal. As Pema Chodron, a notable figure in Tibetan Buddhism said, “Nothing ever goes away until it teaches us what we need to know.”

My interest in the Chakras began half way through my teacher training with a hip injury. After months of doctor visits, hip specialist, chiropractors, acupuncture, yoga privates, physical and massage therapy I was not getting any better. My yoga instructor began asking me questions about what was going on in my personal life. I did not completely “understand” why she was inquiring about this at the time. She went on to explain that oftentimes we are susceptible to injuries in the area of the body which correlate to a deficient chakra. This sparked an immediate interest with me and has become a passion of mine. I also discovered that my mind began to grow and develop though my teacher training and my body was fighting to remain the same. It did not want to change. As Rod Stryker said in his book *The Four Desires* “the tendency to avoid is stronger than the tendency to approach. In other words, often we behave in ways that are counterproductive in order to avoid the effort- the immediate pain- involved in change, even though in doing so we are aware that we are causing ourselves long-term pain.” In order to continue my growth in my yoga practice I needed to face what was holding me

back in my life, and in particular what was blocking my second chakra. The chakra that correlates to the hips, abdomen, genitals and low back. In order to accomplish my goal it was important that I first have a clear understanding of what chakras are.

### What is a Chakra

The word chakra is from the Sanskrit language and translates as wheel or disk. These energy centers of life force were developed into a science thousands of years ago in India. Our bodies are made up of vibrating matter. Every thought, emotion and belief transmits a measurable vibrational frequency. Each chakra receives, assimilates and expresses a certain aspect of life force energy, or prana. Chakras are the centers for this vibrating energy. The centers spin like a wheel. We want to bring our chakra energy into a state of balance so that prana flows unobstructed from the root of the spine to the crown of the head. Balancing our chakra energy aids us in our quest toward Self-realization, as where there is a free flow of energy there is opportunity for healing, growth and transcendence. There are seven major chakras that run vertically from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Each chakra vibrates at a different speed. The root or first chakra rotates at the slowest speed, the crown or seventh chakra at the highest. Each Chakra is stimulated by its own color. The chakra colors are of the rainbow; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The size and brightness of the wheels vary with individual development, physical condition, energy levels, disease or stress. They correspond to major areas of our lives, from bottom to top survival, sex, power, love, communication, imagination and spirituality. If one of the chakras is blocked it can lead to illness within the body corresponding to that particular chakra. If we are able to identify where we are losing energy and act to correct it the likelihood of illness is reduced if not completely eliminated.

## What Blocks a Chakra

Chakra blockages occur when energy is not flowing freely through all seven chakras. Childhood traumas, cultural, conditioning, limited belief system, bad habits, physical and emotional injuries, or even just lack of attention all contribute to chakra blockage. As difficulties, at any age confront us we develop coping strategies. If these difficulties persist, the coping strategies become habitual and form a defense system. Eventually these defenses restrict the flow of energy causing a blockage. Like a rock in a streambed that collects sticks and leaves, a block of any significant degree gains severity over time. What begins as a small fear grows into a full-blown phobia. When the chakras are blocked the basic life force is slowed down. You may feel listless, tired, out of sorts, or depressed. Not only will physical bodily functions be affected so illness may manifest, but the thought processes and the mind may also be affected. A negative attitude, fear and doubt may preoccupy you.

Chakras can be energetically deficient as well as excessive. When a chakra is deficient it has very little energy running through it and when it is excessive it has too much energy. The way that we deal with stress, negative experiences or trauma can lead to deficient or excessive chakras. For example, if we do not vocalize ourselves enough we can become deficient in our fifth or throat chakra and if we talk and express ourselves too much we become excessive in the fifth chakra. In most cases an excessive chakra is due to a blockage in the chakra above or below the affected chakra. Understand that if you are opening your chakras, there is no need to try to make over active chakras less active. They are simply compensating for the inactivity of closed chakras. Once all of the chakras are open, the energy evens out, and becomes balanced. A constant balance between chakras promotes health and a sense of well-being. To understand this better we need to look at each chakra individually.

## Chakra One



First is the Earth Chakra, located at the base of the spine. It deals with survival and is blocked by fear. Let your greatest fears become clear to you. You may be concerned for your survival but you must let those fears go. If your root chakra is blocked, you have the feeling of being not at all grounded, and are therefore possibly very worrisome, anxious and high strung. Your physical and emotional constitution may be very weak and you may literally feel not of this world, as if you don't belong here as if you are totally separate from everyone and everything else.

Sanskrit name: Muladhara

Meaning: Root

Location: Base of spine, coccygeal plexus, legs, feet and large intestine

Element: Earth

Main Issue: Survival

Right: To have

Developmental Stage: Second trimester to nine months

Color: Red

Stones: Garnet, hematite, bloodstone and lodestone

Foods: Protein and meats

Sound: Lam

Goals: Stability, grounding, prosperity, right livelihood and physical health

Physical Imbalances: Obesity, hemorrhoids, constipation, sciatica, eating disorders, knee troubles, bone disorders. Frequent illness in general, frequent fears, inability to focus, spaciness, inability to be still.

Psychological Imbalances: Identity crisis, accident prone, weak ego structure and dependent personality.

Movement: Running, walking, squatting, floor exercises and dancing.

Chakra opening: Belly breathe, walk (especially barefoot in nature), dance, ground, mindfully eat healthy food, especially root vegetables, garden, create healthy order or structure in your life or home, such as creating a filing system or putting up shelves in the garage, wear a pleasing color of red, surround yourself with pleasing smells, especially cedar and clove.

Recommended Yoga Poses: Focus on the feet to help grounding. Roll a tennis ball underneath the feet, Sukhasana with your fingers laced between your toes and Broken Toe Pose. Calf openers and hamstring stretches such as Virasana with a doll rod to roll out the calf muscles, Supta Padangusthanasana, Janu Sirsasana, Adho Mukha Svanasana and Uttanasana. Standing poses to root attention downward and trust the earth like Virabhadrasana 1, 2 and Trikonasana. Restorative poses to settle an overactive mind and to surrender to gravity. Supta Baddha Konasana, Salamba Balasana and Salamba Savasana.

Affirmations: It is safe for me to be here. The Earth supports me and meets my needs. I'm here and I'm real.

## Chakra Two



Next is the Water Chakra, located in the abdomen. It deals with pleasure, and is blocked by guilt. Look at the guilt from your past that burdens you. Let them go, or they will poison your energy. Meditate and realize that these things happened for a purpose. If you feel yourself to be cold emotionally and sexually your second chakra is blocked and your whole body may seem or feel frigid. Tensions in this chakra manifest as inner conflict, sexual problems, instability, and sense of isolation. The sacral chakra governs your sex and urinary organs, kidneys and the circulation.

Sanskrit Name: Svadhisthana

Meaning: Sweetness

Location: Abdomen, genitals, low back and hips

Element: Water

Main Issue: Sexuality and emotions

Right: To feel

Developmental Stage: Six to twenty-four months

Color: Orange

Stones: Coral and carnelian

Foods: Liquids

Sound: Vam

Goals: Fluidity, pleasure and relaxation

Physical Imbalances: Urinary problems, kidney weakness, menstrual difficulties, reproductive organ disorders, sexual dysfunctions and constipation.

Psychological Imbalances: Hysteria, depression, chameleon personality, unable to be sexually intimate, repression and inhibition.

Movement: Swimming, water aerobics, or a steam sauna. Drink more water or take an Epsom salt bath.

Chakra Opening: Spend time in moonlight and near open water; affirming erotic play; dancing; walking in nature; surround yourself with beauty, especially things that are beautiful to the touch; enjoy flowers, especially roses, iris, and other beautiful-smelling blooms; use perfumes with musk and sandalwood; swim (especially in the moonlight); play; wear sensual fabrics next to the skin; free up your schedule to make more time for spontaneity; eat fruit, chocolate or other sweet foods (in moderation); wear a pleasing shade of orange.

Recommended Yoga Poses: Hip and groin openers to provide freedom of movement in the pelvis. #4 pose, Bharadvajasana, Gomukhasana, Baddha Konasana, Upavista Konasana, Anjaneyasana, Malasana, Garudasana, Trikonasana, Parivrtta Trikonasana, Navasana, Bhekasana, Eka Pada Rajakapotasana and Happy Baby.

Affirmations: I deserve pleasure in my life. I embrace and celebrate my sexuality. Life is pleasurable.



## Chakra Three



Next is the Fire Chakra, located at the stomach. It deals with willpower, and is blocked by shame. Recognize the biggest disappointments in yourself, and what you are ashamed of. Accept that these things happened. This chakra is linked to the muscles, to fatigue, stomach ulcers, allergies and diabetes. If the solar Plexus chakra is blocked, then you likely feel easily depressed and rejected and possibly wanting to blame others for your insecurity's. You are an emotional chameleon, always willing to change to suit the needs and wants of others to be more accepted as you need reassurance and to be in the good opinion of others. This only hurts you more as your own sense of self-worth fails to manifest as a result.

Sanskrit Name: Manipura

Meaning: Lustrous gem

Location: Solar plexus.

Element: Fire

Main Issue: Power and energy

Right: To act

Developmental Stage: Eighteen months to three years

Color: Yellow

Stones: Topaz and amber

Foods: Carbohydrates

Sound: Ram

Goals: Vitality, strength of will, purpose

Physical Imbalances: Ulcers, digestive troubles, diabetes, indigestion, gallstones, liver problems and stomach problems.

Psychological Imbalances: Sleep problems, obsessive behavior, compulsive behavior, addictive personality, excessive anger or fear, catatonic schizophrenia, manic-depressive behavior.

Movement: Enliven your solar plexus and reduce your stress with the balance of harmonizing exercises such as yoga, tai chi, qi gong.

Chakra Opening: Belly breathe; spend time in the sunlight; do vigorous sports or activity; clean out a closet or do another task that you've been putting off; do something that you've been procrastinating on; make a point of dressing and grooming yourself well; work on cleaning or decorating the outside of your house; hold your head high; smile, no matter how you're feeling; set an intention, take a small step to set it in motion, and then allow yourself to rest for a day; assert yourself on a small matter; smell rosemary or lavender; wear a pleasing shade of yellow.

Recommended Yoga Poses: Focus on strength of the core and twisting to massage the abdominal organs and to flush out toxins. Bhastrika Pranayama (Breath of Fire), Maricyasana 3, Ardha Matsyendrasana, Surya Namaskar A, Virabhadrasana 3, Parivrtta Trikonasana, Navasana, Ardha Navasana, Urdhva Prasarita Padasana, Jathara Parivartanasana.

Affirmations: I honor the power within me. I accomplish tasks easily and effortlessly. The fire within me burns through all blocks and fears.

## Chakra Four



Now is the Air Chakra, located at the heart. It deals with love, and is blocked by grief. Lay all of your grief out in front of you. If you have lost someone close, you must realize love is a form of energy, and it swirls all around us. The love is still in your heart, and can be reborn in the shape of new love. Blockages can manifest as immune system or heart problems, or a lack of compassion. Characteristics of a blocked heart chakra include fear of rejection, feeling unworthy of love or loving too much. If there is blockage in the heart chakra, you may feel unworthy of love and skeptical of anyone who wants to love you (and paranoid that you will wind up hurt, yet again), or your love relationships may be completely co-dependent.

Sanskrit Name: Anahata

Meaning: Unstruck

Location: Heart

Element: Air

Main Issue: Love

Right: To love

Developmental Stage: Three to six years

Color: Green

Stones: Emerald and rose quartz.

Foods: Vegetables

Sound: Yam

Goals: Balance, compassion and acceptance

Physical Imbalances: Asthma, lung and heart problems, respiratory and circulatory problems, loneliness and codependence.

Psychological Imbalances: Suicide, at war with yourself, feelings of alienation, self-destructive tendencies, inability to bond with another.

Movement: Circulate the love in the heart chakra territory by supercharging with some aerobic exercise.

Chakra Opening: Be out in nature; spend time with small children and domestic animal companions; make a donation; volunteer at a food bank, homeless shelter, pet shelter, etc.; give and accept hugs; scents of rose, jasmine, fresh grass; forgive someone; express gratitude; perform a "random act of kindness"; give someone a compliment; work for peace; eat a bountiful, fresh salad; see an old, dear friend; sing a song that always makes you feel good; wear a pleasing shade of green.

Recommended Yoga Poses: Chest openers and backbends to open the heart and develop trust and surrender. It's refreshing to let the mind drop away from the top position and instead lead with the heart. Nadi Sodhana Pranayama, Salamba Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, Gomukhasana, Garudasana, Salabhasana, Urdhva Mukha Svanasana, Purvottanasana, Ustrasana, Dhanurasana, Urdhva Dhanurasana.

Affirmations: I am worthy of love. I am loving to myself and others. There is an infinite supply of love.

## Chakra Five



Next is the Sound Chakra, located at the throat. It deals with truth, and is blocked by lies. The lies we tell ourselves. You must not lie about your own nature. Accept who you are. In the physical sense this chakra is associated with the shoulders, arms, hands, with the ears, nose, teeth, mouth and neck. A blocked chakra inclines you to be inconsistent, to lack self-expression and appear unreliable. If there is an imbalance in the throat chakra, there may be an imbalance in your voice itself which may sound scratchy, dry or forced. You may also be considered somewhat “wishy-washy” depending upon who is speaking to you at the moment.

Sanskrit Name: Vishuddha

Meaning: Purification

Location: Throat

Element: Sound

Main Issue: Communication

Right: To speak

Developmental Stage: Six to ten years

Color: Blue

Stones: Turquoise

Foods: Fruit

Sound: Ham

Goals: Clear communication, creativity and resonance

Physical Imbalances: Sore throats, stiff neck, poor communication, teeth and mouth problems, speech problems and thyroid problems.

Psychological Imbalances: Stuttering, poor auditory memory, inability to express self in word.

Movement: Let your throat chakra voice itself through the clarity of sound: chanting, humming, or singing in the shower or car can help you find your authentic self.

Chakra Opening: Speak up about something you've been silent about; take voice lessons; listen to someone with your whole heart for five minutes; then switch and have them listen to you; speak your truth; create something and display it; drink tea; share a favorite poem with someone; stand under a blue sky; scents of sage and frankincense; wear a pleasing shade of light blue.

Recommended Yoga Poses: Open up and rebalance the throat. Simhasana 1 (facial exercise known as "The Lion"), neck and shoulder rolls, Ustrasana, Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, Salamba Sarvangasana , Halasana and Viparita Karani.

Affirmations: I hear and speak the truth. Creativity flows in and through me. My voice is necessary.

## Chakra Six



Now the Light Chakra, located at the forehead. It deals with insight, and is blocked by illusions. The biggest illusion of all is the illusion of separation. Things we think are separate are actually one and the same. Like the nations of the world: we are all one people, but we live as if divided. When this sixth chakra experiences a blockage, one may suffer from frequent nightmares and headaches, poor eyesight, lack of concentration and sometimes even migraines. If the 6th chakra is not balanced, you have the potential to be a cold intellectual who trusts only reason and logic and is manipulative when it comes to getting what you want. When this chakra is blocked, you are undisciplined, an underachiever with a possible predisposition to schizophrenic breakdown.

Sanskrit Name: Ajna

Meaning: To perceive

Location: Brow

Element: Light

Main Issue: Intuition

Right: To see

Developmental Stage: Seven to twelve years

Color: Indigo Blue

Stones: Lapis lazuli

Foods: Feasts for the eyes

Sound: Om

Goals: Psychic perception and imagination

Physical Imbalances: Headaches, nightmares, hallucinations, poor vision, brain tumors, sinus problems and ear problems.

Psychological Imbalances: Paranoia, schizophrenia, inability to focus, extreme confusion, psychotic behavior and poor visual memory.

Movement: Toss away the clutter of thoughts from your third eye chakra through meditation, sitting in silence, or reciting an invigorating or calming mantra to replace the “monkey-mind”.

Chakra Opening: Allow yourself to let your intellect rest and follow to an intuition; be aware of "sixth sense" experiences; keep a dream notebook; stand under a starry night sky; rub your temples; look at something from a different point of view or from a whole different way; have or do a tarot reading (or other form of divination) for yourself; deeply relax your eyes; take some time to really see the world around you; scents of vanilla, jasmine; wear a pleasing shade of deep, dark blue.

Recommended Yoga Poses: Wear a head wrap partially over the eyes during a class to stimulate Pratyahara. Supported forward folds such as Paschimottanasana, Baddha Konasana or Balasana with a bolster to stimulate the third eye area. Meditation including images and visualizations. Yoga Nidra.

Affirmations: I see all things in clarity. I am open to the wisdom within. I can manifest my vision.



## Chakra Seven



Last is the Consciousness Chakra, located at the crown of the head. It deals with pure cosmic energy, and is blocked by earthly attachments. Meditate on what attaches you to this world. Let your emotions flow and be forgotten. You must unlock this chakra to gain your energy from the universe. The characteristics of a blocked chakra include indecisiveness, a sense of not belonging, fatigue. If this chakra is fully blocked, then you are cut off from life and live in great fear. People who have this chakra completely blocked have rejected any notion of spirituality and fail to find any meaning in life beyond the physical although their higher self may consciously or unconsciously keep nagging them to do so. Challenges when crown chakra is not open or in balance are loneliness and meaninglessness.

Sanskrit Name: Sahasrara

Location: Top of head

Element: None

Main Issue: Understanding

Right: To know

Developmental Stage: Twelve and up

Color: Violet

Stones: Amethyst

Foods: None, fasting

Sound: Om

Goals: Wisdom, knowledge and spiritual connection

Physical Imbalances: Confusion, apathy, overly intellectual, coma, migraines, brain tumors, amnesia and cognitive delusions.

Psychological Imbalances: Nightmares, split personality, memory disorders, excessive gullibility and multiple personalities.

Movement: Connect to the whole of life by praying, setting intentions, and giving gratitude in every moment.

Chakra Opening: Spend an extended time in stillness and silence; receive or give energy work; massage your head and scalp; find things to be grateful for; surrender a problem to your higher power; do anything that makes you feel peaceful and harmonious; create an altar; listen for guidance out of prayer and stillness; accept things that you just "know," without intellectual proof; visit mountain tops or other places that offer high, clear vistas; scents of rose and lotus; wear a pleasing shade of purple.

Recommended Yoga Poses: Meditation, Meditation and Meditation!!! Just as our body needs a shower frequently, the busy mind filled with so many thoughts and concerns also needs a cleansing.

Affirmations: Divinity resides within. I am open to new ideas. I am guided by higher power. I am guided by inner wisdom.

## **Conclusion**

Now that we have gone into each chakra in depth, we have a deeper level of understanding from which we can examine the system as a whole. It is here that we tackle the final and most important aspect of chakra work: integration. None of the chakras function by themselves. An imbalance in any particular chakra will affect other chakras. Our power chakra is affected by the strength of our grounding. Our ability to open sexually may be influenced by our ability to communicate. Excessive attachment to power and control may interfere with love and relationships. All of the chakras need to be open and functioning in balance with the others to be a fully thriving human being. We do not believe that any chakra is necessarily more important than another, or that we have to repress one chakra in order to open a different one. It may be important for an individual to focus on a particular chakra if that chakra has been underdeveloped in their life, but this is only for the purpose of overall balance in the system.

There are numerous books, websites and even professional healers that we can turn to for testing for imbalances in our chakra system. I have listed a few of my favorites in my bibliography. Please keep in mind that healing and curing are not the same thing. A cure is when we have controlled an illness. Curing a physical illness does not mean that the cause of the illness has been addressed. If we cure an illness without finding the cause it is highly probable that that illness will return. That is why it is important that we address the energy flow of our chakra system. In order to heal from within, it is essential to change negative attitudes and patterns, to those that are positive and produce well-being. Health comes with learning to say "yes" to all of our experience. Wellness emerges out of the balance

and harmony of all parts of ourselves. When we are well, we feel accepting and in harmony with ourselves and the entire world. This state of being brings refreshment and healing day by day.

I have adopted seven beliefs in my life to help with my healing. First, all circumstances can be changed in a moment, and all illness can be healed. The Divine is not limited by human time, space, or physical concerns. Second, be consistent: live what you believe. Third, change is constant. Every life goes through phases of difficult change as well as peace. Learn to go with the flow of change rather than try to stop change from occurring. Fourth, never look to another person to make you happy- happiness is an internal, personal attitude and responsibility. Fifth, life is essentially a learning experience. Every situation, challenge, and relationship contains some message worth learning or teaching to others. Sixth, positive energy works more effectively than negative energy in each and every situation. Seventh, live in the present moment, and practice forgiveness of others.

With the knowledge that I have acquired thus far on my journey I am now “UNDERSTANDING” the healing qualities of the chakras instead of just standing under them. It is human tendency to gravitate toward that which we do well and to avoid that which is difficult. It has been a very difficult time for me but I am happy to say that I am truly healing for the first time.



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## Resources for Chakra Testing

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