

The Chakras

Each of the chakras has "**basic rights**," "**identities**," and "**demons**" associated with it.

Basic rights are defined as the basic inalienable right associated with each chakra. Loss of these rights blocks the chakra. Reclaiming these rights is a necessary part of healing the chakra.

Identities: If our rights remain intact, or if we have managed to reclaim them, then we have a good chance at embracing our seven basic chakra identities, each of which builds upon the one below in an ever expanding pattern of larger systems.

The identities can be seen as metaphoric layers of clothing, as ways to cover the essential soul underneath. It is not a problem to have clothing—we need different outfits for different occasions. It is a problem if we think the clothing is who we actually are, and never remove it.

When we are so immersed in these identities that we confuse them with the underlying Self, then we have gotten stuck at a particular level. We have confused the clothing for the body itself—unwilling to remove it, scared to expose the nakedness underneath. If, on the other hand, we cannot identify at all with a level, then we know we have some work to do there.

The chakra identities can be positive or negative, liberating or imprisoning. They are simultaneously real and false. They are real in that they are real parts, yet they are false because they are not the whole.

Demons: Each of the Chakras has what I have come to call a specific demon that interferes with its health and undermines its identity. I use the word *demon* not to denote some kind of evil creature, but as a way of naming the counterforce that seemingly opposes the natural activity of the chakra. The reason I say seemingly is that the demons arise to teach us something. A counterforce usually results in strengthening whatever it opposes. The presence of the demon keeps the chakra from doing its job, but that challenge also forces us to bring more awareness to that job, so eventually we can do it better.

When unacknowledged, the demons keep us from moving forward. They fixate our energy at a particular chakra level, short circuiting our activities and expression, blocking resolution. If we acknowledge the demon and explore its reason for being there, we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves. To acknowledge that we have fear, for example, enables us to face that fear and understand its origins, eventually making us more confident. To acknowledge grief enables healing, and allows the heart to lighten.

First Chakra

"If you're an alive body, no one can tell you how to experience the world. And no one can tell you what truth is, because you experience it for yourself. The body does not lie." Stanley Keleman

Name:	Muladhara/Root
Element:	Earth
Purpose:	Foundation
Issues:	Roots, Grounding, Nourishment, Trust, Health, Home, Family, Prosperity, Appropriate Boundaries
Color:	Red
Location:	Base of Spine, Coccygeal Plexus
Orientation:	Self Preservation
Archetype:	Earth Mother
Basic Right:	To Be Here and Have

To find solidity in the first chakra, we must have an instinctual sense of our right to be here. Without the right to be here, few other rights can be reclaimed. Do we have the right to take up space? Do we have the right to establish individuality? Do we have the right to take care of ourselves?

The right to be here is our right to exist--the right that is the foundation of our survival and security.

Affirmations:

- "It is safe for me to be here."
- "The earth supports me and meets my needs."
- "I love my body and trust its wisdom."
- "I am immersed in abundance."
- "I'm here and I'm real."

Identity: Our first identity level is known as the *physical identity*, and its job is *self-preservation*. Here we learn to identify with the body--when my body is hungry, I am hungry, when it hurts, I hurt. The body cloaks the invisible soul, and reveals its shape and expression. When we identify with the body, we identify with the soul's expression in physical form, as well as its physical qualities of male, female, young, old, fat, thin, healthy, or sick.

Physical identification is necessary for dealing with the physical world. If I do not realize that I cannot lift one hundred pounds of paper in a carton, I can seriously hurt my back. If I do not recognize when I am hungry or need to rest, I can seriously compromise my health over time. To go without this identity is to be dissociated from the body and disconnected from the physical world.

Demon: Fear

When survival is threatened, we feel afraid. Fear heightens our awareness and floods the body with natural chemicals (such as adrenalin) to energize it for action. Fear brings our attention into the here and now to address the threat, but focuses the attention outward and upward to the chakras of perception and mental activity. We become hypervigilant, restless, anxious. We cannot settle, relax, or let down. It is as if we are jumping right out of our skins.

Although fear is the demon of the first chakra, it is also a sacred adversary, a presence that has much to teach us. Fear exists as an ally of self-preservation, teaching us of our own importance and the need to take care of ourselves. Only when we acknowledge this demon as an ally can it be truly mastered.

Ernest Holmes, who founded the Science of Mind philosophy, describes both qualities of fear and faith as having similar qualities. Fear is a belief that something awful might happen, while faith is a belief that something good will happen. Although the results are different, the causes are the same--both are beliefs that govern our behavior and influence the way we feel. If we can replace unreasonable fear with reasonable faith, then we have a natural antidote to our first chakra demon.

Reclaiming the Temple of the Body

The Foundation of the Temple

All foundations rest upon the earth--the universal ground for all that we do. Our bodies are the earth of our spirit, the foundation, the home. To connect with the body is to connect with the earth, to be grounded in the biological reality of existence.

Situated at the base of the spine, the first chakra is the foundation for the entire chakra system. It is here we build the foundation for the entire chakra system. It is here we build the foundation for the temple of the body--the anchor for the Rainbow Bridge. Without a strong, rooted foundation, little else can be accomplished. We must have soil firm enough to provide stability, yet yielding enough to be penetrated by roots. The anchoring of this temple digs deep into the earth, for its Sanskrit name, *muladhara*, means root.

The foundation contains the temple's energy by defining its scope, edges, and boundaries. It defines a place, as a basic context of all that happens to us. It gives us a ground, a home, an anchor point for our experience. The foundation largely determines the shape of the structure above, determining what it can hold, how high it can build, what kind of stresses it can withstand. Thus damage to this chakra is reflected in each and every chakra above.

To build a strong foundation is to gain solidity. Solidity allows us to be firm and make boundaries. Solidity has consistency, repetition, accountability. Our bodies are the solid form of our existence; they have definable boundaries. To be solid is to face what is in front of us without flinching, to remain anchored in truth in the face of opposition, and to remain calm and secure.

Second Chakra

“Lose your mind and come to your senses.” Fritz Perls

Name:	Svadhithana (sweetness)
Element:	Water
Purposes:	Movement and Connection
Issues:	Movement, Sensation, Emotions, Sexuality, Desire, Need, Pleasure
Color:	Orange
Location:	Lower abdomen, sacral plexus
Orientation:	Self-gratification
Archetype:	Lover
Basic Rights:	To Feel and Have Pleasure

A culture that frowns upon emotional expression or considers sensitivity a weakness infringes upon our basic right to feel. “You have no right to be angry.” “How can you express your emotions like that You should be ashamed of yourself!” “Boys don’t cry.” These kinds of injunctions infringe upon our right to feel. Feeling is the way we obtain important information about our well-being. When the right to feel is impaired, we become out of touch with ourselves, numb, and disconnected. A corollary of this right is *the right to want*, since if we cannot feel, it is very difficult to know what we want. Our right to enjoy healthy sexuality is intimately connected with our right to feel.

Affirmations: “I deserve pleasure in my life.”
“I absorb information from my feelings.”
“I embrace and celebrate my sexuality.”
“My sexuality is sacred.”
“I move easily and effortlessly.”
“Live is pleasurable.”

Identity: Beneath the surface of the body churn the emotions. The emotions are the clothing of our feelings. When we experience a strong emotion, we feel our aliveness and often identify with the feeling involved. Even our language makes this identification: *I am angry, I am scared.* (Other languages say, *I have fear or anger.*) This is the identity that says, *I feel therefore I am*, and whatever I feel is what I am. Some people identify their main sense of self in this way.

The second chakra, then, is our *emotional identity*, and its job is *self-gratification*. Emotion emerges from the physical identity and yet brings in an added dimension. We have to feel our bodies in order to feel our emotions and learn to interpret their messages. Emotional identity expands the experience of the body and gives it dimension and texture, connecting us to the flow of the world.

Demon: Guilt

Guilt curtails the free flow of movement, largely by taking the pleasure out of it. If I feel guilty about what I am doing, I do not fully enjoy it. I cannot fully sense the experience as one part of me is frozen off, restricting or trying to control what I am doing.

Guilt polarizes the personality. It divides light against dark, good against bad. We are wonderful one day and horrible the next, all because of something we did. The brighter the light, the darker the shadow. The greater the guilt, the more we try to emancipate ourselves by flawless behavior. Flawless behavior inhibits the natural flow of energy moving up from the lower chakras and tends to polarize mind and body. A polarized personality is characterized by either-or thinking. Without the multiplicity of the rainbow, we find ourselves locked in black-and-white choices.

There is, of course, a healthy place for guilt: as a feeling that allows us to examine our behavior before, during, or after our actions. When it's not distorted, guilt tells us where the boundaries are and where we need to make change. In its appropriate place as feedback, guilt is not a demon but a guide. It is only when guilt becomes excessive, habitual, internalized, and toxic that it dominates the free flow of movement and the full sensate experience of life that is so necessary to the second chakra. Guilt is a teacher when it guides us, but a demon when it binds us.

Swimming in the Waters of Difference

Diving in the Waters

As we enter the second chakra, we encounter the watery realm of emotions and sexuality. Where we have worked for grounding and stability in the first chakra, we now cultivate feelings and movement; where we have been concerned with survival and structure, we now focus on sexuality and pleasure. Our associated element has shifted from earth to water, from solid to liquid. In this transmutation we encounter change. Through consistency, consciousness finds meaning; through change it finds stimulation and expansion.

If we think of the body as a vessel for the soul and spirit, then the element of earth in chakra one provides support and containment for the fluid essence of chakra two, much like a cup holds water. Without appropriate containment, water flows out and the cup runs dry. With excessive containment, however, water cannot flow at all and becomes stagnant and dull. Ideally, we want to have a cup that is capable of filling, holding, and emptying. The task of the first chakra was to build this container. Now we look to its contents.

To find consistency within change is to embrace the unfolding flow. Where we developed grounding, stability, focus, and stillness in the first chakra, now our second chakra challenge is just the opposite; to let go, flow, move, feel, and yield. Only by moving does our consciousness expand, and only through change is our consciousness stimulated. Movement and change stimulate awakening.

Movement overcomes the inertia of chakra one. Through movement, we extend our field of perception, increasing our sensory input. By moving the body, we build muscle tissue, increase circulation, stimulate nerve endings, and generally enhance our flexibility and aliveness. The flow of pleasure and excitation through the nervous system bathes the organism in sensation and awareness and awakens the consciousness within. Movement becomes its own pleasure.

By paying attention to the way we move, we can uncover previously buried issues and feelings. In the first chakra, the structural forms of the body gave us clues to unconscious process. In the second chakra we observe the way these forms move and make contact.

The senses are the essential link between the inner and outer worlds. Only through the senses do we transcend isolation and make connection to a larger sphere. Sensate experience is simultaneously physical, emotional, and spiritual. The senses are the gateway between the internal and external world. Sight, sound, touch, taste, and hearing give us a constantly changing inner matrix of the world around us, through which we form our basic belief systems, coping strategies, and thought processes. The senses are the data input of our overall system. They orient us in the world, allow us to connect, give meaning to our experience. Through our senses, we differentiate between pleasure and pain, we expand or contract, move forward or backward, react or enact.

When there is pain or emptiness, our senses shut down. When this happens, we restrict information entering our consciousness, and cut ourselves off from the world around us. Senses are the only means we have of experiencing connection.

The complex combination of sensation and feeling gives us the emotional texture of experience. Senses, as the language of feeling, form the basis of our values. How we perceive something and how we feel about it are the ways that we determine value. Without a sensual connection to what is around us, we lose our sense of values and distinctions.

Third Chakra

“No human being can stand the perpetually numbing experience of his own powerlessness.” Rollo May

Name:	Manipura (lustrous gem)
Element:	Fire
Purpose:	Transformation
Issues:	Energy, Activity, Autonomy, Individuation, Will, Self-esteem, Proactivity, Power
Color:	Yellow
Location:	Solar plexus
Orientation:	Self-definition
Archetype:	Hero
Basic Rights:	To Act and Be an Individual

Cultures with narrowly defined behavior patterns impair the right to act through fear of punishment and the enforcement of blind obedience. Most people follow in the footsteps of others, afraid to innovate, afraid to be free. When the right to act is restricted, will and spontaneity go with it and our vitality decreases. This does not imply that the third chakra profits by senseless or whimsical acts, but that we do need freedom to develop our inner authority. A corollary to this right is the *right to be free*.

Affirmations: “I honor the power within me.”
“I accomplish tasks easily and effortlessly.”
“The fire within me burns through all blocks and fears.”
“I can do whatever I will to do.”

Identity: In the third chakra, we identify with our will, behavior, and our actions. This is where we realize that we are a separate entity with the power to choose our own actions and consequences. This is the *ego identity*, oriented towards *self-definition*. This type of identification says, “I am what I do.” When we do something right or achieve something difficult, we feel good about ourselves. When we make mistakes or fail, we think we’re bad. We think that what we do is a statement of who we are. Ego identity emerges from physical and emotional identity and can be thought of as the *inner executive*, as it executes our intentions. This is the identity most often in charge. But we have to remember—it is only a middle manager.

Demon: Shame

Shame is inversely proportional to personal power—the greater the shame, the less we feel powerful and the harder it is for the ego to form itself. Shame blocks the liberating current and prevents energy rising from the lower chakras from forming into effective action. We feel ashamed of ourselves, and hence of our basic instincts, which must then be controlled by the mind. As a result, shame-bound personalities feel stuck and may fall into patterns of compulsive

repetition and addiction.

When the ascending, liberating current gets stuck at the third chakra, the manifesting, downward current of consciousness is increased. The mind runs the show, *binding* the biological energy into controlled patterns, creating the term *shame-bound*. Shame-bound people honor their thoughts more than their instincts, especially the internal voices that constantly tell them how worthless and inferior they are. Spontaneity is limited by internal scrutiny, which finds and disempowers the will.

As natural instincts can never be fully repressed, they periodically erupt in shadow forms that only increase the sense of shame and inadequacy. When we misbehave, lose our temper, fall apart, or have lapses in our vigilant self-control, we are driven to deeper shame. Examples include the dieter or substance user who repeatedly binges or the entrepreneur who sabotages work and success through procrastination and passive-aggressive behavior. The block in the will keeps the downward current from entering the second chakra with its orientation toward pleasure, so these activities seldom have any real pleasure to them. Shame finds its penance in suffering, and the need to recreate misery and failure keeps one in a very unhappy false state of equilibrium.

Burning Our Way Into Power

Energy and Activity

...To restructure the way we think of power and to channel and contain that power within our own being is the challenge of the third chakra. It transforms us, igniting our life with purpose. To have true power emanating from within renews the joy of being alive.

What is needed to reclaim our power is to enter into an entirely new dynamic, a new definition of power that lifts us out of struggle and into transformation, out of past and into the future, one that inspires, strengthens, and empowers individuals without diminishing others.

The dynamics of power within the chakra system are also built on duality, but in a way that emphasizes combination and synergy rather than separation and struggle. Raw energy is created from a combination of the first and second chakra's attributes of matter and movement. The expression of that energy as action is motivated by survival and pleasure, the instinctual forces that combine to create our ascending liberating current.

Transforming the instinctual impulses into willed activity is made possible by the descent of consciousness which gives form and direction through understanding as it meets and mediates the ascending current of liberation. When the ascending and descending currents combine, the raw energy of power is focused into activity. Only through this combination do we realize that the true purpose of power is transformation.

So we enter the third chakra through the gates of duality. By successfully integrating both sides of polarity, we emerge into a third realm that simultaneously includes and transcends polarity by creating a new dynamic. Here we reach beyond the oscillating realms of either/or, win/lose, black/white, and enter the rainbow realm of multiplicity. Once we have ventured out toward the middle of the Rainbow Bridge, our choices expand, our horizons widen. As our options increase, so does our strength and our freedom.

As we exercise choice, we initiate the will. Through exercising our will, we develop our individuality, discover our strengths and weaknesses, and begin to build the power that will steer our lives. We leave the realm of safety and security, carrying our safety within the ground of our own body. So many people in recovery are understandably concerned about feeling safe. But power is not created from staying safe; power comes from the willingness to leave the world of safety and move forward into the unknown. As we meet challenge, it strengthens us by forcing us to grow. Power, like a muscle, will not increase by doing nothing.

In the chakra system as a whole, the purpose of the third chakra is to transform the inertia of matter and movement into a conscious direction of willed activity. Earth and water are passive and dense. They move downward. Chakras one and two are instinctual. They follow the paths of least resistance. The fire of chakra three is dynamic and light, rising upwards, moving away from gravity. This change is necessary to reach the upper chakras and complete our journey.

We must be willing to leave passivity behind. We must be willing to leave the way it has always been, to transform our habits, set a new course and enter chakra three. We must be willing to individuate--to step out of the familiar and expected and confront the challenge of uncertainty. "Thus to be independent of public opinion is the first formal condition of achieving anything great," says Hegel. "You must be the change you wish to see in the world," says Gandhi.

Friction makes sparks. Fire transforms matter to heat and light, and gives us the ability to see and to act. Fire awakens us from our passive slumber, sparking consciousness into understanding. Understanding tempers the fire, binding raw energy into power, direction, and transformation. Thus we enter the fiery yellow section of our Rainbow Bridge on the unfolding journey from matter to consciousness.

Fourth Chakra

“Driven by the forces of love, the fragments of the world seek each other so that the world may come into being.” Pierre Teilhard De Chardin

Name:	Anahata (unstruck)
Element:	Air
Purposes:	Love, Balance
Issues:	Love, Balance, Self-love, Relationship, Intimacy, Anima/Animus, Devotion, Reaching out and taking in
Color:	Green
Location:	Chest, heart, cardiac plexus
Orientation:	Self-acceptance, acceptance of others
Archetype:	Healer
Basic Rights:	To Love and Be Loved

In a family this can be damaged by any dysfunction in the parents' ability to love and care for their child. Culturally, the damage appears in judgmental attitudes toward men loving men and women loving women. The right to love is further damaged by racial strife, cultural prejudice, war, or anything that forces enmity between groups as well as by poor self-esteem, broken will, and inability to feel or communicate. As the central chakra in a system of seven, the right to love is harmed when any of the other rights are lost or damaged.

Affirmations: “I am worthy of love.”
“I am loving to myself and others.”
“There is an infinite supply of love.”
“I live in balance with others.”

Identity: In the fourth chakra, we create a *social identity*, also known as the *persona*. The *persona* is the personality created to interact with others—it is the part of ourselves that the ego allows to rise above the surface, separated off from the shadow. Our social identity may be the compulsive helper, the seductive lover, the pleaser, or the entertainer. In our families we may take on the role of the lost child, the hero, the good girl, or the rebel. Initially, our self-concept is based on how others react to us—whether we are popular or an outcast, admired or criticized, loved or rejected—identifying ourselves primarily through our relationships. As we mature, the identity shifts to include how we perceive our role of service to others, or how we have learned to give and embrace a world beyond our ego-oriented self. This becomes our basis for *self-acceptance*.

The social identity has the ego as its base, yet continually expands beyond the realm or self-centered needs to embrace an awareness of others. As I transcend my ego identity to care more about others, my social identity emerges. Yet, how I present myself to others depends a great deal on underlying ego strength.

Demon: Grief

As the resident demon, grief sits on the heart chakra like a stone. When our heart is heavy with grief, it's hard to open, even hard to breathe. When grief is denied, we become numb to our feelings and our aliveness. We become hard and cold, rigid and distant. We may feel dead inside. When grief is acknowledged and expressed, however, we find a vital key to opening the heart. Tears are shed, truth expressed, and the heart lightens. The breath deepens. There is a sense of spaciousness that emerges, allowing more room inside for our spirit. Hope is reborn. Coming to terms with our own grief leads us toward compassion for others.

When we fall in love, we strip ourselves of defenses. We open to another and to the world. We expand and grow. When we are hurt in matters of love, we are hurt in our most vulnerable, trusting aspects. The purest form of self is wounded. It no longer seems safe to be authentic. Our system—wounded at the very core—shuts down and we lose not only our lover but ourselves as well. This is the deepest loss.

If we consider that love may indeed be the most important element of well-being and spiritual growth, then any impairment in our ability to find love is a profound wound. When we further consider that this impairment affects how we treat each other in the larger social sphere, we have not only a personal problem, but a serious collective situation as well. Where grief is the wound, compassion is the healer.

Finding the Balance in Love

The Mystery of Love

Riding on the golden flames of our power center, we now arrive at the heart of the chakra system. Here, in a band of green, lies the center of the Rainbow Bridge, the midpoint of our journey. Like the green, growing plants which push toward the heavens from their roots in the earth, we too, reach outward in two directions --anchoring the manifesting current deep in our bodies and expanding the liberating current as we reach beyond ourselves. In the heart chakra, these currents come to perfect balance in the center of our being. From that sacred center--the heart of the system--we enter the mystery of love.

The basic issues that we encounter in the heart chakra deal with balance, love, and relationship. Through balance we find a center from which we can love, through love we form relationships, and through relationships we have the opportunity to awaken the self-centered ego of the lower chakras into awareness of the larger realm in which we are embedded.

Each ISSUE is covered in the book. Here is a sampling:

BALANCE is the underlying foundation of longevity in all things. Ancient tantric diagrams depict the heart chakra as a lotus of twelve petals containing a six-pointed star, made of two interlacing triangles. This represents the downward movement of spirit into matter and the upward liberation of matter into spirit, meeting in perfect balance in the heart. More than just a meeting, this is an interpenetration whose final goal is integration of spirit and mind with body and soul.

Since the heart chakra is the middle point in a system of seven centers, balance is an essential principle at this level of integration. This implies both internal balance between various aspects of ourselves (mind and body, persona and shadow, male and female), as well as balance between ourselves and the world around us (work and play, giving and receiving, socializing and being alone). Finding this equilibrium supports the basic issues of love and relationship, for without balance within ourselves it is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve healthy and long-lasting love relationships.

INTIMACY, as Thomas Moore so aptly points out in *Soul Mates*, is about bringing forth deeply interior aspects of the self. In order to have intimacy we first need to have a sense of self. We need to be intimate with our own interior, to know our needs, wishes, fears, boundaries, and hopes. Through knowing the self within, we can honor the self that lives within another. We need to be able to love our own self enough to offer it openly to someone else. Without self-love, this cannot happen.

COMPASSION means to have passion with. In the second chakra we encountered passion in the realm of feelings, through the desires of the soul reaching forward to meet its own needs. In the heart chakra, we now reach beyond ourselves and expand that passion to include an understanding of another's needs. The ego, when secure in its own autonomy and power, can now surrender willingly toward altruism. If our own needs have been met and satisfied, we can now share our fullness with another.

The ability to have compassion for others depends first on our ability to be in touch with our yearnings and pain. Expansion of spirit is one of the silver linings of hardship. Pain opens us to deeper understanding of others and expands our own limited being. Only by experiencing our own trials and tribulations can we share wisdom and understanding from the tender level of feelings. Thus compassion is an exquisite balance of upper and lower chakra expression. Compassion remains centered, yet open, and it quietly holds the space for change to occur, providing both the stability of a container and the freedom of release.

Love is the essence that heals. Patience, skill, training, and talent all play their part, but without love they are merely techniques. All wounds cry for the universal medicine of love. As the cosmic glue of the universe, love is the force that bridges the gaps that cut us asunder. In the gap between Heaven and Earth, love is the binding force that holds together the many-colored steps of the Rainbow Bridge.

Unfortunately, due to the damage we have each received in our lives, we are not always sure how to apply love to the wounds within ourselves and others. We do not know what real love looks like or how to create it.

FORGIVENESS is said to be the ultimate step in healing. Forgiveness uses the compassion of the heart to understand situations in terms of the forces that were acting on both ourselves and others. We may still vehemently disagree with the actions taken. We may say, rightfully, that we would never have done such a thing. We may even need something from the other person in order to allow forgiveness—an apology, some kind of restitution, or an acknowledgement of harm. But in the end, forgiveness allows the heart to lighten and move on; it is the redemptive action of the heart.

Forgiveness softens the hardening of the heart and so renews openness. It is not meant as a process which allows the same thing to happen again, but it will allow greater awareness to evolve in situations that have gone awry. It allows us to unhook the energy from the negative past and free it up for a more positive future.

The heart chakra brings us to a place of acceptance and openness that allows the spirit inside to be still and find peace and stability without constriction. If the third chakra below has done its work correctly, we have created a place where the fourth chakra can now let go and just be. The state of being as opposed to doing is the qualitative difference between chakras four and three.

Healing the heart involves attending to the most vulnerable and sacred aspects within ourselves. Only through attending to their truth can we drop the protective armor that keeps us bound to the ego, bound to smaller parts of ourselves. Manipulation, derision, criticisms, or command will not work. We can only melt the armor with the combination of feeling and understanding that is love.

Through love we are able to expose our instinctual core and evolve to the next step of expressing our truth. Through love we are able to embrace and heal the larger world around us. Relationship furthers the evolution of individual souls and the collective soul of our planet.

(Here is a wonderful Short Meditative Movie on "You Are Love" <http://www.youarelovemovie.com/>)

Fifth Chakra

“If it is true that you are what you eat, it may just as accurately be said that you are what you listen to.”

Stephen Halpern

Name:	Vissudha (purification)
Element:	Sound
Purpose:	Communication, Creativity
Issues:	Communication, Creativity, Listening, Resonance, Finding One’s Own Voice
Color:	Bright blue
Location:	Throat, Pharyngeal plexus
Orientation:	Self-expression
Archetype:	Artist
Basic Rights:	To Speak and Hear Truth

This right is damaged when we are not allowed to speak truthfully in our family. “Don’t talk to me like that, young man!” “We don’t discuss that subject in this family.” This includes not being heard when we do speak, keeping family secrets, and not being spoken to honestly. When our parents, culture, or government lie to us, there is abuse of this right. Learning clear communication is essential to reclaiming this right.

Affirmations: “I speak and hear the truth.”
“I express myself with clear intent.”
“Creativity flows in and through me.”
“My voice is necessary.”

Identity: The fifth chakra is the center of our *creative identity*. Here we identify with our *self-expression-what we say and produce*. Initially, we identify with our word through the commitments we make. In this identity, we take responsibility for what we say by embodying it in our actions. Through our creativity, we identify ourselves as artists, teachers, entrepreneurs, politicians, mothers, or fathers. (We may also identify with our mistakes and failures.) The creative identity expands outward, through its ability to contribute and give back to the larger system.

As this level matures, we begin to identify with larger possibilities and reach for inspiration from the great works of civilization, from the inspiring acts of heroes and saints, poets and painters. As we expand into the creative flux of the world around us, we identify with our path. Our path is the realization of our personal contribution to the larger system. Ideally, the path leads to an ever-expanding growth of consciousness and an eventual transcendence of the personal self into the transpersonal self. Its foundation is a healthy ego, social confidence, and a sense of compassion for others.

Demon: Lies

Lies can be told with words, but they can also be told with actions or held by the body. When I am afraid to show someone how excited I am, I restrict the muscles of my face or hold my arms down by my sides. I am then lying with my body and out of resonance with my own field. My natural process gets frozen.

When we live in our truth, there is a resonant continuity between ourselves and others. When this resonance is interrupted, we experience discontinuity. Perpetual discontinuity breaks down our health. Just as an engine needs all of its vibrating parts to be coordinated smoothly, so too does our basic resonance. This allows the forward progression of the self to occur gracefully.

Vibrating Into Expression

The Subtle World of Vibrations

As we enter the etheric level of the throat chakra, we enter a paradoxical realm of great subtlety yet powerful influence. We leave behind the balanced middle ground of the green ray and reach into the etheric range of turquoise and blue that resonate with the throat chakra. The enveloping element of air still surrounds us, yet we reach beyond it into the unknown ether—the realm of vibrations, sound, communication, and creativity.

We have passed the halfway point in our rainbow. In the dance between liberation and manifestation, we are now leaving the yin balance of the heart and to focus more heavily on the upper chakras. We are breaking free from gravity, free from the way things have always been and from the structure and restriction of manifested form. We become more abstract, yet broader in our scope. In the first four chakras we concerned ourselves with form, movement, activity, and relationship—things that are easily observed. In chakra five, our attention moves to vibrations, as the subtle, rhythmic pulsations that move through all things.

Entering the Symbolic

The symbol strikes its roots into the most secret depths of the soul; language skims over the surface of the understanding like a soft breeze...Words make the infinite finite; symbols carry the mind beyond the finite world of becoming into the realm of infinite being. J.J.Bachofen

As we enter the upper chakra triad, we enter the symbolic world of the mind. Symbols are the building blocks of consciousness, the link between the eternal and the transient. Words, images and thoughts (chakras five, six and seven) are all symbolic reflections of the manifested plane. Each word we use is a symbol for a thing, concept, feeling, process, or relationship. Each image in our mind is a mental symbol for something real and each thought is a combination of these symbols. With symbols we can do more with less. I can talk about a truck even though I cannot lift one. I can describe a spiral galaxy, even though I cannot travel to one. I can show you a picture of a man easier than I can describe him.

Symbols can be seen as the vibrational essence of what they represent. They are the building blocks of communication and consciousness. They are like packets of meaning that can be stored in one mind and shared with others, each packet enhancing consciousness. When a symbol really speaks to us—when it is full of meaning—then we are said to resonate with it.

Resonance

All life is rhythmic. From the rise and fall of the sun to the rise and fall of our breath, from the beating of our hearts to the infinite vibrations of atomic particles within our cells, we are a mass of vibrations that miraculously resonate together as a single system. In fact, our ability to function as a unified whole depends upon the coherent resonance of the many subtle vibrations within us. The task of the fifth chakra is to enhance this resonance.

Resonance requires a certain balance of flexibility and tension. A string needs to be both taunt and flexible in order to sound a note. In our bodies, we need to have enough flexibility to resonate with different frequencies, yet maintain enough tension to create a repeating pattern.

The state of resonance within the body/mind is a statement of our health and vitality. When we cannot resonate with the world around us, we cannot link with it. We are unable to expand, respond, or receive. We become isolated and ill. Opening to resonance requires both grounding for the establishment of form, and an openness of breath that yields softness and flexibility. This balance is a delicious combination of letting and willing that allows us to both listen and respond at the same time.

Communication

Communication is the exchange of information and energy. While resonance is the underlying principle behind the fifth chakra, communication is its essence and function. As self-expression, it is a gateway between the inner world and the outer. Only through self-expression does the outer world get to know what's inside of us. Only through self-expression do we put forth what we have previously taken in.

Self-expression in the fifth chakra is a counterpart to the sensate reception coming in through the second chakra. In the second chakra, we opened a gate that allowed the world IN through our senses. In the fifth chakra, we open a gate that allows our inner self to get OUT into the world.

Sixth Chakra

"We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are." Anais Nin

Name:	Ajna/To Perceive and Command
Element:	Light
Purpose:	Pattern recognition
Issues:	Images, Intuition, Imagination, Visualization, Insight, Dreams, Visions
Color:	Indigo
Location:	Forehead, brow, carotid plexus, third eye
Orientation:	Self-reflection
Archetype:	Seer
Basic Right:	To See

This right is damaged when we are told that what we perceive is not real, when things are deliberately hidden or denied (such as parental drinking), or when the breadth of our vision is discounted. When children see things that are beyond the scope of their understanding, or when angry or frightening scenes occur frequently, children diminish their own ability to see. This may affect both physical vision and subtler psychic perceptions.

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

Identity: In the sixth chakra, we expand into our *archetypal identity*, transforming the individual *I* into something transpersonal. Our personal story is now seen as an event in a larger story. If we suffered from poor mothering because our mothers were not supported, we carry a piece of the archetypal story of the degradation of the Mother Goddess—the loss of the archetypal Mother. The power that our mothers lacked was the same power that has been stripped from women over millennia, stripped from the archetype itself. Those who suffered from distant fathers carry a piece of the larger story of industrial revolution, of disempowered men removed from their families, and the distant Father-God archetype.

We enlarge our understanding of Self as we find our own life themes reflected in fairy tales, mythology, movies, and news stories. We experience *self-reflection* in the larger system. We realize we are players in a much larger drama, riding the waves of the cultural tide's ebb and flow. As we mature at this level, we consciously embrace the evolution of the archetypal symbols that speak to us. If we take on a crusade for the preservation of the ancient forests, we are doing more than just saving trees—we contribute to a larger archetypal cause.

Demon: Illusion

Illusion wrests our consciousness from open-minded perception, fixing it upon a frozen image. An illusion is a static image, displaced in the stream of time, and is for that reason unreal. The illusion I hold of how something *should* be is usually an image of what it currently is not. My attachment to it pulls me out of present time, where I might see realistically. My fixation on my body ten pounds thinner fails to appreciate my body the way it is now. My illusion of how a relationship should be makes me criticize all the places my relationship falls short of that image, and I fail to see the meaning these issues might have for me.

Illusions are held in place by an investment of psychic energy. When we fixate on an image, everything becomes food for its embellishment. If we think someone dislikes us, we take the slightest disharmony as proof. A hypochondriac takes the slightest ache as proof of illness. When we invest in an illusion, it ties up our energy and perpetuates the attachment. The more we are attached, of course, the more energy we need to invest, and it is here that we run into the danger of obsession. Since illusion does not feed back the energy we invest, it does not bring satisfaction or completion and, like an addiction, continues to lure us into its false promises.

When illusion is fed by a sixth chakra excess, it becomes obsession or delusion. Obsessions fix an unusual amount of energy on a particular issue; delusion assembles elaborate illusions around a central theme. Removed from the grounded connection of the first chakra, the upper chakras spin wildly, like an engine with the clutch disengaged—lots of activity with no forward movement. The more we invest in an illusion, the harder it is to let go of it. Sealed in, we are trapped into repetitive cycles that keep us from true understanding.

Seeing Our Way Through

Opening the Third Eye

As we enter the brow chakra, we look back at the steps behind us with new vision. Adding indigo to our ever expanding bridge we now have enough colors to see that we are, indeed, building a rainbow. Once we see what the pattern is becoming, we can intuit the steps necessary to complete it. Our sight gives us guidance. We can see where we have been, where we are now, and predict where we are going. This consciousness lets us know what to do, which explains why the sense of sight is classically related to the third chakra, even though the sixth chakra is about seeing. Without vision our actions are mere impulses, but with vision they become creative acts of will in the service of transformation.

The element of this chakra is light, a higher and faster vibration than that of sound in the chakra below. Through light, we are blessed with the ability to see, to take in from a distance the shape and form of things around us. This miraculous act of seeing is the basic function of this chakra, but this implies far more than seeing with our physical eyes. Physical perception tells us that something exists, but only the inner sight can tell us what it is.

While our physical eyes are the organs of outer perception, the sixth chakra relates to the mystical third eye—the organ of inner perception. The third eye witnesses the internal screen where memory and fantasy, images and archetypes, intuition and imagination intertwine on endless display. By watching the contents on this screen, we create meaning and bring it to consciousness. The purpose of the sixth chakra is to see the way, and bring the light of consciousness to all that exists within and around us.

The final outcome of working through the sixth chakra—with its archetypes and images, dreams and fantasies, symbols and illusions—is the emergence of a personal vision. As we see more and more of ourselves, we see more deeply into people and situations around us. As we expand our internal picture into a larger, more comprehensive worldview, we inevitably begin to create a vision. This vision can address world problems and how they might be changed for the better, or it may only address something within our own lives. It may be as large as a vision to create a new society, or as focused as one about relating to our spouse differently. It is not the size or scope of the vision that is important, but the ability to see a new way of being.

Ascending to the sixth chakra opens us to transcendent realms beyond ordinary awareness. This expansion can radically shift our perspective of daily situations and bring profound insight and vision. It can also elevate our understanding to broader levels, allowing us to embrace a much larger system of being than we have ever encountered. In expansion of consciousness, chakra six takes us to a beautiful world of colors and symbols, dreams and fantasy, archetypes and images. The possibilities expand through imagination which stimulates creativity. Our new vista gives us increased understanding, as we not only perceive the patterns around us, but also perceive our own place and purpose in them.

Chakra six prepares us for the final passage on the Rainbow Bridge. With its focus on archetypes, it lays the groundwork for understanding the intricate dance of divinity and consciousness that we shall encounter in the next chakra.

Seventh Chakra

“We are no longer concerned with the dualistic opposition between God and man, but with the immanent tension in the God image itself... This inner non-equilibrium, the glorious imperfection of life, is the effective principle of evolution. God is not the creator but the mind of the universe”

C. G. Jung

Name:	Sahasrara (thousandfold)
Element:	Earth
Purpose:	Understanding
Issues:	Transcendence, Immanence, Belief systems, Higher Power, Divinity, Union, Vision
Color:	Violet
Location:	Cerebral cortex
Orientation:	Self-knowledge
Archetype:	Sage/Mastger
Basic Rights:	To Know and to Learn

This includes the right to accurate information, the right to truth, the right to knowledge, and the right to simply know what’s going on. Certainly education is an important part of knowledge. Equally important are one’s spiritual rights—the right to connect with the divine in whatever way we find most appropriate. To force on another a spiritual dogma infringes upon our seventh chakra personal and spiritual rights. To deny information and education is to close down the natural questing of the seventh chakra.

Affirmations: “Divinity resides within.”
“I am open to new ideas.”
“Information I need comes to me.”
“The world is my teacher.”
“I am guided by higher power.”
“I am guided by inner wisdom.”

Identity: In the crown chakra, we come to the final and largest identity: our universal identity. The more our consciousness expands, the larger our identity can become. As we realize the magnificent scope of the cosmos, we have the opportunity to transcend our smaller, more limited world, and identify with the entire universe. This is a common theme in mystical experiences where the identification with the smaller ego states gives way to recognition of a unitary identity with all of life, indeed all of creation. In Eastern philosophy, this is the basis of true self-knowledge—the knowledge of divinity within.

Demon: Attachment

While attachment is necessary for making and maintaining commitments essential to the lower chakras, it inhibits our ability to expand in the crown chakra. Attachment denies the constantly fluid state of the universal system. It keeps us anchored in time, unable to move forward, trapped in a small place, unable to embrace a larger space. In Eastern religions, attachment is seen as the basis of suffering.

For some, letting go of attachment is synonymous with letting go of responsibility. It can become a means of escape. When the going gets rough, we simply let go of our connection rather than work through sticky issues. In so doing, we experience freedom but sacrifice growth.

In the truer sense of the word, letting go of attachment is about how we direct our psychic energy. To let go of attachment is to release our fixation upon something external, to relinquish our need to control, our desire for a certain outcome. Attachment is our way of not trusting the wisdom of the universe while it actually tries to teach us something. We stay attached because we are defending against our suffering, rather than seeing that suffering as a teaching. Attachment says we are certain we know what is best. It does not allow the humility that opens us to something larger.

Opening to the Mystery of Heaven

The Separation of Spirit and Matter

Western civilization is founded on the belief system that spirit and matter are separate and distinct. The Earth is treated as an inanimate object to be used wastefully, at our own lack of discretion. Science examines the world rationally and methodically, pointedly avoiding the more nebulous issue of spirit. Corporations are built to enhance their economic prowess, often with little regard for the spiritual well-being of their workers or the environment.

People who give spirituality a high priority are often considered fringe members of society. For many seekers and respected masters, spiritual practice is seen as antithetical to mundane existence. Monks leave their homes and families and renounce all worldly pursuits in order to obtain enlightenment. Nuns cloister themselves to be closer to God. New Age ascension philosophy advises transcending the body and becoming nothing but light. Eastern philosophy tells us to let go of worldly attachments.

The separation of spirituality from the rest of life leaves us spiritually homeless. In reflection of the archetypal divorce between Earth Mother and Sky Father, we are taught to seek enlightenment by denying the basic nature of our biological existence. This chasm between Heaven and Earth creates a corresponding abyss between spirit and soul into which many fall as they engage in ascetic practices, sign their will over to gurus, and disengage from the world. Denying our basic nature in order to achieve unity is a contradiction steeped in dualistic thinking which will never lead to unity or wholeness.

The seventh chakra is about merging with divine consciousness and realizing our true nature. The petty concerns that occupy the bulk of our waking life often distract us from remembering who we truly are beneath the jobs and the cars, the kids and the clothes. It is important to know that we are children of the divine seeking our way back home—that there is a deeper meaning to life than is normally perceived.

What is valid about this myth of separation is that we do need to disconnect from the illusions and attachments we place between ourselves and the divine, from the substitutions we use to fill the emptiness of our soul. I believe the ultimate source of these soul wounds stems from stripping our ordinary existence of its spiritual meaning, leaving the average person without purpose or direction.

The crown chakra is the thousand-petaled lotus. Most people think of the petals as reaching up into the heavens; actually, the lotus petals turn downward like a sunflower, dripping nectar into the crown and down through the chakras. In this way, the two ends of the spectrum are profoundly connected. How can a lotus bloom without roots in the Earth? How can it reach Heaven if its roots are not deep and wide?

The Rainbow Bridge, like any bridge, is about connection. The two ends of the spectrum connect the individual self with universal creation. The middle section of the bridge takes the combination out into the world, through appropriate action, right relationship, and creative contributions. Our purpose in the seventh chakra is to contact the divine, but also to manifest divinity in our bodies and actions and so transform the world. In the seventh chakra, we see divinity in all matter and in all its infinite arrangements. Crossing the Rainbow Bridge is about stretching to connect the limited with the infinite, while still retaining both qualities. It is through that stretch that we grow.

To arrive at the fully blooming lotus crown chakra, our stem needs to be connected all the way to Earth, our roots deep in the ground. Through this connection, our lotus is nourished and continues to bloom, its petals ever unfolding. Our purpose is indeed to liberate the spirit, but if we are to avoid getting lost in the infinite we must retain a home to which the spirit can return. This is the challenge of a psychologically balanced seventh chakra.

Short Synopsis

Chakra Seven:

Thought, Universal identity, oriented to self-knowledge

This is the crown chakra that relates to consciousness as pure awareness. It is our connection to the greater world beyond, to a timeless, spaceless place of all-knowing. When developed, this chakra brings us knowledge, wisdom, understanding, spiritual connection, and bliss.

Chakra Six:

Light, Archetypal identity, oriented to self-reflection

This chakra is known as the brow chakra or third eye center. It is related to the act of seeing, both physically and intuitively. As such it opens our psychic faculties and our understanding of archetypal levels. When healthy it allows us to see clearly, in effect, letting us "see the big picture."

Chakra Five:

Sound, Creative identity, oriented to self-expression

This is the chakra located in the throat and is thus related to communication and creativity. Here we experience the world symbolically through vibration, such as the vibration of sound representing language.

Chakra Four:

Air, Social identity, oriented to self-acceptance

This chakra is called the heart chakra and is the middle chakra in a system of seven. It is related to love and is the integrator of opposites in the psyche: mind and body, male and female, persona and shadow, ego and unity. A healthy fourth chakra allows us to love deeply, feel compassion, have a deep sense of peace and centeredness

Chakra Three:

Fire, Ego identity, oriented to self-definition

This chakra is known as the power chakra, located in the solar plexus. It rules our personal power, will, and autonomy, as well as our metabolism. When healthy, this chakra brings us energy, effectiveness, spontaneity, and non-dominating power.

Chakra Two:

Water, Emotional identity, oriented to self-gratification

The second chakra, located in the abdomen, lower back, and sexual organs, is related to the element water, and to emotions and sexuality. It connects us to others through feeling, desire, sensation, and movement. Ideally this chakra brings us fluidity and grace, depth of feeling, sexual fulfillment, and the ability to accept change.

Chakra One:

Earth, Physical identity, oriented to self-preservation

Located at the base of the spine, this chakra forms our foundation. It represents the element earth, and is therefore related to our survival instincts, and to our sense of grounding and connection to our bodies and the physical plane. Ideally this chakra brings us health, prosperity, security, and dynamic presence.