

The Sevenfold Journey: Reclaiming Mind, Body & Spirit Through the Chakras by Anodea Judith & Selene Vega

From Chakra One: Earth ...This level represents our roots, our foundation, our bodies, and our survival. Our purpose here is to build a strong foundation that will support all our subsequent work, and to strengthen that foundation through roots that are solid and deep, a body that is healthy and strong, and stability in our livelihood...

The name of the 1st chakra is Muladhara, which literally means root... Just as roots grow downward, our first chakra experience is one of moving energy and attention downward in our bodies—down to the base of our spine, down to the legs and feet, down into our guts, down into our past, our ancestral roots. As we move downward, we move into the associated element of the first chakra, which is earth.

The tasks of this chakra involve getting in touch with the earth, establishing a good sense of grounding, taking care of our survival needs, and taking care of the body. When there is damage to the chakra, these things become monumental tasks. When the chakra is healthy and balanced they become rudimentary tasks, maintenance programs that run smoothly and provide the stability needed to accomplish other things...

Our physical universe begins with our body. It is the only physical certainty in our lives from birth to death, and we only get one. We cannot stress enough the importance of the body in the first chakra and in the whole chakra system... It is the physical manifestation of all that happens to us, the hardware in which all our programs run.

First chakra work focuses on the body, beginning with awareness. We focus on health, diet, fitness, exercise, and physical interactions with the world. We pay attention to how we feel about our body, and to how we feel in our body. Do we feel awake and alive? So we feel sluggish and heavy?

Mastering the first chakra involves gaining an understanding and healing of our own bodies, and of the part they play in our overall state of consciousness and interaction with the world around us...

From Chakra Two: Water Now that we have established our ground and our center, we begin moving upward. As soon as we move, we shift our focus, and discover that the mere act of making a change is stimulus for consciousness. Change helps us to wake up, to realize there is more to learn, and invites us to reach out and explore. As our attention shifts from self (the focus of the first chakra) to other, we encounter dualities and their mutual attraction, and discover the realm of feelings and desire. So the first significant aspect of the second chakra is change.

While the first chakra taught us to be grounded and still, the second chakra allows movement through the body—the movement that begins the journey upward to the crown chakra. Here we work with moving our physical bodies, in addition to learning about the internal movement of emotional energy. Moving our bodies physically promotes flexibility and health. It helps our muscles to relax, and moves chronically blocked energy through the body. It generates the raw energy needed in the third chakra, and can also be a source of pleasure, which is an important element of the second chakra.

The element associated with the second chakra is water. We often refer to emotions as being part of a watery realm—they flow like a river, have tides like the sea, give us raindrops of tears. Water is fluid... We can think of our physical bodies as the earthen container and the emotions the fluid essence that flows through the container... It is our structure that gives shape to the water, but it is the water that fills the structure and allows it to flow and change. So, in keeping with the qualities of water, we want to learn to let our energy yield and flow, cleanse and change.

The second chakra brings us from singleness to duality. With duality comes an expansion of the picture, and the presentation of choice... We make our choices by sorting out our feelings and desires. This work is a prerequisite to enacting the will, the work of chakra three.

Duality also brings us the concept of polarity, of yin and yang, male and female, up and down, dark and light. We have taken our singleness of chakra one and made a primary division. We now have a line of force running through the

middle, connecting the polarities. The ruling force of the second chakra is attraction of opposites. This attraction is the basis for movement... Emotionally we feel this pull as desire—a desire to experience something different, a desire to merge with another, a desire to move ourselves to another state of consciousness, a desire to grow...

Complex as they are, emotions can be seen largely as a reaction to pleasure and pain... Pleasure and pain are outgrowths of the survival mechanism. When survival needs are properly taken care of, the organism naturally turns toward pleasure. Pain is an indication that something is wrong, that something is threatening our survival... When we experience pain, we try to shut down the sensation, and subsequently our feelings. Pain makes us contract, withdraw, and pull our energy inward... Pleasure, however, encourages us to expand... Energy and consciousness are intricately interrelated. If we suppress our feelings, our sensation and our energetic flow, then we also restrict our consciousness. We limit the amount of change we can experience, and instead our efforts go into keeping things the same. Pleasure then, helps us to expand our consciousness.

Pleasure, emotion, duality and sensation all lead us to sexuality— the expression of opposites merging as one. Sexuality is the experience of attraction, movement, feeling, desire, and connection, all rolled into joyous experience of pleasure. The sweetness of pleasure is the jewel in the lotus of the second chakra. The Sanskrit name for this chakra, Svadhisthana, which means “sweetness,” emphasizes this concept.

Second chakra practice involves working on the emotions and sexuality, and on the fluidity of movement through the body. These are not separate and distinct aspects, but intricately interwoven... Each practice can enhance the other aspects.

If the second chakra is energetically deficient, there is fear of change. Energy gets trapped... and resists fluidity... If the chakra is excessive or too open, the opposite applies. We may be overly emotional, constantly swinging back and forth between extremes...

Ideally, we should be able to embrace polarities, feel our emotions, and express ourselves sexually without losing the connection with our center. The center of polarity is a state of balance. We must be willing to embrace both sides of achieve balance. The joining together of polarities forms the metaphorical basis for power, the goal of the next step of our climb, chakra three.

From Chakra Three Fire With our bodies grounded and our feelings flowing, we are ready to begin work on developing chakra three, the chakra that relates to personal power, will, and vitality. This is where we take action, create change, reorganize for efficiency, and purify ourselves in the flame of life. The name of this chakra is Manipura, which means “lustrous gem.” This is the chakra of the solar plexus, of solar energy, of fire, of golden yellow light shining with strength and will.

Our element is fire, and this chakra rules the creation and expression of energy in the body. Fire is the transformer, changing matter to energy in the form of heat and light...

True power comes from the harmony of our polarities, much as electrical power comes from the combination of both positive and negative poles. Our personal power is greater when we combine both our male and female side, our light side and our shadow, our strength and vulnerability. Exploration of these polarities is the domain of chakra two. Combining them creates the power of chakra three.

Next week: Heart Practices (Chakras 3-4-5) with a focus on the 4th Chakra.