

Chakra Psychology

Practitioner Delcia McNeil explains how this modality can help you to fulfil the dream of becoming whole

Combining the age-old chakra system, with its roots in the Tantric and Yogic traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism, with contemporary psychological knowledge is proving a powerful way to access unconscious material, as well as becoming more familiar with our energetic patterns and our strengths. Mindfully focussing on the chakra centres can bring us insights, sometimes memories, often images that are symbolic, archetypal and full of meaning. They can be like a dream-world, they are full of information that we can access and reflect upon. In modern terminology, the chakra system offers us evolutionary software and data through which we can reprogram our lives.

For many today, psychology (the study of the human mind and soul), is about developing ourselves to be rounded human beings. A psychological approach can refer to our behaviour, our beliefs and attitudes, how we think and how we give meaning to our lives. It can refer to what we may be experiencing unconsciously – our behaviours and thoughts and feelings, which arise without our conscious awareness of why or how we are thinking or doing something.

The chakra system, the 'wheels of light', has a long and complex history, dating back several centuries BC. From a contemporary viewpoint, this remarkable system offers us a specific psychological model that we can use to access this unconscious material as well as familiarise ourselves with our personal energetic patterns and sensations. By mindfully focussing on the chakra centres, we can



experience where we feel strong and at ease, as well as where we may feel stuck, anxious or uncomfortable.

The seven major chakras can also be viewed as seven stages relating to our growth – conception and babyhood, pre-school age, school age, pre-adolescent, adolescence, young adulthood, and mature adulthood. We are deeply influenced by what was happening in our lives at the different developmental stages of our childhood and young adulthood in particular.

Family relational patterns, traumas, culture and many more influences, both positive and negative, are deeply buried in our bodies and minds.

Because they reflect our developmental experiences, each of the seven major chakras is therefore associated with specific psychological states. These can indicate our strengths such as being a good communicator, or being in touch with our creativity. But we also can uncover issues that need healing. For example we may be fearful of not belonging, or being intimate, or never finding love or our purpose in life. Once we have become conscious of what is troubling us and can reflect upon it, we can find ways to heal ourselves.

Theory of Chakra Psychology

Since being introduced to the chakras in 1981 I have found that many writers have developed their own models relating to psychology and the chakras. Each model is different yet has cross-over similarities. In 2006, I decided to create a course in which we included looking at these different approaches. In my experience different chakra models are not necessarily in opposition to each other but need to be seen as complementary or amplificatory. By taking in different perspectives we can aim to arrive at our own personal truth that resonates with our real experience.

Anodea Judith, author of *Eastern Body Western Mind*, views the chakras as a map, a set of 'energy portals' between the inner and outer worlds'. 'A chakra is a centre of organisation that receives, assimilates, and expresses life force energy,' she

says. Judith has clearly documented that the chakra system is a model for the integration of body, mind and spirit. The seven chakra centres correlate with basic states of consciousness and their patterns are programmed deep in the core of the mind-body interface.

Most contemporary writers refer to 'blocks' in the chakras, places where energy has become stuck or stagnant. 'If we block an experience we block our chakras', states Barbara Ann Brennan, author of *Hands of Light*. She views the chakras as metabolisers of energy and devices that sense energy. They serve to tell us about the world around us.

Blocks are also a theme in Brenda Davies' book, *The Rainbow Journey - Seven Steps to Self Healing*. She identifies different types of block - and we often have a combination - that relate to psychological defence mechanisms, eg. freezing, denial, suppression. She takes the developmental stages further by introducing the idea that each chakra is a primary focus not only during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, but also in later adulthood.

In her original book on the chakras, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, Caroline Myss synthesizes three spiritual traditions - the traditional chakras (Hindu), the Christian sacraments, and the Jewish Kabbalah's Tree of Life (the ten sefirot or qualities of Divine nature already mentioned). For her the chakras symbolise seven levels of evolution through perceptions of power. The chakras, as part of the energy system, contain data and a history of how we invest our life energy.

Transpersonal psychotherapist, Ruth White, in *Using your Chakras*, views the chakras as a map of consciousness that charts a spiritual and evolutionary journey, not only for the individual but also for the whole of humanity. Connecting with the chakras enables us to become more conscious and aware of ourselves and others.

How Chakra Psychology Works

Chakra Psychology includes both energy work and cognitive understanding. Using meditation to focus the mind on the parts of the body where a chakra is located, we can get a felt sense of how that chakra is functioning, eg how comfortable or not does it feel to hold our attention here? How is its energy? Do we experience it as flowing or feeling blocked? Simply by focussing and becoming aware, we often find the energetic vibration of the chakra changes, eases, or shifts, affecting the whole system.

We may start to feel release or relief, or we may begin to have thoughts - memories, ideas, recall a dream, and so on. If we feel uncomfortable, chances are there are issues associated with that chakra that need our attention. Any thoughts that come to us can be important information that the intelligence of that chakra is giving us. It's a bit like going to a website to research something. What we are doing is touching in on another level of our being, a deeper level of consciousness. It's subtle, yet potentially powerful.

What to Expect

In my courses, I use not only relaxation and meditation, but also a number of activities as we focus on each chakra centre. These include:


- VARIOUS CHAKRA VISUALISATION PROCESSES to help to heal past situations
- GROUNDING EXERCISES to centre and connect with the earth
- THE USE OF BODY AWARENESS AND FOCUS - sensing or visualising through the physical body
- MOVEMENT - using the body to express itself non-verbally
- Different ways of working with affirmative statements
- Techniques to help improve self esteem
- HEALING TOUCH - on and off the body
- THERAPEUTIC ART to help describe the

energy state of a chakra

- SOUND HEALING - working with the 'seed sounds' of the chakras
- COLOUR THERAPY - using colour as a means to alter our vibrational state and mood
- OPEN CHANNELLING - an intuitive activity of the mind through which a wider wisdom than normal can be accessed
- Exploring general and spiritual beliefs and becoming aware of which ones no longer work for us and which ones we need to strengthen
- Sharing through talking and listening with others and having one's personal experience acknowledged in a safe, confidential and non-judgemental environment.

We focus from a psychological perspective on the functioning of each chakra in respect of its associated issues and its stage of development. For instance, if you feel very disconnected from your Root chakra, you could explore the nature of your own birth and early bonding with your mother.

Although primarily course participants focus on their own personal development, the material is transferable to individual practice. The aim is for this to be appropriately relevant and effective for the therapist to integrate with their existing skills.

As an approach Chakra Psychology is both pragmatic and visionary. It offers us a wide range of resources to work with. Through experiencing firsthand the subtle energies of the different chakra centres, we can become more aware of our own inner energetic and emotional processes. The unconscious becomes much more conscious. We begin to think differently, to have greater self understanding and to accept ourselves more. When we start to feel better on the inside we can begin to experience ourselves as having more choices, helping us feel more energised and experiencing a more fulfilling and joyful life. 

Find out more

- Delcia McNeil is a qualified psychotherapist, energy healer and artist. She runs Chakra Psychology courses in North London, South Cumbria, and at a distance. These are primarily, though not exclusively, continued professional & personal development courses for healers & therapists. The courses are validated by The Association for Therapeutic Healers and the Confederation of Healing Organisations. The next course is in North London and starts in October 2015 (maximum eight participants). It can also be taken on a one-to-one basis (face to face, or phone/skype).
- www.chakrapscychology.co.uk



• DELCIA MCNEIL