



Wounds Into Gold: Another Model of the Chakra System

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Abstract:

The chakras are often divided into two groups: masculine and feminine. My observation is that these two groups describe and facilitate two very different evolutionary paths for an individual: the paths of relating and creating. These two paths are acted upon by every kind of input imaginable, including the predisposition to introversion or extroversion.

“The church says this body is a sin. Science says this body is a machine. Business says this body is a product. The body says: ‘I am a fiesta!’” --Eduardo Galeano

Everything we know about the subtle systems has come through observation of Nature, observation of humans and the perceptual frameworks on which we hang these observations. We call these frameworks “models.” In the Galeano quote above, we see four models of the body presented by four different sources with four different agendas, each one colored by its own perceptual framework. I am offering you yet another model: a model for working with the chakra system, looking specifically at two streams of human learning that function independently and interdependently.

Let’s start with dualism -- the sensual pulsation of alternating contraction and expansion impulses that permeates all of creation. Different rhythms, different speeds, different intensities, all modulated in ways that serve different structures and different

functions throughout the Natural world. The sea rushes to the shore, the sea rushes away from the shore. Our heartbeat’s alternating presence and absence. The changing relationship between the Earth and the sun that changes the lengths of days and the passage of the seasons.

Everything at every level of Nature is pulsating, breaking things apart and putting them back together. Making energy, spending energy. This is happening everywhere we look, at every level of the manifest world -- contraction and expansion in repeated patterns. When a system, or part of a system, is moving in its best rhythm of contraction and expansion, its use of energy, of available resources, is highly efficient. When it strays from its natural balance, it requires more or different resources and its integration into the system as a whole becomes strained.



Constant change makes “balance” a moving target. The complexities of the human bio-system make it necessary to have multiple layers of feedback between the internal and external environments in order to create and recreate balance in response to changing circumstances. In this process, we react, but we also learn, create and interact... and evolve.

At our 2004 conference, Hugo Tobar presented the chakra system from the perspective of looking at over- and under-energy in both the yin and yang qualities of each individual chakra. I would like to take a step back and look at the major chakras as a system and the pulsation of yin and yang in a slightly larger framework into which the balance of yin and yang in the individual chakras fits.

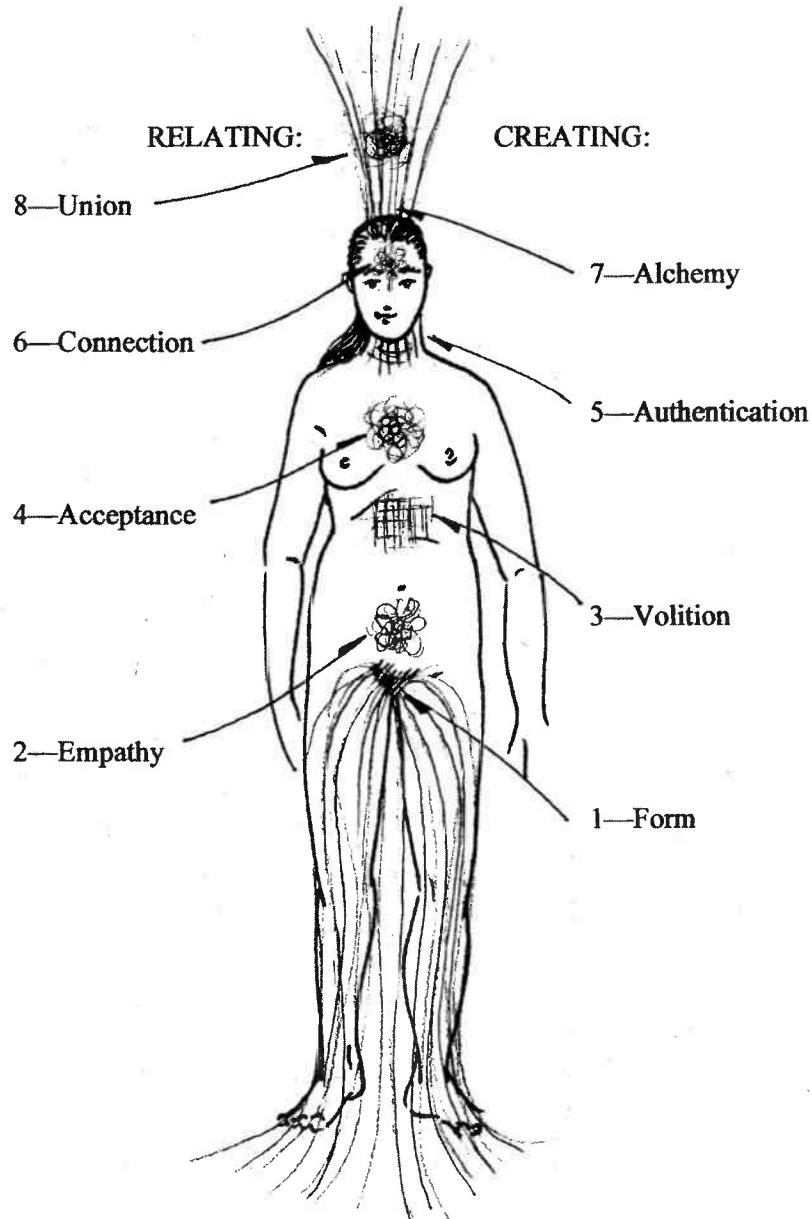
Numerous authors use the model of individual chakras having predominantly “male” or “female” qualities, usually ascribing the more “female” qualities to the even numbered chakras and the more “male” qualities to the odd numbered ones. The chart below shows, metaphorically, how I “see” the two sets of chakras. The “male” chakras I see as much more highly organized, having a clearer intrinsic structure. The “female” chakras I see as being more highly motile, having a less static organization. This alternation of more and less structure, more and less motility provides yet another wave of pulsation through the chakra system, contributing to its strength. Certainly the differences between the “male” and “female” organizations are more distinct in the lower chakras than they are in the upper ones, where the two evolutionary processes

represented by these differences begin to converge and finally disappear into each other, creating that well-known whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

When I refer to “two paths” in the context of female/male, it is not my intention to imply a tension between the two; that they are pulling against each other in any way. Rather, that as we climb the chakra system from the bottom we start with the first step on the “yang” path, then up to the second chakra for the first step on the “yin” path. Next, up to the third for the second step on the “yang” path, then to the heart for the second step on the “yin” path and so on. The alternation of steps – yang, then yin, then yang, etc. – illustrates how the two paths interpenetrate each other, just as Ida and Pingala wind their ways up the column providing stability in complementing each other’s polarity.

What are these two primary evolutionary paths that we are walking? They can be described in several ways: form/content, action/experience, male/female, etc. I tend to shy away from male/female because it’s so easy to fall into the traps of gender programming that are so utterly silly when considering energy systems. Let’s refer to them as the path of relating and the path of creating. I find this a workable description based on watching the flow of energy through the chakras in the context of this model of two different paths. That is not to say that when I speak of FORM in the first chakra, that’s my one word definition of all the qualities and actions of the first chakra. Far from it. Each chakra has a wealth of complexity beyond these single words. While looking at these two streaming

processes, I attempted to select what was coming forward as the strongest contributing quality to the process I was seeing in this model. It may seem overly simplistic. Use whatever words work for you.



"The atomic world of small action is ruled by a fusion of cause and chance...yet it is no world of caprice or chaos. Chance and cause have been wonderfully married into a point of view in which precise pattern governs potential events, and yet in which the variety of potentialities allows the full growth of that novelty which we know to govern the world we live in." —Philip Morrison

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Creating

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”

--Albert Einstein

cre·ate verb

1. to cause to come into being, as something unique that would not naturally evolve or that is not made by ordinary processes.
2. to evolve from one's own thought or imagination, as a work of art or an invention.
4. to make by investing with new rank or by designating; constitute; appoint.
5. to be the cause or occasion of; give rise to.
6. to cause to happen; bring about; arrange, as by intention or design

ME creat (ptp.) < L creatus, equiv. to creâ- (s. of creâre to make) + -tus ptp. suffix]

The path of creating begins in the first chakra with FORM. From the Earth element arises matter, substance, form and our relationship to the sustaining planet. In the first chakra, earth element is in a slow-moving state. It is consolidated, dense and homogenous. It is rich with minerals and nutrients and full of delicious unawakened potential. It will likely remain where it is, as it is, until an outside force overcomes inertia and launches the process of differentiation. As Ngakpa Chogyam says of the earth element: “We like it because it's tradition, and it's tradition because we like it.”

To go beyond (Latin = trans-) form, we need an outside force. In the third chakra, the next step in the creating path, we mobilize VOLITION to set form in motion. We explore the personal will in crafting form in accordance with our desires. Once we've set

form in motion, it becomes quite interesting and we begin to experiment with different shapes, structures, processes and what it feels like to control them. The passionate fascination of the fire element can sometimes cause people to get stuck here, possibly languishing in regressive power dynamics.

Our personal will and desires can create a lot of things, a lot of experiences, but that, too, has limits. In the fifth chakra, the drive to create deepens and the forms and structures we make now go through a sorting process. We are searching for depth and meaning, for what is authentic. As we amplify these forms, we must bring something larger than our personal will to the process. We bring in the larger Will of creation itself for AUTHENTICATION of our creations. This requires that we sort through the various processes that we set in motion in the third chakra and make decisions about which ones we will continue to nurture and which ones we will abandon. When this process is properly aligned with the Will of creation itself, we naturally cultivate forms that are in alignment with our destiny and gifts. We communicate our purpose to the world.

Once we've culled the pathways into which we will funnel our drive to create, and the flow of our destiny moves through them, we bring them, as a kind of offering, to the crown chakra. Here, they transform through contact with the Divine and ALCHEMY is the result. The metaphor of alchemy comes from the process of turning base metal – lead – into gold. However, this deceptively materialistic metaphor was actually a representation of the honing of the human soul and the elevation of consciousness. A simple description of the process of creating

would be reaching down to gather up a handful of earth, forming it into a shape, sanctifying the shape, and making an offering of it to Heaven. Similar imagery to many creation myths around the globe.

Relating

“No, I don’t understand my husband’s theory of relativity, but I know my husband and I know he can be trusted.” --Elsa Einstein

re·late [ri-leyt] verb

1. to tell; give an account of (an event, circumstance, etc.).
2. to bring into or establish association, connection, or relation
3. to have reference (often fol. by to).
4. to have some relation (often fol. by to).
5. to establish a social or sympathetic relationship with a person or thing.

L relâtus, suppletive ptp. of referre to carry back ME referren < L referre to bring back

Our drive to relate begins in the second chakra, where the perception of self and other arises. After the homogenous form of the first chakra, in the second we observe the dual nature of our world. There is self and there is “other.” The other resembles us in some ways and not in others. Sometimes the appearance is very similar indeed, as in identical twins, and the line between self and other may be very thin. Sometimes, as in different ethnic or racial groups, the differences are so great as to be difficult to reconcile. We observe our inner responses to the outer world, project those same responses onto those around us and discover EMPATHY. We can ease suffering and we can create suffering. We can nurture and we

can shun. We can observe the emotional flow in another individual and use it to support or manipulate them. We experiment with these skills to get our own emotional needs fulfilled. We keep score.

This initial drive to relate deepens in the heart chakra. The emotional scorekeeping of the second chakra no longer functions here. The capacity to prioritize our needs with the needs of others becomes much more sophisticated. We no longer hold the needs of “me and mine” above those of the community at large, and the world as a whole. Rather than feeling oppressed by the differences between our process and another’s, we can savor the added richness that this diversity brings to the world and to our ability to feel. We can serve for the sake of service itself and develop much greater ACCEPTANCE of differences. We experience altruism.

In the sixth chakra, we experience the world through all the ways in which consciousness experiences/expresses itself: waking, sleeping, dreaming, nightmares, and mental chatter that relate to our personal processing of our interactions with others and with the world at large. Also available are telepathy, intuition, insight, psychic ability and the capacity to contain and entertain paradox. We have both local and non-local means of relating to our inner world and to others. We can see both the human frailty in another and the divine aspirations striving for expression and realize: “That’s me!” Not “That’s like me!” as we experienced in the second chakra, nor “That’s not like me and that’s okay,” as we experienced in the fourth chakra. We come into CONNECTION that allows for non-local, as well as local, experience and communication, which breaks down the

barriers between self and other. We realize that the microcosm of our inner world and the macrocosm of the outer world are reflections of one another.

In the eighth chakra (called the Transpersonal Point in some systems, or shown as a kind of “confluence” of energies within the crown chakra) those barriers break down completely and we experience the ecstatic state of UNION with all things: seen and unseen.

While these two paths of relating and creating may seem, at first glance, to be too disparate to exist side by side, they are highly interactive. Some individuals may have a more natural flow with one or the other, or spend a certain period of time more deeply immersed in the learning process associated with one or the other. The problem solving involved in these processes gives us opportunities to resolve the lessons associated with our evolution.

If we accept the premise that one of our life purposes is to progress our genetic stream, our lineage, we can see how these two paths serve together, yet separately. On the creating path, we take the tribal foundation, move it through our personal will and higher Will selecting which family patterns to perpetuate and which to end, then offer up these aspirations through our self-actualization. On the relating path, we take the nurturing that we did or did not get and project those early experiences onto those around us to learn about them. As we move through acceptance and connection and finally union, we discover that, like Dorothy with her ruby slippers, what we were seeking from the outside was within us all the time.

A different type of example of this interactive relationship would be that the generative force necessary to fund the creating process does not reside within the process itself. The path of creating must go to the second chakra to pick up the generative force before volition can start actually moving form. In the process of relating, the empathy of the second chakra and the sorting process of self and other must pull the stabilizing personal force of ego from the third chakra before aligning in the fourth with an expanded process of service motivated by altruism. The interactions between these two processes are constant and reciprocal.

How well we are able to make creation manifest in the world has impact on our ability to relate and our relationships provide fuel for creative problem solving. If either process doesn't flow well, it takes resources from the other. Often, when a person feels greater skill with one path, they may seek refuge there when their experiences on the less skillful path are difficult. These tendencies, when repeated often enough, can create habitual imbalances that can affect the whole system.

Either or both of these paths can be affected by using whatever techniques you already use to balance the chakras and connect them to one another. What this model provides is another working framework to use in recognizing imbalance patterns, and new possibilities for discussion with clients who present with the same types of imbalances over and over again. For example, a client who reports frequent stress in several of her important relationships always needs her heart chakra balanced. If she's habitually having problems keeping the heart chakra

energy in balance, perhaps building the relationships between the heart chakra and the second and sixth chakras (and perhaps the eighth as well) will stabilize the heart chakra energy and give her more resources in resolving her relationship issues, by reintegrating the typically stressed chakra with the others on the relating path.

Of course our personal predispositions affect our personal work and our work with clients. One of the qualities that can affect how we interpret the state of balance or imbalance in either of these processes is whether we identify ourselves as introverts or extroverts. And how our personal tendency colors our expectations of “normal” behavior.

Dr. Marti Olsen Laney, in her book [The Introvert Advantage](#), makes a very simple, yet clear distinction between these two types. Introverts build energy when alone and spend energy with others. Extroverts build energy with others and spend energy when alone. Whichever of these perceptual lenses you habitually use may well affect your definition of “creating” and “relating.”

Of course, the map should reflect the territory, not the explorer.

However, an important factor to consider as we prepare to use these techniques is the impact of stress and the Fight/Flight/Freeze response on the quality of energy that we’re able to bring to our experiences. When we are locked into F/F/F in the creation process, we can become reactive and hypersensitive to the local environment, scanning for cues that mean immanent danger and can only create what our senses can contact, nothing new or different, no new uses. We are condemned to repetitions of old forms, known forms. When we choose protection strategies, we

lose growth. When we stop growing we start dying.

In relating, our ability to be truly present to the one in front of us disappears. They transform before our eyes into a ghost from the past, speaking with another voice, from another time. And as goes our attention, so go our chakras... They process at the speed of thought and they hold personal history, family history and genetic history. Here is a system that’s been running a moment-by-moment learning, evaluating and adjusting program from the moment of conception. Our quality of attention changes the balance in our chakras, as does our state of stress as we manage the dynamic tension between our inner and outer realities, and move through these two processes of personal evolution. Clearly this would be a prime location for making very profound changes and for increasing the capacity to tolerate change itself, supporting the process of continued growth and development.

“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.” -- Anais Nin

In other words, we can lose the capacity to be present which is so crucial to both these evolutionary processes. When we drop out of the present moment, it creates a kind of vacuum, which the subconscious abhors, and immediately fills with whatever seems to be the closest “match.” If the match is close enough or has been repeated often enough, we can go on like this for days or even weeks, repeating what is known without reflection.

The present moment is the only place of true creation and true relation. The only place where we can clearly see what’s there to work

with and what can be done with it in new and different ways. Maintaining this present moment awareness is a very difficult thing, but it's the only place to change ourselves, and the world, for the better. Look at the world that we've created by not being in the present moment. We develop more and more creative ways to destroy and go into most opportunities to relate as opportunists. It will likely continue in this way until we move it consciously in another direction. We have the power to do this, for ourselves and with others.

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