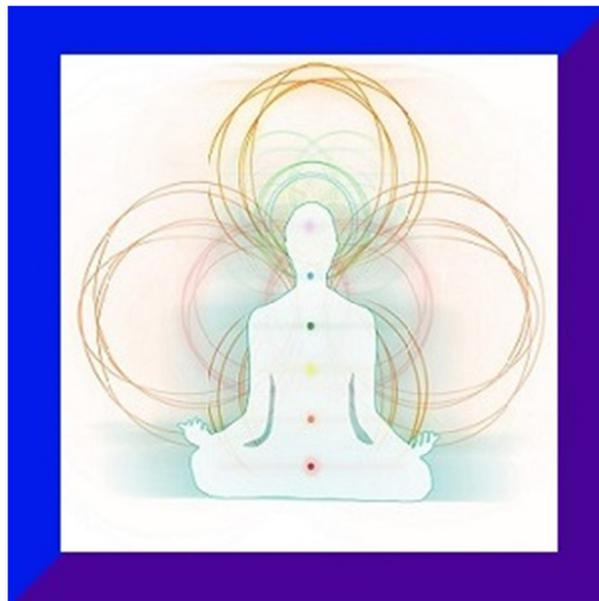


Seven Chakras



River Flow Healing

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Introduction: Getting Back in Balance

Out of balance. Off balance. Chakra rebalancing. What does any of that mean? It has to do with energy.

Energy is everywhere. Everything, living or not, including humans, has an energy field. Since humans tend to be complex, the human energy system is equally so. In addition to a seven-layer energy field, or aura, the human energy system includes seven major centers. Each energy center corresponds to a certain part of the body and certain traits. Energy flows throughout the aura layers and through the chakras, causing the chakras to rotate. The rotation is where chakras get their name; in Sanskrit, the word “cakra” (pronounced “chuck-ruh”) means “wheel,” because that’s how ancient cultures perceived the energy centers. Each of the energy centers is unique, with its own associated color and location on the body, and each is believed to govern certain physical and emotional traits and abilities.

When someone’s energy system is balanced, the right amount of energy is flowing through their energy field and through each chakra. The chakras are rotating at an optimal speed. Someone with a balanced energy system might experience a number of benefits, including:

- A better overall sense of well-being
- Secure relationships with themselves and others
- Better management of stressful situations
- Feeling more rested, and possibly sleeping better
- Stronger connection with spirituality and spiritual practices
- Better ability to let go of negatives and to view things objectively
- Feeling more in balance with themselves and the universe
- Getting along better with other people
- An overall more positive outlook
- More focus and clarity

But since energy, one’s physical state, and one’s mental and emotional state are intertwined, it’s easy for things to get thrown off balance. Unhealthy lifestyle choices such as not eating well or not exercising can cause disruptions in the energy flow. Stress or conflict might cause disruptions or might create blocks in one or more chakras. Not taking time to work on one’s inner self or to have a spiritual practice of some kind can also cause imbalances. (When I say “spiritual practice,” I simply mean whatever feels spiritual for the individual. For one person, that might be attending regular church services; for another, it might mean taking a walk along the beach a couple of times a week.) Illnesses and injuries affect the energy system, and so do traumatic experiences.

When your energy system is out of balance, it can cause negative effects in several areas of your life, including:

- Feeling and acting irritable toward others
- Exhaustion
- What I call “don’t-feel-well-itis”; that is, feeling unwell or “off” but not being able to pinpoint why, even with a doctor’s input
- Lack of clarity or focus
- Feeling overwhelmed even by things that seem small
- Difficulty handling stressful situations
- Conflicts in relationships
- A more negative outlook

There are other negative effects that are specific to the individual chakras. In the next several chapters, I’ll discuss those.

It’s important to note that some issues in the list above can also be symptoms of medical or psychiatric conditions that can only be diagnosed and treated by licensed professionals. If you have concerns about your physical or mental health, please see a doctor.

The good news is that there are ways to bring your chakras and energy system back into balance. One way, of course, is to get professional treatment for injuries or illnesses, or for negative or traumatic experiences in your life. But there are other things you can do on your own:

- Meditate regularly. Even five minutes of sitting in silence will help.
- Begin a spiritual practice, or committing more regularly to one you already have
- Spend time with loved ones and friends with whom you feel happy and positive
- Develop healthier eating, exercise, and sleeping habits
- Create more balance in your life among your career, your family, your self-care, etc.

An energy healing practitioner can help rebalance your energy system using specific techniques that clear blocks in the chakra, repair damage to the energy field, and restore proper flow. These techniques vary somewhat depending on what type of energy healing the practitioner uses, and different techniques and modalities of healing work better for some than for others. I’ve found that Chios, the modality I practice, is very effective at rebalancing the chakras and energy system, though other modalities are effective as well.

One: The Root of the Energy System

The first chakra in the human energy system is the root chakra, or, in Sanskrit, Muladhara. This red chakra, located in the genital area, is the foundation of the energy system. When we talk about “grounding” ourselves, we’re talking about working with our root chakra.

In addition to helping us feel grounded and solid in our foundation, the root chakra governs security and safety. It’s associated with our basic needs, like food, water, and sleep, and with our physical identity and our perception of that. When the root chakra is balanced, we:

- Feel safe and secure
- Feel grounded and centered
- Have a strong foundation for our lives

The root chakra is the one least likely to have imbalances or issues, but problems can definitely occur. If you’re in a situation where you aren’t safe or secure, it impacts your root chakra. Likewise, if your basic needs aren’t being met consistently, the root chakra is affected.

If your root chakra is out of balance, you might:

- Feel insecure or endangered even when you are in a safe, secure situation
- Worry more than necessary about having the resources to meet your needs
- Feel disconnected from the rest of the world
- Have trouble sleeping or resting
- Be uncertain about the direction of your life

When you build a house, you have to start with a strong foundation. Likewise, in building and living your life, your foundation has to be strong and in balance. When your root chakra is out of balance, first examine the basics of your life. Are you safe and secure in your living situation, your relationships, your job? If not, is this something you can change?

If you are living in an unsafe situation, there are resources and agencies that can help you find safety. Please reach out for help if your home situation is unsafe.

Do you have the food and water you need? This doesn’t necessarily mean not having enough food or water, though that would obviously cause problems and is something you might be able to address through a social service agency. But having your need for nourishment met also means eating and drinking things that are good for your body. Are you eating in healthy ways?

When your basic needs are met, if your root chakra is out of balance, the easiest way to bring it back toward balance is through grounding techniques. An effective technique is to sit with your spine straight and your feet flat on the floor, and feel or visualize energy coming up from the

ground through you. Sense or envision the energy flow as a circuit between you and the earth. Doing this daily for as little as a minute or two at a time will help rebalance your root chakra.

Two: Your Creative Center

The human energy system's second chakra is the sacral chakra. In Sanskrit, this chakra is called Svadisthana. It's located in the center of your lower abdomen.

The sacral chakra governs creativity, sexuality, emotions, and fantasies. Sexuality, of course, is often thought of in conjunction with passion, and that plus the chakra's orange color may lead people to associating it with fire. Actually, the sacral chakra's element is water, meaning that it is also connected with flow and flexibility. When our sacral chakra is balanced, we:

- Are able to manage and express our emotions effectively
- Connect emotionally and through our senses with the world around us
- Experience joy in our life
- Express our sexuality and sexual desires in healthy ways

Note that "healthy" in this case is subjective. One person's healthy means of expressing their sexuality might be extremely detrimental to someone else. Expressing your sexuality in a healthy way is entirely about doing it in a way that feels most beneficial and comfortable to you and does not cause harm to you or others.

Because of its relationship with sex and sexuality, things which in our society can be controversial and cause a lot of pain and judgment, the sacral chakra, in my experience, is one of the most likely to be out of balance. If you're suppressing or denying your emotions, sexuality, desires, or creativity, your sacral chakra will be imbalanced. Toxic or abusive relationships will also cause problems with this chakra. If you're in an abusive relationship, please seek help from authorities, a professional such as a doctor or therapist, or a domestic abuse hotline.

If your sacral chakra is out of balance, you might:

- Develop or engage in addictive behaviors
- Be controlled by your emotions rather than being able to manage them
- Feel numb or disconnected from the world
- Engage in sexual fantasies or activities that are unhealthy *for you* (again, "healthy" as far as sex goes is highly subjective)
- Feel mired in a specific mood or emotion

The sacral chakra is integral in having balance in your life as a whole. Having out-of-control emotions or trying to feed an addiction negatively affect not only you, but those around you, particularly loved ones, family, and friends. Lack of joy or connection in your life can be particularly harmful, as it can add to destructive behaviors or isolation.

To improve the balance of your sacral chakra, the first thing I recommend is work with crystals. Orange-colored crystals such as citrine and orange carnelian can be carried or worn as jewelry to help bring balance to the sacral chakra. Because of the sacral chakra's connection with water, and in women with the menstrual cycle, it also has a strong connection to the moon and therefore moonstone is another beneficial crystal for healing the sacral chakra.

Engaging in creative activities that you enjoy, such as writing or singing, will benefit you as well, and so will making an effort to connect with your sexuality--including your sexual relationship with yourself. To work with your emotions, which will also help to rebalance this chakra, explore emotional management techniques, including therapeutic techniques such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) or Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), both of which should be taught and guided by a licensed professional. Some energy healing modalities, and the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT, or "tapping") are also beneficial.

Three: The Center of Self

The third chakra in the human energy system is the solar plexus chakra, which in Sanskrit is called Manipura. It's also sometimes known as the navel chakra, indicating its approximate location on the body.

The solar plexus chakra governs our will and personal power, our mental abilities, and most importantly our sense of self. It's tied to self-confidence and independence, and also related to how we connect with others. The energetic cords that bind us to other people originate in this chakra.

When our solar plexus chakra is balanced, we:

- Stand in our personal power, and use that power in positive and constructive ways
- Know and understand what we want in our lives
- Have healthy and effective connections with others
- Are confident in who we are
- Recognize and accept who we are outside of any relationships with others

Many of us have had experiences in our lives that have impacted our confidence, sense of self, and ability to form healthy and beneficial attachments to others. These experiences may include bullying or abuse, or may be more subtle, such as being raised in an environment in which you were expected to be what others told you to be rather than feeling as if you had the right to choose your own path. If your solar plexus chakra is out of balance, you might:

Experience poor self-confidence and low self-esteem

- Be overly dependent on others, including their opinions and perceptions of you
- Have unhealthy or toxic attachments to others, or be unable to form attachments
- Feel and act powerless or helpless
- Have difficulty in social situations
- Have a lack of direction or purpose in your life

Without a true sense of who we are as a person, it's difficult to live our best life. When we continually form unhealthy connections with others, it impacts us in many negative ways, including perpetuating the forming of that type of connections and continuing to hold us down in negative self-esteem and inability to find a direction in life. The solar plexus chakra is the center of our self, and its healthy functioning and balance is imperative if we're to live a healthy, positive life.

Meditation is a relatively easy way to improve the balance of your solar plexus chakra. Spend time in meditation connecting with your inner self. Underneath all the external "dirt" of your

daily life and your past experiences, who are you? Quiet meditation, either on your own or guided, can help you uncover that self and strengthen it.

Another way to bring this chakra back into balance is by cutting energetic cords that form attachments to others who no longer serve you, such as people you knew in the past who are no longer part of your life, or people who are still in your life but are toxic to you. While there are ways to cut energetic cords yourself, if you are newer to energy work or are uncertain of how cord-cutting works, I strongly advise either asking your guides to cut the cords for you, if you are in communication with your guides, or seeking cord-cutting from an energy-healing practitioner.

Four: The Heart of the Energy System

The human energy system's fourth chakra is the heart chakra, or, in Sanskrit, Anahata. This chakra is located approximately in the center of the chest. Because of this, when treating people with breasts using hands-on energy work, the hand position needs to be altered. It's also a good idea for a healer to ask whether the client is okay with having hands-on treatment for that chakra.

The heart chakra, as one might expect, is responsible for love and relationships, including self-love and our relationship with ourselves. This chakra also governs transformation, awareness, and insight, and affects our ability to go through the grieving process.

- When our heart chakra is balanced, we:
- Are able to give and receive love
- Feel love for ourselves
- Have positive, constructive relationships, especially with family or partners
- Are able to recognize the need for change, and undergo the process of change
- Are self-aware and have insights into our lives and possibly others' lives

A number of things can cause issues with the heart chakra. If we feel unloved or unwanted, the chakra will become underactive or blocked. Feeling undeserving of love, or not having love for ourselves, is also likely to block the energy flow through this chakra. Abuse, bullying, having our "heart broken," being treated poorly or rejected by family, especially when we're children, all can have a profound negative impact on this chakra.

If your heart chakra is out of balance, you may:

- Be unable or unwilling to accept love from others or yourself
- Be constantly on the defensive
- Depend on others' attention and approval, or act as a "pleaser"
- Have a strong inclination to try to be a "savior"; or, alternatively, be stuck in victim mindset
- Isolate yourself even from partners and family, and avoid social interactions

Love is one of the most basic human needs. From the moment we're born, we require not only food and shelter, but love and attention from our parents or caregivers. Studies have shown that even when an infant's physical needs are met, if they aren't shown love and given opportunities to bond with parents or caregivers, their ability to form healthy attachments to and relationships with others can be permanently compromised. And although the saying goes, "You can't love others if you don't love yourself," the reality is that you may be able to feel love for others, but if you don't feel it for yourself, you'll be unable to accept it from anyone else.

The heart chakra is in some ways the most vulnerable to imbalances and blocks, because it's where vulnerability is focused. Phrases in our language such as "open your heart" reference the need to let yourself feel and experience love, while leaving yourself open to possible pain. This is not an easy thing to do, but to fully live and enjoy our lives, we need an open heart.

One of the seemingly easiest, but perhaps most difficult, ways to address an imbalanced heart chakra is through practicing self-love. Something as simple as looking in the mirror and saying, "I love myself" can begin to improve the energy flow. At first, if you've struggled with self-love, you might not even believe it when you say it, but the energy will begin to shift, and you will come to believe it if you keep trying. Green or pink crystals such as malachite, emerald, rhodochrosite, and rose quartz are also good for this chakra.

Five: Your Communication Center

In the human energy system, the fifth chakra is the throat chakra, or, in Sanskrit, Visuddha. This energy center governs our communication and expression, as well as knowledge of our purpose in life. The throat chakra is often connected with the sacral chakra; the sacral chakra is responsible for the energy we use to create, while the throat chakra's energy is needed in order for us to share our creations with the world.

When your throat chakra is balanced, you're able to:

- Express yourself clearly
- Speak or otherwise express your truth, without or despite fear of judgment from others
- Effectively communicate with others to resolve issues or conflicts
- Voice your thoughts and emotions in constructive ways
- Share your gifts and creations with others when you choose to do so

Communication is a complicated thing for us humans. How many times as a child were you told things like, "Don't say that, it isn't appropriate," or "Be quiet unless someone speaks to you" or "The adults are talking, it isn't your turn"? Some of us are taught from an early age that what we want to say doesn't matter to anyone else, and we learn that it's unacceptable to tell anyone how we feel, especially if they might take it personally due to being the cause of those feelings. Sometimes we're also taught to hide our gifts and creations; I was told repeatedly as a child not to talk about energy, magic, or guides because people would think I was crazy and would lock me away.

As adults, we're also told or shown that talking about certain things is unacceptable. If we're struggling with past trauma or with a mental illness, we might hear, "Don't talk about that, no one wants to know." We learn to be ashamed of these difficulties, which leads to many people not asking for help in dealing with them. In other areas of our lives, we don't express anger or hurt, especially not to someone whose actions contributed to those feelings, because it simply "isn't okay" to talk about negative emotions. And some of us, because of our upbringings or because of negative results in the past, don't even attempt to process and resolve conflicts; we just hold everything in until we can't hold it anymore.

Any of those things can lead to imbalances and blocks in the throat chakra. If your throat chakra is imbalanced, you may:

- Have difficulty expressing yourself verbally
- Speak about subjects to inappropriate people or at inappropriate times (for example, oversharing about your medical history with a stranger on the subway)
- Experience shyness and feel anxious about conversations or social situations

- Not listen to others
- Have difficulty with emotional regulation due to repressing emotions over a long period of time
- Lack a sense of purpose or vocation

Communication impacts our lives in more ways than we realize. It's a source of connection; even as newborns, we communicate by crying, looking at people who hold us, wrapping our hands around their fingers, and so on. It's how we relate to others by sharing thoughts, interests, and experiences. It allows us to let out our emotions rather than burying them, and it enables us to solve problems and resolve conflicts. And those are only a few examples.

One of the most effective things I recommend when people's throat chakras are out of balance is to write about what they've chosen not to communicate. This might take the form of writing a letter to someone who has hurt or angered you, to whom you weren't able to speak about the situation. I generally suggest that once the letter is written, you burn it to release that energy, rather than sending it to the person. It may also be journaling about the emotions, situations, etc. that you've been holding in. When possible and safe, especially with family and partners, I might also suggest setting a time to discuss things you've been reluctant to bring up with them.

Several crystals are also effective in balancing and improving function of the throat chakra. Basically, any blue crystal will have a positive effect, since blue is the color of this chakra. However, I've found that sodalite, lapis lazuli, and blue lace agate are especially beneficial. Carrying one of these crystals will help, but I would recommend wearing one as a necklace, as that brings it closer to your throat chakra.

Six: Your Third Eye

The sixth chakra is what many people refer to as the “third eye,” and this is, in fact, the name of the chakra. In Sanskrit, it’s called Ajna (pronounced “ag-ya”). Located in the center of the forehead, this chakra governs psychic abilities, concentration and focus, sleep, wisdom, intuition, and inspiration.

When your third eye chakra is balanced, you may:

- Be in tune with and willing to follow your intuition
- Be able to concentrate on tasks until they’re completed
- Focus on tasks, goals, etc., and have an understanding of how to approach them
- Sleep well and awaken feeling rested and restored
- Be connected with your inner wisdom and inspiration

During childhood, we might be attuned to our intuition and inner wisdom. We might accept psychic abilities such as “just knowing” things about people or future events. Our minds might be full of ideas and inspiration about what we want to do or create, and we have the focus and understanding to follow through.

As we grow, some of us are fortunate enough to have those gifts accepted, nurtured, and honored by the people around us, especially our families. Some of us are not so fortunate, and learn that our intuition and abilities are things to fear and hide. By the time we reach adulthood, in addition to suppressing those things, we might be too busy to attend to our need for rest and sleep, which in turn has a negative impact on our concentration and ability to focus. All of these things can lead to energetic issues with the third eye chakra.

If your third eye chakra is out of balance or blocked, you might:

- Experience lack of clarity about situations or your life in general
- Sleep poorly, for example struggling to fall asleep or waking frequently throughout the night
- Have frequent nightmares
- Be disconnected from or ignore your intuition and inner wisdom
- Have difficulty focusing on and completing tasks
- Experience headaches or chronic pain issues such as migraines

Many aspects of our ability to function in our lives are affected by the third eye chakra. Sleep is the most obvious, and the most likely for adults to have issues with. In our work lives and our daily lives, the ability to focus on what we’re doing and concentrate on each task is vital.

Ignoring our intuition and innate psychic abilities can lead to us making poor choices, or to bringing people and situations into our lives that are far from beneficial. On a physical level,

forcing ourselves to reject and suppress psychic abilities and intuition can lead to frequent headaches and, along with lack of sleep, exhaustion.

The most effective way to counteract imbalances in the third eye chakra is meditation. As we meditate, we connect with ourselves, including our inner wisdom and intuition. We may gain answers to problems and questions our conscious minds have been unable to solve. Additionally, meditation can lead to feeling more rested and being better able to relax and sleep.

Seven: The Energetic Crown

The seventh of the major human chakras is the crown chakra, which, in Sanskrit, is called Sahasrara. This chakra is often associated with the sound “Om,” which is considered a sacred sound and is vocalized at the beginning and end of many Sanskrit prayers and mantras.

As might be presumed from that association, the crown chakra is the center of spirituality. It governs our connection to our spiritual paths and the Divine and to wisdom both within and outside ourselves. This chakra helps us free ourselves from limiting beliefs and patterns, and to remain present in each moment.

A balanced crown chakra leads to:

- A sense of spirituality and divine energy
- Connection with the universe and the Divine
- Being unaffected by unhealthy thought and behavior patterns
- Freedom from negative beliefs that limit our potential
- Engagement in and enjoyment of each moment as it occurs

In today’s world, many of us have lost a connection with spiritual beliefs, and a number of people no longer believe in divinity, whether represented as a being or simply as energy that’s present within all of us. Rather than being present in the moment, we’ve learned to dwell on the past or worry about the future to the extent that each moment passes with us barely being aware of it. Negative patterns we developed in response to harmful experiences or as defense mechanisms live on in us long after the source of or need for them has diminished, and sometimes it seems it’s become almost trendy to discuss and label our negative patterns and limiting beliefs without actually doing anything about them.

Naturally, this lack of connection and the focus on past and future rather than present can have a detrimental effect on our crown chakras. An imbalanced crown chakra might cause:

- A sense of disconnection
- Excessive cynicism and negativity
- Constantly being “in your head” rather than grounded in your body
- Obsession over past or future events at the cost of focus on the present
- Closed-mindedness

As with the third eye chakra, the most effective means of improving and restoring the functioning of the crown chakra is through meditation, which by its nature leads to connection with ourselves and the energy around us, as well as keeping us in the present moment. Additionally, beginning a daily spiritual practice can help. This isn’t based on religion, or even necessarily on what many people mean when they talk about spirituality. A spiritual practice can

be anything that causes you to feel connected to yourself and the present, whether that's daily prayers, magical rituals, or simply a walk on the beach or playing with your children or pets. Meditation also constitutes a spiritual practice.

Bringing your crown chakra back into balance and removing blocks from it can help you feel more connected to the world as a whole, and especially to yourself and your loved ones. It can also help you find joy in your daily life rather than being stuck in the past experiences that may have caused you to lose joy, or being focused on future events that will "make you happy."

To Sum Up...

A variety of things can cause imbalances and damage to your chakras and energy system. As human beings, some of these things are difficult, if not impossible, to avoid.

Maintaining a healthy balance in your energy system can contribute to maintaining a healthy balance in your life. As you work with your energy system, either on your own or with the assistance of an energy healing practitioner, you are likely to find certain situations in your life easier to deal with. You might experience improved overall health. Although it isn't very common and I wouldn't guarantee the result, I've even seen people who are living with chronic illness experience the lessening or disappearance of their symptoms.

A number of tools exist to help you create and maintain energetic balance. I've included some of them in the preceding chapters. As I noted in the introduction, I've found Chios® Energy Healing, which is my modality of practice, to be especially effective in restoring energetic function and balance. That isn't to say other types of energy healing don't work. However, I will say that the ones I've tried other than Chios don't work *for me*.

I offer Chios® sessions in person in the greater Boston, Massachusetts, area, and by distance around the world. There are many other qualified practitioners in other parts of the US and the world. And there are several other forms of energy healing which you might find more effective for you. If you feel I can help you, please feel free to email me at kim@riverflowhealing.com.

Your energetic health is as important as, and is entwined with, your physical and mental health. Improving one improves all, but energetic health is often overlooked, rejected as “woo-woo stuff,” or outside people's awareness entirely. I hope this collection of information has helped you find ways to maintain your energetic health. Be well.

Thanks for taking the time to read and work with this book. I hope you've found it helpful. If you're interested in continuing this work, or want support as you find and maintain balance, please feel free to email me at kim@riverflowhealing.com or visit <http://www.riverflowhealing.com>. I'm an energy healer, coach, and channel, but I am not a licensed professional. I can listen and offer suggestions, but I strongly recommend also seeking professional help or support when needed.

For more support, suggestions, and stories from others' lives, please join our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/APlacetoBeYourself/>.

Kim Ramsey-Winkler is an energy worker, channel, speaker, and author in Boston, Massachusetts. Over the course of her life, she's been fortunate enough to have several people, including two now-adult offspring and her husband and partner, help her create a new story to tell herself. Under the pen names Jo Ramsey and Karenna Colcroft, she has had nearly 80 novels, novellas, and short stories published over the past decade.

Kim's passion for helping others, and her own experiences as a trauma survivor, have led her to work in which she has the opportunity to guide people to telling their own new stories and finding the balance they need. Chios® Energy Healing has been her modality of choice since 2005 because of its profound effectiveness in helping her identify and address elements of trauma that had held her back much of her life. She has been a Certified Chios Master Teacher since 2006.

