



Anatomy of the Subtle Energy System

There are a variety of components that make up the human energy system. All aspects of the system are intimately connected and form a finely woven network of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energies. The main components of this system are the chakras, meridians (or nadis), strange flows and Celtic weave. Although all of the components are important, for purposes of clarity and simplicity, we will focus primarily on the two main parts of the system: the chakras and meridians.

The word “chakra” is from Sanskrit and translates to “wheel of light.” Chakras are actually centers of electromagnetic energy that are located throughout the body; they provide a way for energy to enter and exit your body and help regulate all types of energy flow: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. There are seven major chakras in the midline of your body. They run from the base of your spine to the top of your head. You also have minor chakras in each joint of your body – even the small ones on your fingers and toes! There are also chakras on the palms of your hands and the soles of your feet. Each of the major chakras is associated with a particular function, physically, psychologically and spiritually. These energy centers are connected to each other and to your body’s organs through an extensive network of fluid-like energies. The Indian name for these channels is “nadis.” Traditional Chinese Medicine (and most Western practitioners) calls them “meridians.” These channels run parallel to your nervous system.

Meridians are electromagnetic spaces rather than concrete structures within the body. Chakras are more like swirling vortexes of electromagnetic activity. Energy moves through them like a cyclone or water moving down a funnel. By alternately spinning clockwise and counterclockwise, our chakras maintain a dynamic balance between receiving and building energy (done through the clockwise motion) and releasing excess energy (done through the counterclockwise motion).

How Chakras and Meridians Influence Well-Being

The strength, flow and frequencies of your energy system determine your overall mental and physical health. In Energy Psychology, emotional imbalance is viewed as a disruption in the flow of energy through the chakras and meridians. Similarly, in Energy Medicine, physical pain is thought to be caused by this disruption. Although each of these disciplines views the disruption of energy at a different place on the continuum of progression from mind to body, both of these approaches relieve pain and restore health by treating the human energy system. If you are aware of how your energy system relates to your well-being, it is easy to understand why this is so.

There are two ways that chakras influence your health: they “feed” your endocrine glands, and they “feed” your aura. Let’s first consider their affect on your endocrine system.

In her book, *Molecules of Emotion: The Science behind Mind-Body Medicine*, Dr. Candace Pert describes the chakras as “minibrains”: nodal points of electrical and chemical activity that receive process and distribute information from and to the rest of your “bodymind.”

These minibrains reside in the midline of your body, where there is also an endocrine gland and a major nerve plexus. The seven endocrine glands are fed by their associated chakras. The endocrine glands manufacture hormones and supply them to the bloodstream, where they are carried to the organs and tissues in your body. The seven nerve plexuses, which are also located along your spinal cord, are responsible for transmitting nerve impulses. They are also dense with neuropeptides.

Neuropeptides have been dubbed the “molecules of emotion” as they are the chemistry associated with our emotions. They do not rely on transmission through the nervous system. If you are experiencing happiness, for example, you will find neuropeptides associated with happiness in your body; if you are sad, there will be “sad” neuropeptides in your body, and so forth.

Each of the seven areas that contain these structures can be seen as a model of the bodymind. Your endocrine gland represents your body; the neuropeptides your emotions; the nerve plexus correlates with your mind; the subtle energy of the chakra correlates with your spirit. If a chakra is damaged it may cause disruption in the function of its associated endocrine gland. And, because the activity of the endocrine glands and nerve plexuses is interrelated and interdependent, if an endocrine gland isn't functioning properly, it may affect your entire bodymind.

The more you understand the flow of subtle energy, the more you can see how your thoughts, emotions, spirit and physical body are interrelated. The activity of any one aspect ultimately affects each of the others. Your thoughts influence your emotions. Your thoughts and emotions influence your spirit. Your thoughts, emotions and spirit energy are reflected in the health of your physical body. An imbalance in your body can drag you down ... depressing your spirit, emotions and leading to negative thoughts. It is a two way street and can well turn into a never ending feedback loop of increasing negativity unless there is intervention to shift the process.

No matter what level of disruption is present, it can always be helpful to use some form of energy work. Obviously the deeper the problem the more different types of intervention may be advisable or required to bring about healing.

In any case, as we view our energetic anatomy and the clear model of mind-body-spirit that it provides it becomes even more obvious that we need to address ourselves, our lives and our health with a comprehensive approach that treats us as a Whole Being!

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