

Heart Chakra - Anahata

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The Heart Chakra is the energy of love. To know love is to know yourself because you can't love unless you love yourself. If you love it is true to you. It matters not how others see it through their eyes.

Anyone who has experienced grief or a broken heart will know and understand how fragile existence can be and how fleeting our time is in this form on this plane. Grief and heartbreak can and does lead to early death. It can lead to closing off and cultivating the bitterness of a long and cold winter in our soul. A broken heart can sometimes never heal and most certainly is never forgotten.

The Yin and Yang of love with the Yang being the warmth and strength of the invigorating state of physical love is balanced with the Yin of cold heartbreak, hurt, sorrow and regret. The Yin is the unseen energy you carry with you that comes from the essence - your "Chi" or "Qi". The Yang being the hot blood running through your veins.

The challenge for us all is to be centered, to live in balance and to connect our essence to the universal unconditional acceptance of love.

For a martial artist it may seem strange to talk of love when the focus is on survival, gathering all your strength and power to inflict the maximum pain and damage in the shortest amount of time but then we remember why we train. We train because we love the knowledge that we can control our world, that we can protect ourselves and the ones we love. We remember that we love the strength and vitality that we feel in our bodies when we refine them through exercise, discipline and fitness. We love the confidence we gain when we understand body mechanics, strategy and develop foresight and balance. To be the best martial artist we can be, we need to understand the Heart Chakra and channel the Yin and Yang, the opposing forces within and without and perfect the physical, mental and spiritual self.

This overview of the Heart Chakra is provided from a martial arts perspective from the darkness at noon from the Makura No Hiruma of Anderson Bushi Kai. I hope that these insights help you on your journey to balance and fulfilment.

The Heart Chakra Overview

The Heart Chakra, Anahata (unhurt), is the fourth Chakra and is the seat of our Soul. It is the energy centre of love, happiness, universal compassion and rules all of our relationships, our perception of love and our ability to give and receive love.

Like Yin Yang, the Heart Chakra represents the duality of life. The higher Heart Chakra rules universal unconditional love where our true self exists and the lower Heart Chakra rules human love where we experience anger, lust, sorrow and sadness.

Through the Heart Chakra we can connect our Yang physical and Yin spiritual energies. The Yin dreams and connects ideas and intention with the Yang bringing that down into physical creation. Heart Chakra is Yin at the centre of the positive Yang Chi energy in the body. Chakras are Yin when they receive energy, Yang when they emit energy. Sadness is Yin, while joyfulness is Yang. Yin is

insidious and feminine. Yang is active and masculine. The Heart Chakra is where body meets spirit, where masculine and feminine energies merge and opposites unite. Managing Yin Yang is like balancing the human and true self. We can raise our consciousness through the power of love or lower our consciousness through the power of fear. It is all a balance.

This Chakra is to reach for the heavens as it is directly connected to the astral layer of aura which is the layer of love associated with expression on a physical, emotional and mental level. The Heart Chakra bridges the denser, lower vibrations of the Yang physical plane and the finer, higher vibrations of the Yin spiritual plane with the aura projecting from the body as a bright rose colour.

The Heart Chakra is where we move beyond the focus on the individual self toward a focus on relationships and connection in a state of openness and acceptance that brings us in touch with our world and ourselves. Your relationships may come as a person or as a thing like a sport, a hobby, your job or your passion and beliefs.

Challenge - grief

Purpose - to balance wisdom, power and love in our relationships and in our actions.

Proverb – "Love Heals All" (anonymous)

Location - in the spine behind the sternum at the level of the heart at the center of the chest between the breasts. It is the center and balance point of the Chakra system and the line that separates Yin and Yang.

Symbol

The symbol of the Heart Chakra is a circle with twelve red petals and a downward-pointing triangle and an upward-pointing triangle forming a six-pointed star. The intersecting triangles are the union of the opposite types of energies of Yin and Yang, spirit and matter.

Sense - touch

Energy - love

Colour - green, and the secondary colour is pink.

Like Yin and Yang, the Heart Chakra has two components you always want to keep in balance. The lower Heart Chakra is green and the higher Heart Chakra is pink. The astral aura is pink and is closely tied to the emotions so when we are in love a pink aura can be seen projecting from the Heart Chakra. The left side of the Heart Chakra is red and positively charged, the right side is dark green and negatively charged and the core of the heart centre is pure white. The red corresponds to the rose light of love while the green signifies the lower emotional body focussed on self, security, attachment and pride in the physical and emotional. The white signifies spiritual purity with the Heart Chakra mediating between the two. Between the Yin and Yang, the darkness and the noon, is the purity of the spirit reconfirmed in the Heart Chakra.

Crystal - rose quartz, aventurine, jade and peridot which is a light green stone that will work simultaneously on the Heart Chakra and the Solar Plexus Chakra.

Element – air with energy associated to breath and movement. We hold too tight and we suck the oxygen out of our relationships.

Mantra – Yam

Vowel Sound – Ay

Musical Note - F

Drum Beat - 136.10 Hz = C#; relaxing, soothing, balancing

Frequency – 341 (1:12) F

Rights - to love

Gland – thymus which is in charge of regulating the immune system.

Organs - sense is touch and the sense organ is the skin with the hands being the organ of action. When the Heart Chakra is awakened healers emit a high vibrational energy field through deep inner peace and spiritual insight communicating loving healing power through the power of touch.

Physical Association – the cardiac plexus system which rules over the heart, the circulatory system (lungs), the thymus gland as well as arms and hands.

Psychological Function - love

Identity – social identity

Plane – balance

Planet – Venus (lunar, feminine), Sun

Deity – Vishnu, Lakshmi, Krishna

Animal - deer

Incense – jasmin, lavender, rose

Essential Oil - rose, jasmine, eucalyptus and lavender which in Chinese medicine circulates heart Qi and can restore vitality, relieve tension and restore calm.

Diet - vegetables and leafy greens like kale, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and celery.

Tea - green tea.

Spices - sage, basil, thyme and parsley.

Affirmations

I am wanted and loved;
I am open to love and kindness;
My heart is full of gratitude;
I am calm, present, and centered

Stances – Yoi

Blocks – any open handed block for example Mawashi block

Kata – Tensho. Tensho means rotating palms. This kata emphasizes continuous, flowing movements, deep breathing and soft flowing hand movements.

Exercises – pushups, swimming (breast stroke) and bear hugs.

Runes – Jera, Ansuz, Mannaz and Thurisaz. The twelfth Rune Jera is about cyclic phenomenon and repeating situations. The fourth rune Ansuz is about logical thought, communication and inspiration and is of the left Nerve Channel. It is the Rune of Ódhinn who has unlocked the psychic heart to manifest miracles. The twentieth rune Mannaz is of the right Nerve Channel. Ansuz Mannaz symbolizes the circle of humanity and empathic inter-connections between people. Thurisaz relates to emotional power relying on a healthy partnership between the subconscious and conscious minds and mediation between body and spirit. The Heart Chakra corresponds to Midgard the realm of mankind and is about our feelings of our identity.

Tarot Suite - swords

Lesson – first we must love and accept ourselves before we can love others – the most important lesson we have in life is forgiveness (of ourselves and others).

Yoga Poses - cobra, cow face, eagle, upward-facing dog

Psychological and Behavioural Characteristics

Capacity to love, compassion, empathy, forgiveness, acceptance, grieving, relationships, connection, center of awareness and insights, harmonious and peaceful way of being.

Balance

When the Heart Chakra is balanced you will feel open and at ease, connected to life and those around you. To be balanced is to be centred and to feel worthy of love, able to open up to giving and receiving. You will be self-aware and happy to accept yourself for who you are. You will be self-actualised and not limited by your ego as your consciousness is opened and you know that to love others is to love yourself because we are all connected on a universal level. It is at the heart of the matter, in the heart center, that you experience peace and deep inner balance and the ability to accept all the circumstances of your life.

Physically you are open through your chest and spine. You stand straight, shoulders back and look people in the eye. You are not hunched over or round shouldered as though on a subconscious level curled in to protect your heart from hurt. A balanced Heart Chakra will be reflected by a healthy immune system that doesn't overprotect causing allergic reactions or under-protect allowing bacteria to attack like colds and flu.

The Heart Chakra is where we connect with others we love so life experiences like death, divorce, rejection, broken relationships, breach of trust, injustice and emotional abuse will cause imbalance.

Heart Chakra pain is associated with having a "broken heart," often from being let down in some way by someone you love. Most of us have been in love and have been hurt and many have built walls and put up barriers to protect from getting hurt again. We use in our everyday conversations words like hard hearted, broken hearted, heartless, heart felt.

When the Heart Chakra is under-active and you may feel unworthy of love and close down your heart out of fear. When the Heart Chakra is out of balance you may feel drained, depleted, stuck in thoughts or patterns, you struggle with boundaries and have trouble understanding etiquette, have low self-awareness and often unable to accept feedback. You are filled with negativity, fear, hatred, cruelty, sadness, moodiness, mistrust or possessiveness. You can also experience a lack of self-love, have difficulty allowing others into your life or suffer immune disorders, depression, grief and fatigue.

The Heart Chakra is the element of air and is located in the chest so a lot of the physical symptoms of imbalance are connected to the lungs, ribs, and heart. Physical symptoms of a blockage include poor circulation, heart troubles, and respiratory illness like asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis and pneumonia. Symptoms of a blockage can also include a cardiac or respiratory issue or a feeling of pain and heaviness in the heart with conditions such as heart disease, breast cancer, stiffness in the shoulders, chest and upper back, hypertension and problems breathing.

Our hearts can speak to us if we listen. Some hearts murmur, some people follow their hearts and others their heads whilst some have died of a broken heart.

Broken Heart Syndrome is medically recognised condition known as Stress Cardiomyopathy or Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy where intense emotional or physical stress can cause rapid and severe heart muscle weakness. It can occur after emotional and physical stress such as fear, surprise, anger, the death of a loved one and it can fuel a stroke or seizure. With Stress Cardiomyopathy, the heart muscle is overwhelmed by a massive amount of adrenaline that is suddenly produced in response to stress. Women are eight to nine times more likely to experience Stress Cardiomyopathy than men with the average age of those affected being around 60 years.

Balancing and Healing the Heart Chakra

Deep heart hurts can result in aura obstructions called heart scars which can hold a lot of old pain. It is only when you open your heart to love that you can forgive yourself and others, connect deeply and rise above anger, hatred and envy to a higher state of consciousness. As the Kundalini awakens and opens the Heart Chakra you have a much higher intuitive capacity to understand the fragility of all things and can experience a release of old pains and a sense of freedom in balance and harmony within your body, mind and between yourself and others.

Loving and forgiving yourself and others is central to healing and releasing blockages as holding on to pain from the past hurts you the most. If we can function from our higher heart, our love is unconditional and we are accepting and free of judgment. It is the challenge of our hearts to connect with and receive the love of our higher self so that we can heal and experience self-love and then we can love others.

There are many ways to heal a broken heart and to balance through the physical, mental and spiritual realms.

Healing on the Physical Plane

Our Environment

Air is the element and green is the colour of the Heart Chakra so getting into nature and breathing deeply the fresh bush air can help manage an overactive Heart Chakra and start the healing process.

Wearing green or pink and surrounding yourself with these colours can help with balance as can wearing green and pink stones and crystals close to the heart.

Light green candles, burn incense and breathe deeply.

Massage

The Heart Chakra rules the sense of touch so healing comes from massage, hugs, holding someone's hand.

Your Posture

Stand straight, puff your chest out, roll your shoulder blades down and back and focus on the middle point of your back between your shoulder blades. Breathe into your chest deeply. Open your hands as you stand and walk with open palms and stretched fingers. Open hands show an attitude of giving and receiving.

Heart Health

Eat well particularly lots of green foods, drink lots of water and exercise regularly to maintain healthy weight, reduce stiffness and manage stress through supportive relationships and meditation. Don't smoke and check your blood levels every three months for cholesterol and glucose. Know the signs of a heart attack. If you have symptoms of chest pain or shortness of breath when under significant stress consult your doctor without delay.

Healing on the Mental Plane

Service to others

Do some volunteer work. Do small random acts of kindness regularly and notice how it makes you feel. Pay it forward and do something for someone else. Do your best to forgive someone.

Gratitude

To open your Heart Chakra be grateful for you and work towards self-acceptance by creating and repeating your own affirmations of gratitude and self-acceptance. When you find yourself holding onto a negative emotion, take a deep breath center yourself and catch your thoughts and realign them into a more positive space. Find something every day to be grateful for and breathe in that feeling of gratitude. Practice the art of acceptance. If you can't change it, forget it and instead focus on what you can control. Most importantly, tell someone you love them and you appreciate them without expecting anything in return. Be thankful. Gratitude is a great way to stop finding fault in everyone around you.

Healing on the spiritual plane

Meditation

Pink - meditate and picture a loving pink light entering your heart and then radiating back out.

Green - meditate by imaging a ball of green healing energy in your chest, gently removing the blockage and opening your heart.

Love - meditate and take a few deep breaths and enjoy the feeling of breathing. Think of someone you love deeply. Let the feeling of love fill your heart. Gently turn this feeling of love inwards, sending yourself this same unconditional love.

Meditational travel to your secret garden - take a few deep breaths listen for the beating of your heart. Think green, think forest, think of a secret garden that is all for you with all of the things you love surrounding you. Breathe in the air, move around your own special garden that is safe and just for you. Allow the green to fill you and feel at ease, comfortable, a deep waterfall flowing through your center, a strong tree with leaves blowing in the breeze to sit beneath, some lush grass to walk on with bare feet. Take a seat and enjoy where you are. Spend as long as you like here, feel the love in your being. This is yours. You can come here any time.

Drumming

The heart has a beat, a rhythm. Drumming activates the Heart Chakra as the drum rhythms affect the heartbeat. Many shamanic cultures use a healing heartbeat rhythm pulsed at around sixty beats per minute which is the average heart rate of a person at rest. The heartbeat is one of the reasons that people so strongly and naturally connect to the drum. We all enter the world listening to our mother's heart-drum in the womb and we are imprinted with the rhythm of the heartbeat of life. The drum awakens our hearts.

Key Principles for Heart Chakra

Principle 1 - Know Your Heart as Intention Matters

The cruelty of life is that the people you want to die won't and the people you don't want to die will. Those who come in to your life are there to teach you a life lesson not about them but about you. Life is fragile so don't waste it. Know that your true heart is the place of unconditional love and rise above your base instincts to find your compassion and universal love.

Know where your heart is at so you know the work you need to do to bring you into balance.

To set your heart on something is to set your intention and your goals. We talk about intent in martial arts. The focus of what you are about to do is made alive by your entire being so acutely focused that others can sense your intent without a single movement by you. Set and hold the intention for Heart Chakra and make your purpose clear, perform the activity mindfully and as you're doing it take a moment to silently affirm that your actions are creating your intention. If you take this onto the training floor you will be balanced and able to achieve Zen.

Principle 2 – Grokking

Being able to read another person helps us to build better relationships and to be more self-aware of the impact we have on others. Reading emotions and understanding intuitively and with empathy improves our ability to communicate and establish rapport. The other big learning here is to use grokking and self-awareness to look at our ancestry and learned behaviour from our past generations and current peer influences to ensure that our true identity emerges not just a rehash of our genetic blue print or environmental influences. You can change your stars but you need to know from what and to where. If you don't like where you have been then don't continue to go there. Find a new secret garden and then create reality from your visualisation.

Principle 3 - Show Your True Self

Often in kata training as Kata Masters we say to students that we know they can kick and punch and that they know the moves and patterns what it is we want to see is their essence. It is the presentation of their true self that we are seeking.

To be authentic in your training, to be able to show your true self, is to show balance and understanding of the physical, mental and spiritual realms. Be honest in your training. Don't cheat or take the easy road. The difference between a master and a student is often said to be that the master has failed more times than the student has tried. Honesty in your training and being true to yourself takes practice, training, getting on the floor and doing your best without excuses. To show your true self be prepared to work, develop and seek out help on your journey.

To connect to a higher consciousness and to have no mind is the path to Zen.

Principle 4 - Forgiveness

The most important thing we can do for ourselves is to forgive.

To forgive is to release the power held over you. You take away this power through forgiveness. It is ok to acknowledge and feel the pain without judging or resisting it. Accept it. See it for what it is a moment in time in the past. It happened and you learned something from it. Forgiveness comes when you forgive yourself first. Look for the cause and work with it.

For a martial artist forgive yourself for growing old, for being out of condition or just not up to date or simply not up to it. You don't have to be the strongest or the fastest on the floor. You don't have to beat up everyone in yaksu, bunkai or sparring. If you accept that you have a personal journey of growth to achieve a deeper intrinsic understanding of martial arts then you will get on the floor and train honestly and with integrity and be in harmony with yourself and the world around you and you will be amazed by your growth and progress. You are after all only competing against yourself.

I hope these insights help you on your journey - see you at training!