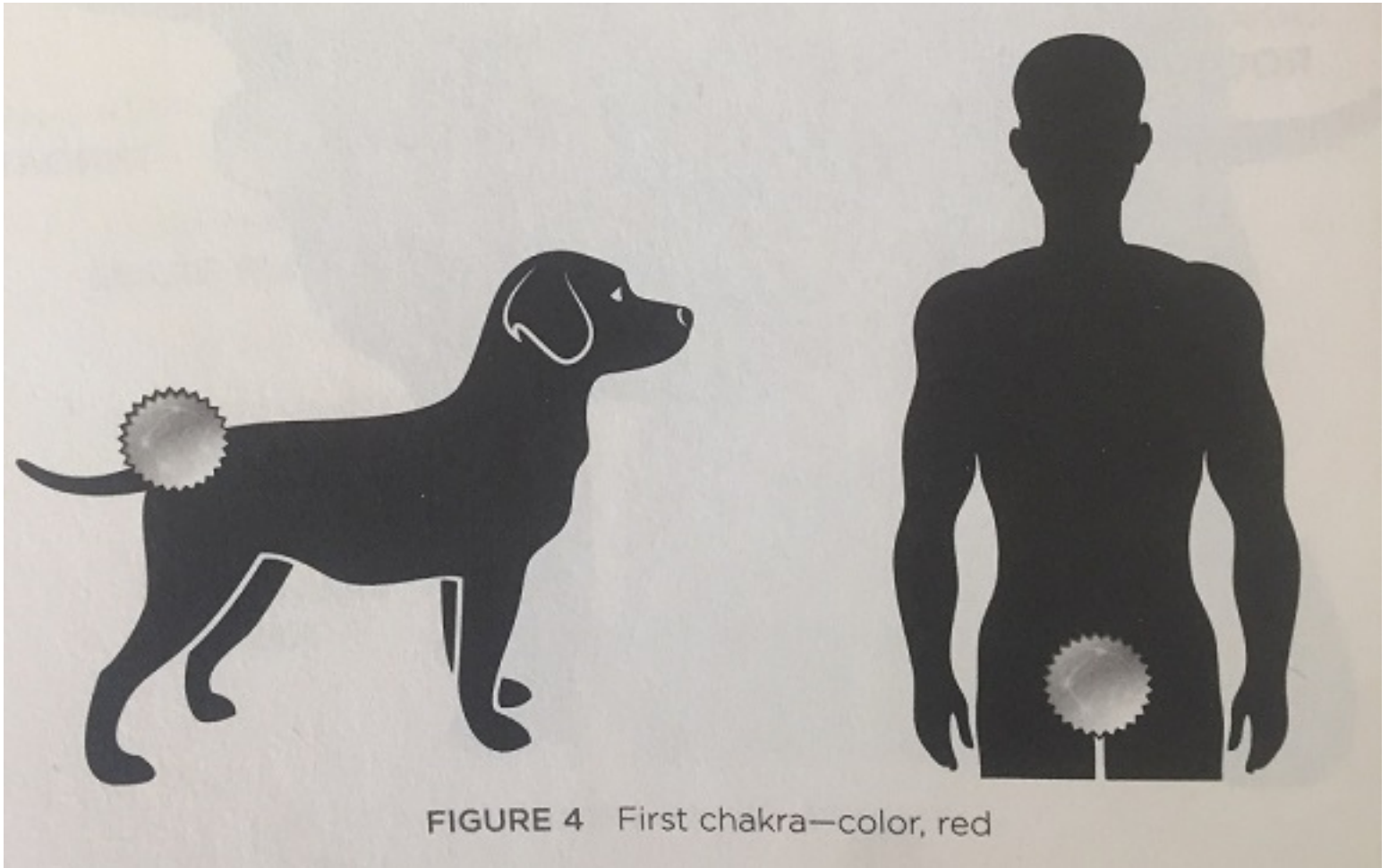


MUCH ADO ABOUT CHAKRAS

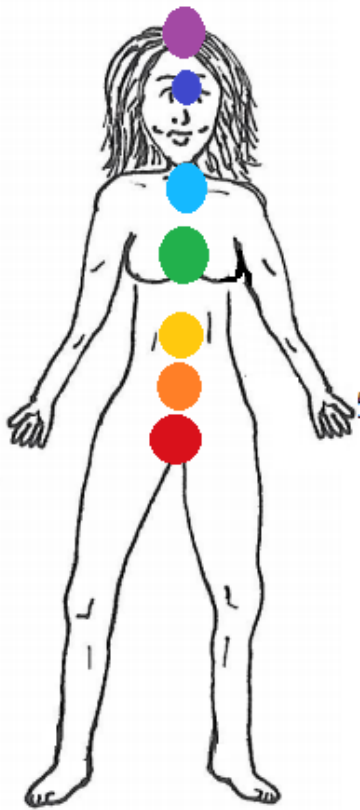
*TIS IN OURSELVES THAT WE ARE THUS OR THUS. OUR BODIES ARE OUR
GARDENS TO WHICH OUR WILLS ARE GARDENERS.*
-WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE





Some see a chakra as a vortex; a whirling, three-dimensional mass. Perhaps it's easiest to imagine a cone-shaped funnel extending from the physical body, with the slimmest point actually planted in the body.

The chakras are associated with locations in the physical body and each one has a theme. Think of it this way: each chakra (in either you or your animal) holds information. This information is both personal and general. They contain the story of the individual along with the potential of what each chakra represents in the bigger picture.



Chakras are associated with colors as well. Here is a summary of the themes and colors of the seven main chakras:



First

Survival; red



Second

Power; orange



Third

Self-esteem or self-worth; yellow



Fourth

The heart or unconditional love; green (although in animals, the color associated with unconditional love is pink)



Fifth

Creative expression; blue



Sixth

Intuition; purple, violet, or indigo



Seventh

Connection to God/Spirit/Source/Universe; white

Imagine that the chakras categorize our life experiences for us throughout the body. If something isn't jelling in our personal, emotional, or physical environment, these power centers can potentially lose strength, leading to illness. There are also behavioral repercussions associated with weak chakras. I always think of the chakras as different theme parks that are all interrelated — it's sort of like going to Orlando!

Through conscious thought and clearing techniques, each chakra also holds the potential to create wellness or better behavior. In the descriptions of the chakras that follow, I'll focus on human chakras first because, after all, your first job as the emotional leader is to balance your own energy! Then I'll move to an in-depth examination of animals and what a disturbance in each of these areas could mean.

THE FIRST CHAKRA: SURVIVAL

For Humans

The first chakra is under our sitz bone; basically, we sit on this chakra. It is located at the base of the spine, which is the origin of kundalini energy. Kundalini energy is said to be female and lying coiled like a serpent, waiting to spring up the spine. Another term for kundalini is life force, so the first chakra is the seat of the ever-emerging and expanding life force. The first chakra governs the immune system, the legs, feet, blood, bones, joints, and even the skin. This is also the home of our sexual organs and of male hormones. The first chakra rules reproduction; it is the seat of the drive to procreate. The color associated with this chakra is a vibrant red.

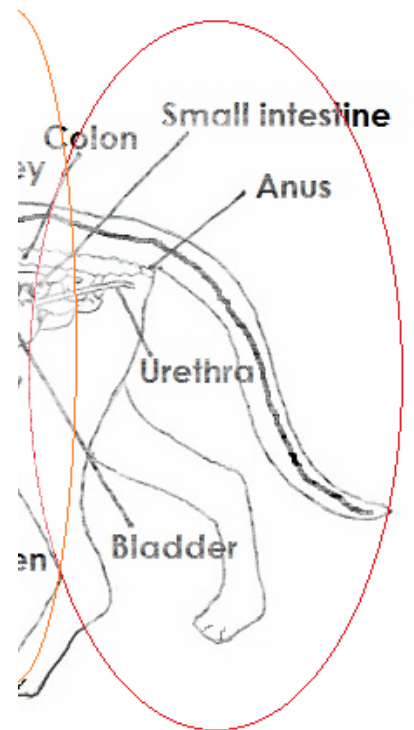
The first chakra represents our tribe and family; our family of origin as well as the family we have created to provide safety. It represents our culture, our country of origin, and our companions, friends, organizations, and work mates. It is our home and our safety. It's also home to the life force. The first chakra colors how we view other groups because it represents emotional security and our need for safety. It holds the fight-or-flight instinct. It also represents being grounded on planet Earth and making sound decisions that embody our whole being.

For Animals

The first chakra sits at the base of an animal's tail — at the end of the spine. As in humans, the first chakra is also where the life force sits in animals. In fact, it is the driving force, literally, in the fight-or-flight response in many species. Physically, the first chakra governs the immune system, the legs, and the feet. It is also home to the sexual organs — this time in females. It carries the energy for blood, bones, skin, and joints.

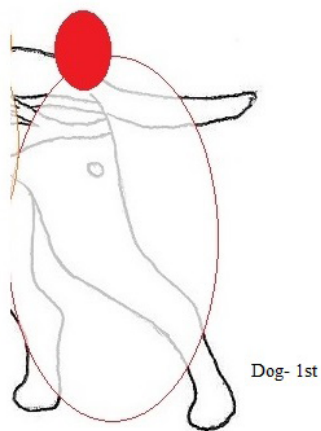
In Chinese medicine, many meridians end or begin at the feet, and a combination of several of these points make up the ting points — points that enhance the immune system when stimulated, as well as the circulation in each of the limbs. As with our own chakra system, the first chakra represents security and safety for animals too. And as I've mentioned, they live in their fight-or-flight senses; these senses are always charged up and ready to activate.

The first chakra also represents how grounded an animal is and how well they listen to a partner or a leader. Finally, the first chakra represents the pack, herd, pride, flock, and even the multispecies pack that we create in our own homes; our multispecies morphic resonance.



Tails and Chakras

Tails are outstanding communicators! As a cat walks through a room, its tail is a gauge of its safety and comfort. If it is straight up, all is good with the world — it's as though the cat is hoisting a flag of pride. A cat's tail at mid-level is a sign that the cat is checking things out. And of course, if need be, it can lower its tail to the ground and become like a hovercraft, scooting from point A to point B with its tail barely skimming the surface. That is not a happy cat, however; it's a cat in distress mode. And if a cat is angry, its tail will flick back and forth.



Dog- 1st

A dog's tail, of course, also tells a tale. Every morning before I even open my eyes, just as I'm coming to awareness, my dog Olivia wags her tail with feverish delight because we get to start another day together. She also wags her tail with joy when someone else in the household is getting in trouble — that's just Olivia! A dog that's excited will wag its tail and then its reaction can go in any direction. Whatever happens next, we know there is a high level of stimulation.

Some people are surprised to see a dog act aggressively while its tail is wagging, but a wag is not always a happy wag — the tail operates solely from instinct. The excitement reflected in the wag can go to nervousness and fear as quickly as it can go to sudden "big fun." What do we see in a scared dog's tail? We often find it tucked. Several studies suggest that a dog's tail wagging to the right shows a friendly feeling, while a tail wagging to the left shows caution.

With a horse, the tail indicates engagement when riding, while a tail that is not engaged usually indicates some sort of prior back injury. A horse will be very protective of this area. You see happy tails on horses, swishing with a staccato rhythm, and you see tails that act like arms to swat someone or something away. Physical signs like these can represent a feeling of extreme safety or fear. The engine behind any equine discipline or canine sport is the hind end. The true locomotive for fight or flight is the hind end. It's interesting that most animals have some sort of greeting ritual around the butt, checking out the hind end. If the animal being checked out doesn't trust the situation, it can literally "turn tail" and leave.

Linda Tellington-Jones, an internationally acclaimed authority on animal behavior, training, and healing, has a theory that many aggressive dogs are very tight back in the haunches and that TTTouch (her branded method of massage) can unlock this tension. Nearly 95 percent of the time, aggression in animals stems from fear or a need for protection, but aggression can also be the result of an emotional or physical trauma.

Bodywork in the first chakra area is very good for enhancing feelings of safety in your animals. It is also good for relieving aches and pains as they get older. This area is tighter in the alpha of any herd, pack, or pride, because the alphas are more on guard. You'll also find more tension in a newly adopted or a shy dog. This is a good place to massage them to gain trust. You may be surprised to find that first chakra massage works with a wide variety of animal friends. Years ago I had the honor of working energetically on a beautiful exotic rooster who had survived a raccoon attack and the sad loss of several of his hens. He felt threatened yet was the head of his flock. We worked primarily on his first chakra to restore his sense of safety.

THE SECOND CHAKRA: POWER

For Humans

The second chakra is located between the belly button and the pubic bone. Physically, it governs all of our reproductive organs, the bladder, hips, lower vertebrae, lower intestine, and the pelvic shield for all of these organs. It contains the female organs and hormonal glands.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the bladder is related to shock. It's also the process center for elimination. Emotionally, the second chakra governs money, personal power, and sex, and it's about the feelings that come with money and sex: guilt, control, and the need for power. This is also the area that blames, and so it contains the energy of those we want to hold accountable. The second chakra is also about fertility and is where the spark of creativity is born. The second chakra relates to how we see ourselves—and the view isn't always pretty. Frequently, we bury secrets here, which are later revealed in illness or sexual or hormonal dysfunction. The second chakra also represents our one-on-one relationships.

For Animals

To find the second chakra on animals, we look on the top of the animal in the region of the lower back, hips, and sacrum. This is the area that is visible, available and vulnerable to the world. As with humans, the second chakra governs the hips, reproductive organs, sacrum, lower vertebra, and lower intestine. This chakra also includes teats and the male sexual organs. The second chakra of animals represents sex, power, and their one-on-one relationships with other animals in the home, barn, or field as well as with their humans. Of course, this is also the power center for the human-animal connection. The second chakra represents other human power struggles that might affect animals, including money struggles, especially if they directly impact the relationship.

Cat- 2nd Chakra



If any chakra takes on the mental, emotional, and physical human story, including our shadow emotions like guilt and shame, this is the chakra where an animal may get hooked.

An overactive lifestyle can result in a breakdown in the second chakra, an earned soreness. Certainly a racehorse that has pounded the track for several owners has earned the right to be a little sore here by the time it retires at the age of twenty-one. Dogs who have chased the kids around the neighborhood in family fun, watched their wards run off to college, and now get to lie quietly in the family room have earned their soreness here too. And the cat that jumped out of trees like Tarzan gets stiff here as well.

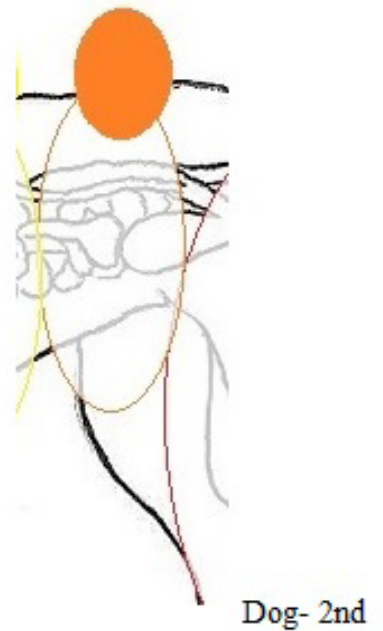
More and more, dogs and cats that are not spayed and neutered and are not in a breeding program are coming up with breast cancer and prostate cancer, diseases in areas governed by the second chakra. In busy spay and neuter clinics, dogs and cats can have their legs placed at extreme angles for extended times, often before the ligaments have fully developed in those areas, and sometimes permanent soft tissue damage results. The more animals in the lineup that day, the more likely your darling will remain in that position.

The result of being left in these extreme positions becomes more evident as the animals age. A dog might paw and paw and not quite be able to comfortably lie down because it's hard for its hips to get comfortable. I'd like to pose a question. What if we're seeing so much second chakra breakdown because we are taking our animals' procreative power away? Now, I believe in spaying and neutering; I'm not suggesting that we don't do these. But what if we did this more consciously? One way to do so is to go to a veterinarian you know and trust instead of a clinic. It might cost a little more in the short term, but in the long term it will result in a healthier second chakra.

Since the second chakra holds the energy of one-on-one relationships, some of the questions to ask about this area include the following:

- How many households has this animal been in?
- How many jobs has this animal had?
- How much armor is this animal wearing to prevent more heartbreak because it has switched homes so many times?
- How many other animals have joined the household?
- How many people have come and gone?
- How much of our sadness and attachment to emotions about losses do we carry (and thus project onto our animals) in the household?

The second chakra is an excellent area to stimulate with massage when you are just lying on the couch with your dog or cat. As animals age and you notice weakness in their hind end when they get up, that stiffness usually starts in the second chakra. Keeping it stimulated with touch will increase the circulation.



THE THIRD CHAKRA: SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-WORTH

For Humans

The third chakra sits at the solar plexus and governs our stomach, liver, kidney, pancreas, spleen, adrenals, digestion, filtering organs and glands. Well-known holistic physician Dr. Andrew Weil considers the stomach “the second brain.”

“Itis” diseases in the gut start here as a result of too much acidity. Arthritis, colitis, and “leaky gut syndrome” are also related to autoimmune disorders. Adrenal exhaustion is a third chakra challenge, as are ulcers and diabetes (losing “the sweetness in life”). This part of our physical body operates as a filter via the digestive system, as well as, the emotional system.

Emotionally, the third chakra governs self-esteem, gut instincts, and gut reactions. This area tells us whether we trust something or not. The third chakra is the lens that determines how we feel and see the world and how the world feels and sees us. This is the center of courage, get-up-and-go, and will. It is a true processing center, whether it works on food or emotions.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the liver is associated with anger, the gallbladder with frustration, the kidneys with fear, the spleen with worry, and the stomach with pensiveness.

For Animals

Animals enjoy the same third chakra gifts and suffer the same quandaries as humans. Although domestication has dulled our animals’ gut instincts, they retain the fight-or-flight instinct, which sparks in the stomach.

Animals also have a twenty-four-hour weather channel in their guts. They can feel barometric pressure change hours before the weather actually changes and this affects their behavior. We could have that sense too if we dialed into our own stomachs, but most of us have walled off the gut to such an extent that we aren’t even aware we have digestive issues. Yet a dog that is affected by thunder and lightning can sometimes feel them approaching eight hours before they first strike.

Food and nutrition are some of the most important tools we have to support animal health. Many animals are afflicted by terrible human diseases that can be traced to digestion. Household animal companions and horses have food allergies, insulin resistance, ulcers, liver disease, and kidney disease, to name a few. Wasn’t it bad enough when cancer in animals started to rise? Now we have replicated nearly every possible human disease in our animals because of poor food choices we are making for them.

Though more and more people are aware of what is in mainstream pet food, they continue to make the same dangerous nutrition choices day in and day out. Pet food manufacturers use corn and wheat as fillers. When did a dog in the wild ever say, “Please, I’d like some wheat before the meat?” Does a cat in the wild stop off for some corn before carrying on with the hunt?

I teach an animal feed-label reading class. The first five ingredients tell the tale. It is amazing what passes for food in these “foods”. When I pass out labels in my class and ask people to try to identify the actual food in the “food”, they are often stumped.

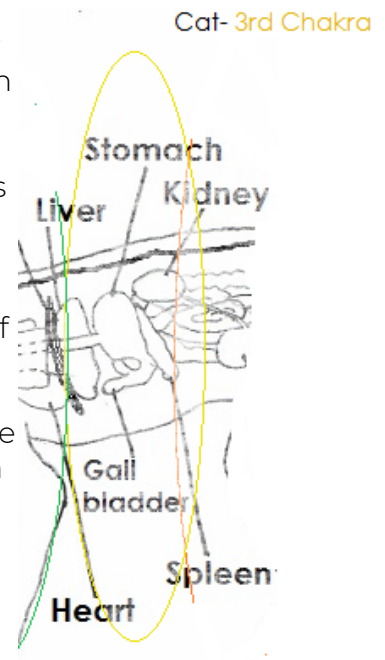
All the internal organs associated with the third chakra suffer the consequences of how we feed animals. Trouble with the pancreas results in diabetes. The liver or gallbladder can reflect the anger and frustration of a household, which our animal friends stuff down. This plays out dramatically for them in their “unspeaking” world. Sadly, we pay for these third chakra problems in the form of vet bills and at the cost of losing them much too early.

The third chakra in an animal also involves self-esteem. Many horses have saddle issues in that area and many dogs sag in this area as they age. Cats end up with kidney disease. Here are some scenarios that could lead to a breakdown in the third chakra:

- A horse that has changed jobs several times.
- The family dog that has watched the kids it helped raise go off to college.
- An animal that has been in several homes.
- Animals that are picked on by other animals.
- Animals that were not treated kindly in human households and are now scarred by insecurities.
- The stoic animal that won't let on it is in greater pain than it actually is.

This list represents just a few of the common issues that might drive a breakdown in this self-esteem. Things that could quickly support an animal challenged in this area include:

- recognizing and appreciating whatever job the animal in your household is doing
- reassigning jobs when big changes are made in a household to help the animal retain a sense of security
- letting new animals know that they are loved
- allowing moments for the animal at the bottom of the pecking order among its species members to just breathe and be themselves
- finding activities that help the animal gain a strong sense of self and its relationship with you
- allowing the animal to express itself through play and other joyful activity
- exercise, play, laughter, good food, and clean water to support the animal's health



THE FOURTH CHAKRA: THE HEART AND UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

For Humans

The human fourth chakra sits at the chest in the heart center. It's the center of love, universal love and unconditional love and it reflects when our heart is open or closed. It also reflects forgiveness. This area governs our emotional expression and our ability to nurture others, including animals. It holds our hopes and dreams and the experience and expression of pride.

Physically, this chakra governs our heart, lungs, bronchial tubes, upper back, shoulders and breasts. The rib cage houses and protects those organs, which are very tender, emotional in nature, and life affirming.

Lung and heart disorders are associated with the fourth chakra, along with breast cancer. Heart murmurs, asthma, and allergies are all centered here as well.

The fourth chakra can house a broken heart, yet it is a place for all love, not just romantic relationships. As we age, many of us contract in this area to protect our heart or lungs. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the heart represents joy, while the lungs represent grief. In yoga, when we bend forward and over, we protect these organs, and in doing so, we are protecting the past and our pain. When we do yoga poses that expand the chest, we open our heart to the future.

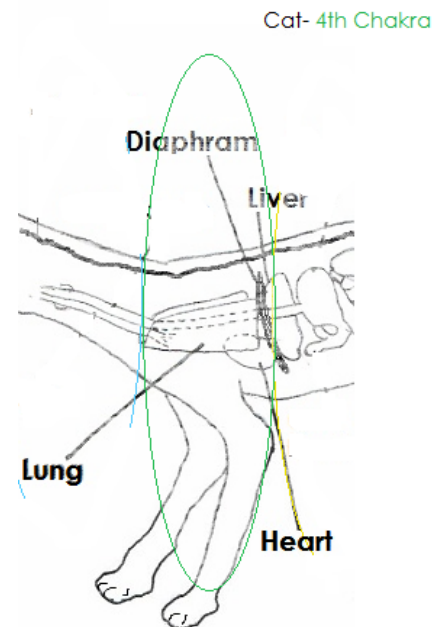
Self-nurturing is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your fourth chakra. Prayer, meditation, sacred rituals, and taking time to experience joy, along with just plain old breathing, can bring wonderful benefits to your heart center.

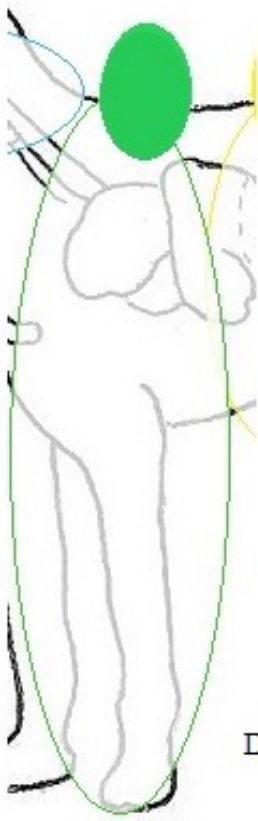
For Animals

This is an area of unconditional love for animals too, as well as a nurturing center. As in humans, this area is associated with diseases of the heart and lungs, such as congestive heart failure, lung cancer, and pneumonia (taking the grief on for us). Asthma and allergies live here too as part of the fourth chakra's story.

This area gets sore and breaks down when the animal has a weak hind end; it becomes part of a pattern to compensate for that weakness. The shoulders and necks of dogs that have lost the use of their hind ends can be rock hard, like armor. These are the dogs that carry the world on their shoulders.

Emotional armor can also accumulate in this area in animals that have been handed off to many homes. Some animals actually do die of a broken heart. Animals that have been through many homes frequently could use a good old-fashioned shoulder and neck rub.





Dog- 4th

The K27 points are a great place to massage when there are fourth chakra issues. These acupressure points are located on the chest below the throat at the base of the collar bones and act as the master points for all of the organs. This area alone is a great place to concentrate on when you are introducing a new animal into your home. In horses, an ill-fitting saddle at the withers (the ridge between the shoulders on four-legged animals) is very common. Continuing the theme of horses having many homes and many jobs, this area is very susceptible to saddle challenges.

Just as self-nurturing, time and sacred rituals are good for humans, these are great things to build into our animal companion's day too, particularly if this area is breaking down due to aging. Creating a new ritual or taking the time to enjoy your companion can have huge benefits.

THE FIFTH CHAKRA: CREATIVE EXPRESSION

For Humans

The fifth chakra is centered in the throat and mouth. It is the area of choice and free will, creative expression, spiritual expression and our ability to follow our dreams or carry through with our will. Energetically, it can represent speaking the word, or speaking our truth. It is the center of Divine expression.

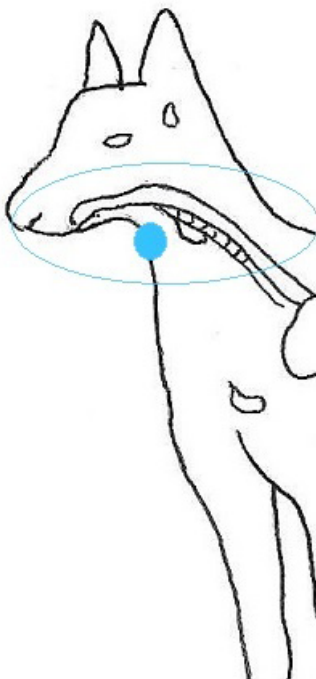
The fifth chakra is associated with the throat, thyroid and other glands as well as teeth, gums, parathyroid, trachea, hypothalamus, esophagus and the vertebrae of the neck. It does not relate to a major organ; instead, it is exposed.

All these glands are part of the endocrine system. In Chinese medicine the endocrine system is associated with the energy of the kidney and the kidney meridian.

For Animals

For our animal friends, this area symbolizes expression and their creativity. Physically, they share the same associations with this chakra that I've just described for humans. Thyroid, teeth, gum, and neck issues all live in this center.

This is the area where we find hypothyroidism in horses and dogs and hyperthyroidism in cats. These conditions affect moods and result in all sorts of skin and hair disorders.



Many animals suffer from jammed necks or severe tightness in this area that goes largely undetected. Tension here can even lead to seizures and jammed necks pushing into the cranial bones can cause some types of aggression.

When we talk about this being the center for expression, it is certainly the chakra I look at most in regards to aggression. In the course of an initial animal communication session, I try to decipher whether an aggression issue is:

- the result of a past trauma (and the animal is therefore reacting in self-defense)
- the result of a physical impingement in the neck or facial bones
- a thyroid issue

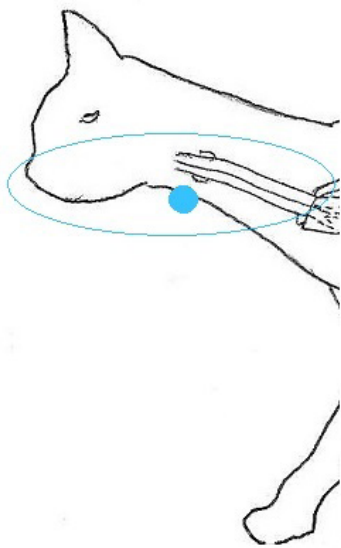
Once I know what the issue is, the course to alignment becomes clear to me.

Dog- 5th

A jammed neck can alter the placement of the facial bones. When that happens, even the alignment of the spine, from head to tail, can change. It's like walking around with an impenetrable shield that limits mobility. This can be accompanied by headaches and other ailments that make the animal feel out of sorts and irritable. In the case of a prey animal, like the horse, it can even affect eyesight.

By definition, thyroid issues mean irritability, and purebreds have a natural predilection for thyroid issues. Sudden weight gain or loss, moodiness, and other temperamental behavior are also strong indications that thyroid levels are off.

Why Does Your Cat Purr?



Cat- 5th

Purring is believed to come from vocal folds or cords. While this expression has no anatomical or physical presence in the body, if you hold a purring cat and feel it, the strongest source of the purr is the fifth chakra. Purring can be about food, but it is also very much a loving expression. In fact, studies have shown that purring is actually healing; the low-frequency vibration is said to help build bone density, heal the heart, and is linked to weight loss.

THE SIXTH CHAKRA: INTUITION

For Humans

The sixth chakra sits on the forehead and is often called the third eye. It is here where we can access all that is seen and unseen. It is the seat of intuition and the site of the thinning of the veil—access to the other world. The sixth chakra governs the pineal and pituitary glands, the brain, eyes, ears, nose, and nervous system. It is concerned with neurological disorders, learning disabilities, tumors, strokes, and seizures. It also involves the sinus area.

Energetically, when we dream, it is the sixth chakra that leads us through the man-or woman-made movie. Shamanic lore sees the pineal gland as the gateway to the soul or a meeting place between psyche and soma, soul and body.

Work on Yourself to Help Your Animals

In the Animal Alchemy weekend workshop I teach, we work on ourselves before we work on the animals. Quite frequently, when I get to the clearing of the third eye, I get such a yummy feeling that it takes me a moment to come back into the room! Looking upward toward your third eye with your eyes shut has a hypnotic effect. This is a great place to focus your attention when trying to calm yourself, meditate, or prepare to communicate with animals.

For Animals

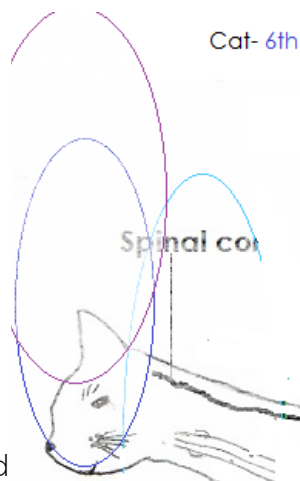
The sixth chakra in animals covers the ears, nose, eyes, brain, all of the nervous system and the pineal gland. A breakdown in this chakra can cause a cat to lose its sense of smell, which can mean the end of its appetite and, worst of all, the end of the cat.

Older dogs get vestibular disease and that too can mean the end of their life, but sometimes they mysteriously recover. This is a neurological disorder that completely messes with balance and spatial orientation, causing the dogs to feel as if the room is constantly spinning. Again, an issue with the sixth chakra is often involved. This horrible disease can be cured with acupuncture, a change in diet, massage, and herbal remedies. With treatment, a dog that seems like she is at the end of her life can suddenly stand up as if nothing had happened and go on to live happy, healthy years in a very normal way. Horses that spook a lot may have had a head injury that moved the cranial bones and the placement of the eye in the socket. In this case, their vision is so different that they don't trust what they see.

In this energy center we find the ability to be seen or unseen—cats have an uncanny ability to become invisible. When you look for a cat and call it, sometimes you can look for it in particular spot, look away, and then look back at that spot to find that the cat is inexplicably there.



Cat- 6th Chakra



THE SEVENTH CHAKRA: CONNECTION TO GOD/SPIRIT/SOURCE/UNIVERSE

For Humans

The seventh, or crown, chakra sits at the top of the head in humans. It governs the entire skeletal and muscular system. It is also the portal to the Divine; it is said that openness here defines the openness one has for the gifts of the Divine. If this chakra is closed, we may feel doubt or forgotten by God.

For Animals

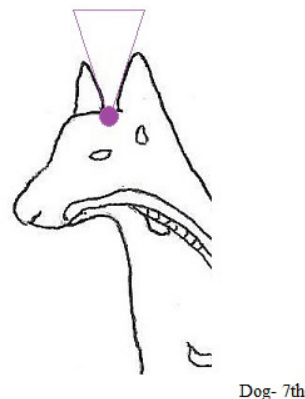
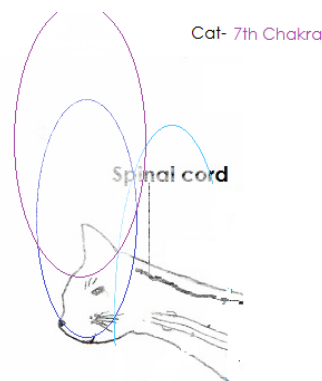
The seventh chakra is at the top of the head in animals too and is also considered the center of connection to the Divine. For some animals, the top of the head may be their most protected spot and they may feel threatened by a human hand coming toward it. This could be the result of a traumatic event, such as a prior owner swatting a dog over the head with a newspaper.

A lot of animals that have been hit on the top of the head lose faith, so to speak, and are constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop or the next knock on their noggin. For other animals, this is the most delicious place to be scratched.

The top of the head is not just a center of connection to the Divine; it also represents an animal's faith; in us and in other beings. The seventh chakra is also pure, unadulterated faith in existence. Animals don't intellectualize their connection to the Divine; it just is. They are grounded and divinely connected at the same time. In many ways, we represent the Divine to them, so when human hands have hurt this area, an animal's trust in the Divine is shattered. This is an important place to work with to help animals recover their sense of faith in the world.

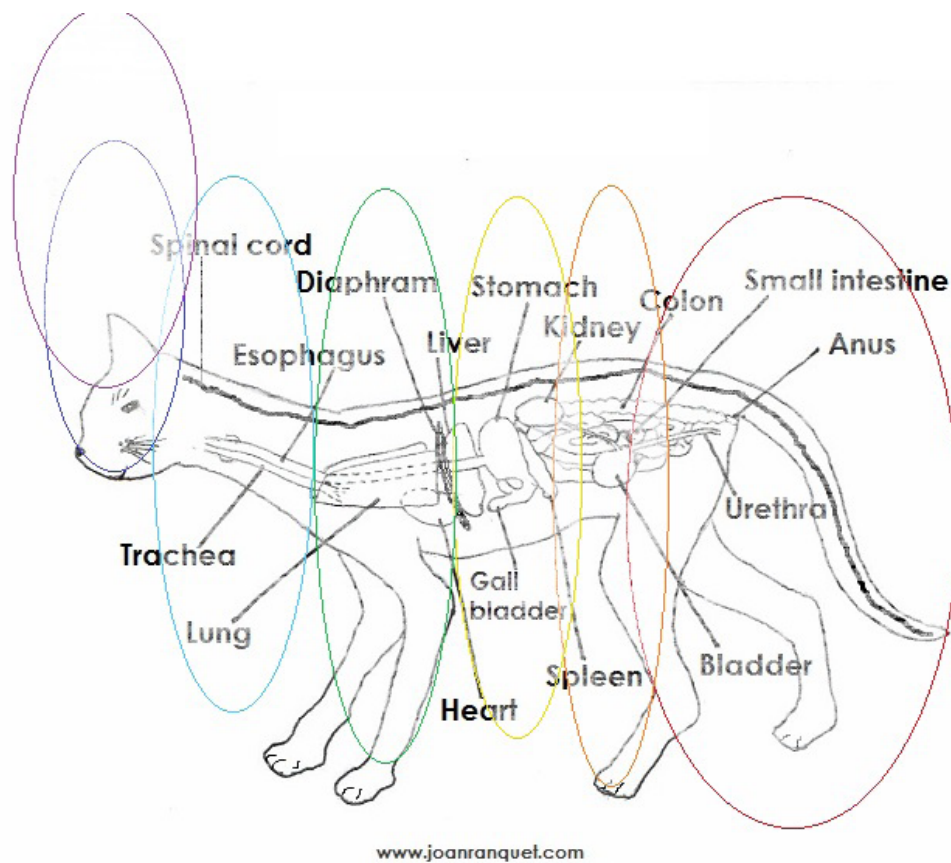
The beauty of an animal's Divine connection is that they never go to war over it. They don't get possessive about their divine connection and they aren't competitive about it. They don't show off how much God has blessed them. They don't create conditions around their Divine connection. In all the time I have been working with animals, no one has ever called me over because of a religious war between two dogs in a household.

This natural divinity is, in part, what draws us to animals. Either we are experiencing fallout from damage to this chakra and we want to make it better for such animals, or we are drawn in by the purity of spirit animals otherwise exhibit, their loyalty and joy, regardless of whether it's a sunny day, the paycheck came in, or the rent is due in a few days. We are forever in awe of the knowingness and devotion to Spirit in animals.



What Chakras Teach Us about Our Animals

All of our amazing human achievements, all of our moving human stories, all of our evolution on this planet have involved thought and a myriad of feelings, compounded overtime by experience. But a deer, a fox or a rooster can be here just because. We really have no place to put that in our calculating brains, our egos and our thoughts. We have to identify in human terms. We can find no justification or purpose for that deer, fox, or rooster. Too often, we conclude that these animals must be here for us. But looking at animals energetically, including their chakras, can help us bypass our calculating minds and work with animals as they are — just because.



Humans becoming aware of the chakras can have a profound impact on animal healing. We see that challenges can become energetically embedded in their systems and are not easy to overcome unless these power centers are attended to on a regular basis. When a challenge becomes a pattern and goes unnoticed or is not taken care of by humans, it becomes a “kick me” sign on their backs. The pattern, whether it is behavioral, structural, or physical, becomes their Achilles heel. It is what gets a dog or a cat sent to another home, or a horse sent down the road to slaughter.

Really keeping a keen eye on any physical injuries that continually crop up, or the emotional or behavioral situations that come forward, can clue you in to which chakra is weak and needs support. It will help you travel down the physical, emotional, and spiritual journey to true healing. And any time you facilitate healing for your animals in this way, you are blessed with a little grace yourself.