

The third chakra: Manipura

In Sanskrit, Manipura means 'sparkling jewel'. The element of this chakra is fire, the color associated with this chakra is yellow. We started with earth in the 1st chakra, then water in the 2nd chakra and here is fire. The place of this chakra is also called "Solar Plexus" or in Dutch "Zonnevlecht", hence the yellow and fire from the sun.

Our first chakra provides us with firmness, stability and form. Our world of experience was one of unity. From that foundation we moved to the 2nd chakra and learned there the concept of *separation* (between "I" and "the other"), we experienced *change* and *movement*.

When we connect these two levels of consciousness, we discover that they create a third state of existence: energy. In our body the physical process of *burning* happens in our metabolism. Psychologically, energy is about the *spark* (the fire) of our will and our strength.

Now this is our third chakra. The element is fire and the goal is transformation. Fire converts matter into heat and light, the 3rd chakra transforms the immobility of the earth (element of the 1st chakra) and the mobility of water (2nd chakra) into action, energy and strength. After all, earth and water are passive, they are subject to gravity and do nothing on their own. Fire, on the other hand, moves upward, destroys shapes, it changes. Fire gives us the energy to rise from the passive and the fire of our will will have to start this movement.



The 3rd chakra is the center or seat of the personality, the center of self-image. It is the centre in which the 'I', the ego, develops with the perception of who we are, who "I am"

The symbol of this chakra is a Lotus with 10 petals. There is a (sometimes red) triangle on it and it symbolizes the fire. The leaves symbolize the rays of the sun.

Exercise:

The third chakra relates to your solar plexus, between the navel and the bottom of your sternum. How do you feel about this part of your body? Have you ever had any problems here?

Fundamental right: the right to act

In the development of this chakra, for example, this right in the development of a human child is curtailed by parents who misuse their authority or by a culture that does so.

At the human development level of the 3rd chakra it is about the development of 'the will' or perhaps even better the 'own will'. The first step in the development of the 'the will' is to realize that you have a will and that it constantly asserts its influence. Everything you see is the product of your will: the clothes you wear, the house you live in, the bike you ride. A feeling of powerlessness does not mean that you do not have a will, but that you are not able to recognize your constantly unconscious working will and work with it. As soon as you restore that contact, you will see that you always make choices and you'll become more and more aware of those choices.

An example: The lack of recognition of one's own will, is something that can happen to us. We say for instance "I have to do this" (washing dishes for example). But actually you want a tidy kitchen.... If you can change your attitude towards something like this to a positive one, you make friends with your own will.

We often do things we don't think we want to do ourselves. But at the end of the day, there's a will- always! Think of the time you did something at work that you didn't really feel like doing. Did you do it to get a compliment from your manager or maybe to maintain the peace, avoid a confrontation? All ultimately your own will, hidden under a negative feeling that you were doing something you didn't want to do.

Get to know your own will better and then you will see that you will become more solid in life because you discover how much influence you actually have on your life. It's confronting at the same time because you might see some of your patterns and sometimes they're less beneficial to you than you hope....

Either way, grounding is important. You have to be able to feel your ground to feel your will. You also need to discover your desires and be able to deal with them. Know what you want, that's what it's about. By the way, discipline is here too, because for example your desire for chocolate can be regulated by your higher will to lose weight. The word 'discipline' comes from the word 'disciple' or 'willingness to be a student': in other words 'you surrender to 'your will'.

Will and power are in our minds often linked to *power over someone*. We are now dealing with the true meaning of will, not the domination of others.

Development Solar Plexus Chakra: from 4 – 5 years old

The third phase (3rd chakra) of development relates to our self-esteem. At this age, you begin to recognize your personal power. You feel emotions and start to see how these emotions affect people around you. You begin to see that your actions and behaviors, such as punching or shouting, evoke emotions of your caregivers. You discover that what you say can affect how others behave towards you. Eventually you start to experience that you have power in the world.

If our caregivers encourage us in a healthy way and to come up with our expressions i.e. we could safely share our thoughts, they listened to our arguments and acknowledged our emotions as normal and natural, then at that stage we created a healthy sense of confidence in ourselves. On the other hand, if they punished us for standing up for ourselves, rejecting our arguments in short, or making us feel bad about what we were doing, then we begin to develop feelings of guilt for expressing ourselves and thus feeling our will. This can lead to low self-esteem and poorly developed capacity for initiative. Remember that this is a 4-5 year old child, looking for safety and willing to please the parents.

Our Solar Plexus chakra is the energy center of our willpower and confidence. When it is deformed during this stage of life, we lack inner strength and we hold ourselves back in making choices and taking actions. It can also lead to a limited sense of self-awareness or a distorted image of our talents. As we heal our root chakra and sacral chakra, we feel more confident in the use of our power and strength, allowing the energy to flow freely in our third chakra, the Solar Plexus.

Developing one's own will, breaking with the (feeling of) powerlessness

Below are some steps you can take in the development of your will, even now, later in your life.

Break the inertia

Do something different than usual. Get up when you feel lazy, try to be quiet when you're normally very active.

Don't get knocked down

Criticism often comes from people who don't know your situation and it is hardly very useful, more harmful. When you do new things, disapproval from others can easily knock you out of balance. Then remember that new ideas face the greatest resistance from those who do not understand them, Albert Einstein once said.

Effort and resistance

Both effort and resistance are exhausting and exhaust our energy. Our energy

doesn't flow. Stop for a moment when you *feel like you need to force* yourself, think about what you're doing and imagine doing it without effort, fluent and full of joy. Also ask yourself why you value this case so much. Ask yourself why it takes so much effort.

Attention

Attention is focused energy, give it to yourself. Give it to others and accept her back from others. Pay attention when needed and see what happens.

Anger

Working with anger in a safe and appropriate way can be a means of preventing or breaking blockages in the 3rd^e chakra.

Take care of yourself

If you don't, no one else will. You know better than anyone what you need and what you want. Take good care of yourself, you'll need less from the outside. The more you need from another, the greater the lack of own power.

Self-love, self-acceptance and recognition of your own worthiness are the building blocks of the third chakra and ensure that the solar plexus chakra comes into balance.

If your third chakra is not in balance:

From deficiency	Out of excess
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low energy, chronically tired • Weak will, easy to manipulate • Low self-esteem, timidness • Don't finish things • Passivity • Victimhood, submission • Feel need of stimulating stuff due to lack of fire and vitality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to take it slowly • Manipulative, hunger for power • Very strong ambition • Need to get right, have last word • Controlling, aggressive behavior • Regular anger explosions • Need for sedatives due to anxious feelings

Affirmations

- I love and accept myself.
- I'm strong and brave.
- I am worthy of receiving love, kindness and respect
- I choose the best for myself.
- I speak up.
- I'm proud of my accomplishments.

- I honor myself.
- I choose healthy relationships.
- I'm authentic.
- I have my own life in my hand.
- I appreciate my strengths.
- I feel my own strength.
- I'm free to choose in any situation.
- I'm looking for opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.
- I'm at peace with myself.
- I respect my inner strength and perform tasks effortlessly and with ease.

Exercises

Fire breathing: kapalabhati

Finally, a consideration: looking at the 4th chakra

Self-esteem is an excellent foundation for the development of the heart (4th chakra) and for the successful maintenance of relationships. When the lower three chakras work well, we are not dependent on our partner for our sense of security, for interpreting our feelings or experiencing a healthy ego. We can now surrender to the experience of love (4th chakra).