

From: The Untethered Soul by Michael Singer

centers *chakras*. When you close your heart center, energy can't flow in. When energy can't flow in, there's darkness. Depending upon how closed you are, you either feel tremendous disturbance or overwhelming lethargy. Often people fluctuate between these two states. If you then find out that your loved one didn't do anything wrong, or if they apologize to your satisfaction, your heart opens again. With this opening you get filled with energy, and the love starts flowing again.

How many times have you experienced these dynamics in your life? You have a wellspring of beautiful energy inside of you. When you are open you feel it; when you are closed you don't. This flow of energy comes from the depth of your being. It's been called by many names. In ancient Chinese medicine, it is called Chi. In yoga, it is called Shakti. In the West, it is called Spirit. Call it anything you want. All the great spiritual traditions talk about your spiritual energy; they just give it different names. That spiritual energy is what you're experiencing when love rushes up into your heart. That is what you're experiencing when you're enthused by something and all this high energy comes up inside of you.

You should know about this energy because it's yours. It's your birthright, and it's unlimited. You can call upon it any time you want. It has nothing to do with age. Some eighty-year-old people have the energy and enthusiasm of a child. They can work long hours for seven days a week. It's just energy. Energy doesn't get old; it doesn't get tired, and it doesn't need food. What it needs is openness and receptivity. This energy is equally available to everybody. The sun does not shine differently on different people. If you're good, it shines on you. If you did something bad, it shines on you. It's the same with the inner energy. The only difference is that with the inner energy, you have the ability to close up inside and block it. When you close, the energy stops flowing. When you open, all the energy rushes up inside of you. True spiritual teachings are about this energy and how to open to it.

The only thing you have to know is that opening allows energy in, and closing blocks it out. Now you have to decide whether or not you want this energy. How high do you want to get? How much love do you want to feel? How much enthusiasm do you want to have for the things you do? If enjoying a full life means experiencing high energy, love, and enthusiasm all the time, then don't ever close.

There is a very simple method for staying open. You stay open by never closing. It's really that simple. All you have to do is decide whether you are willing to stay open, or whether you think it's worth closing. You can actually train yourself to forget how to close. Closing is a habit, and just like any other habit, it can be broken. For example, you could be the type of person who has an underlying fear of people and tends to close when you first meet them. You could actually be in the habit of experiencing an upright, closing sensation whenever somebody walks up to you. You can train yourself to do the opposite. You can train yourself to open every time you see a person. It's just a question of whether you want to close or whether you want to open. It's ultimately under your control.

The problem is, we don't exercise that control. Under normal circumstances, our state of openness is left to psychological factors. Basically, we are programmed to open or close based upon our past experiences. Impressions from the past are still inside of us, and they get stimulated by different events. If they were negative impressions, we tend to close. If they were positive impressions, we tend to open. Let's say you smell a certain scent that reminds you of what it was like when you were young and somebody was cooking dinner. How you react to this scent depends upon the impressions left by your past experiences. Did you enjoy having dinner with the family? Was the food good? If so, then the smell of that scent warms you and opens you. If it wasn't so much fun eating together, or if you had to eat food you didn't like, then you tighten up and close. It really is that sensitive. A smell can make you open or close, and so can seeing a car of a certain color, or even the type of shoes a person is wearing. We are programmed based upon our past impressions such that all kinds of things can cause us to open and close. If you pay attention, you will see it happen regularly throughout each day.

But you should never leave something as important as your energy flow to chance. If you like energy, and you do, then don't ever close. The more you learn to stay open, the more the energy can flow into you. You practice opening by not closing. Any time you start to close, ask yourself whether you really want to cut off the energy flow. Because if you want, you can learn to stay open no matter what happens in this world. You just make a commitment to explore your capacity for receiving unlimited energy. You simply decide not to close. At first it feels unnatural since your

innate tendency is to close as a means of protection. But closing your heart does not really protect you from anything; it just cuts you off from your source of energy. In the end, it only serves to lock you inside.

What you'll find is that the only thing you really want from life is to feel enthusiasm, joy, and love. If you can feel that all the time, then who cares what happens outside? If you can always feel up, if you can always feel excited about the experience of the moment, then it doesn't make any difference what the experience is. No matter what it is, it's beautiful when you feel that way inside. So you learn to stay open no matter what happens. If you do, you get for free what everybody else is struggling for: love, enthusiasm, excitement, and energy. You simply realize that defining what you need in order to stay open actually ends up limiting you. If you make lists of how the world must be for you to open, you have limited your openness to those conditions. Better to be open no matter what.

How you learn to stay open is up to you. The ultimate trick is to not close. If you don't close, you will have learned to stay open. Do not let anything that happens in life be important enough that you're willing to close your heart over it. When your heart starts to close, just say, "No. I'm not going to close. I'm going to relax. I'm going to let this situation take place and be there with it." Honor and respect the situation, and deal with it. By all means deal with it. Do the best you can. But deal with it with openness. Deal with it with excitement and enthusiasm. No matter what it is, just let it be the sport of the day. In time, you will find that you forget how to close. No matter what anyone does, no matter what situation takes place, you won't even feel the tendency to close. You will just embrace life with all your heart and soul. Once you've attained this very high state, your energy level will be phenomenal. You will have all the energy you need at all times. Just relax and open, and tremendous energy will rush up inside of you. You are only limited by your ability to stay open.

If you really want to stay open, pay attention when you feel love and enthusiasm. Then ask yourself why you can't feel this all the time. Why does it have to go away? The answer is obvious: it only goes away if you choose to close. By closing, you are actually making the choice not to feel openness and love. You throw love away all the time. You feel love until somebody says something you don't like, and then you give up the love. You feel enthused about your job until someone criticizes something, and

then you want to quit. It's your choice. You can either close because you don't like what happened, or you can keep feeling love and enthusiasm by not closing. As long as you are defining what you like and what you don't like, you will open and close. You are actually defining your limits. You are allowing your mind to create triggers that open and close you. Let go of that. Dare to be different. Enjoy all of life.

The more you stay open, the more the energy flow can build. At some point, so much energy comes into you that it starts flowing out of you. You feel it as waves pouring off of you. You can actually feel it flowing off your hands, out your heart, and through other energy centers. All these energy centers open, and a tremendous amount of energy starts flowing out of you. What is more, the energy affects other people. People can pick up on your energy, and you're feeding them with this flow. If you are willing to open even more, it never stops. You become a source of light for all those around you.

Just keep opening and not closing. Wait until you see what happens to you. You can even affect the health of your body with your energy flow. When you start to feel the tendency of an illness coming on, you just relax and open. When you open, you bring more energy into the system, and it can heal. Energy can heal, and that's why love can heal. As you explore your inner energy, a whole world of discovery opens up to you.

The most important thing in life is your inner energy. If you're always tired and never enthused, then life is no fun. But if you're always inspired and filled with energy, then every minute of every day is an exciting experience. Learn to work with these things. Through meditation, through awareness and willful efforts, you can learn to keep your centers open. You do this by just relaxing and releasing. You do this by not buying into the concept that there is anything worth closing over. Remember, if you love life, nothing is worth closing over. Nothing, ever, is worth closing your heart over.