

CENTERS

By Shepherd Hoodwin

We all have all seven *centers*: emotional (everyday feelings) and higher emotional (exalted feelings), intellectual (day-to-day matters) and higher intellectual (philosophical/conceptual/big picture thoughts), physical (bodily excitations) and moving (whole-body actions or higher energetic states), and instinctive (automatic survival operations). One of four is chosen by the soul as our primary center, the front door of the personality that opens when someone knocks: either intellectual (most common in the U.S. and Western Europe), emotional, physical or moving. Another is our secondary or *part of center*.

Your primary centering refers specifically to how you react to stimuli. Your thinking when it is not a reaction to externals uses your intellectual center but is not a manifestation of your primary centering, although intellectually centered people tend to think more often. Similarly, you can have an emotional nature in general without being emotionally centered. The emotional center is on the inspiration axis, and the inspiration-axis roles, priest and server, tend to have a particularly emotional nature regardless of centering. However, if they don't have an emotional center, they don't tend to *react* first or second from their emotions, even if they feel a great deal. The feelings may be just *there*, not necessarily displayed, so they may not come into conscious awareness as easily. Sages and artisans, being expressive, also tend to be at least fairly emotional, since they are constructed to bring out what is within (communication and creativity). Scholars tend to be the least emotional of the roles, followed by kings and warriors; for them, being emotionally centered may be the only way they'll develop their emotions, and having that centering can be a big deal and a challenge for them. On the other hand, they tend to be more comfortable with their physicality than the other roles, even without an action-axis center. Of course, everything else on the chart has an impact, too, as well as imprinting, astrology, and so forth.

The three fundamental areas of centering are body, intellect, and emotions. Your primary center uses one, and your secondary (part of center) usually uses another, leaving a third that is used least for reactions, therefore being one's weak link. It takes more conscious work to include it. One of the aims of the Michael teachings is to help us balance our centers, so that we have free access to whichever one is most appropriate.

In the rare instances in which people's primary and secondary centers are the same, e.g. emotional part of emotional center, they react almost entirely from one center and finding balance is even more of a challenge.

Below is a list of combinations of primary/secondary centers. For more information on centers, please see my book *Journey of Your Soul*.

EMOTIONAL/INTELLECTUAL

If you are *emotionally* centered, in the *intellectual* part (secondary), it means that your first reaction is to feel, and then you more-or-less automatically analyze your feelings—your thoughts tend to be informed by your feelings. This centering combination is said to make for people who are the most perceptive of others: you can feel what's true, and then you can articulate it (the intellectual center is responsible for words).

The positive pole of the emotional center is *sensibility*, the negative, *sentimentality*, which, in this context, means false or exaggerated feeling. Those who are emotionally centered might be especially drawn to music and other emotional media. Emotionally centered people tend to have a watery quality in their eyes.

The weak link when your primary center is emotional and your secondary is intellectual are the body centers, meaning that you might have trouble getting around to taking action, and that is what will most balance you.

If you fall into the *trap* of over-analyzing your negative feelings, leading to still more negative feelings and creating anxiety, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to do something. This is accomplished by distracting your intellectual part: instead of analyzing, think about something neutral (do a crossword puzzle, for instance) until you can gain control enough to think clearly and take action.

EMOTIONAL/PHYSICAL

If you are *emotionally centered*, in the *physical part* (secondary), it means that your first reaction is to feel, and then you more-or-less automatically embody your feelings—your bodily sensations are informed by your feelings. This centering combination can make for psychosomatic symptoms—if you heal your feelings, your body can immediately reflect that by feeling better. Therefore, you have a built-in incentive to keep yourself emotionally clear.

The positive pole of the emotional center is *sensibility*, the negative, *sentimentality*, which, in this context, means false or exaggerated feeling. Those who are emotionally centered might be especially drawn to music and other emotional media. Emotionally centered people tend to have a watery quality in their eyes.

The weak link when your primary center is emotional and your secondary is one of the body centers is the intellectual center. Therefore, intellectual reflection before reacting is what will most balance you.

If you fall into the *trap* of somatizing your negative emotions, which further agitates them, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to sit and think. This is accomplished by distracting your body with perhaps a massage or a soak in a hot tub, until you can gain enough control to think clearly. Sometimes writing is an aid to sorting out your thoughts.

EMOTIONAL/MOVING

If you are *emotionally centered*, in the *moving part* (secondary), it means that your first reaction is to feel, and then you more-or-less automatically act on your feelings—your actions tend to be informed by your feelings. The ability to easily embody your emotions might be especially useful in artistic and spiritual endeavors, such as ecstatic dance. However, this centering combination can make for impulsiveness—“ready, fire, aim”—because only after you’ve acted might you analyze your reaction to events.

The positive pole of the emotional center is *sensibility*, the negative, *sentimentality*, which, in this context, means false or exaggerated feeling. Those who are emotionally centered might be especially drawn to music and other emotional media. Emotionally centered people tend to have a watery quality in their eyes.

The weak link when your primary center is emotional and your secondary is one of the body centers is the intellectual center. Therefore, intellectual reflection before reacting is what will most balance you.

If you fall into the *trap* of acting on your negative emotions, which further agitates them, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to sit and think. This is accomplished by distracting your moving center: instead of doing something based on your feelings, move in a neutral way, such as walking or other exercising, until you can gain enough control to think clearly. Sometimes writing is an aid to sorting out your thoughts.

INTELLECTUAL/EMOTIONAL

If you are *intellectually centered*, in the *emotional* part (secondary), it means that your first reaction is to analyze, and then you more-or-less automatically feel based on your thoughts once they are crystallized in reaction to something that occurred. To change your feelings, first change your thoughts.

The positive pole of the intellectual center is *thought*, the negative, *reason*, which, in this context, means mechanical thinking that's asleep, not seeing with fresh eyes and engaging in original thought. Those who are intellectually centered might be especially drawn to reading and analyzing. One can almost see the wheels turning in their head when they react to something.

The weak link when your primary center is intellectual and your secondary is emotional are the two body centers—taking action and having physical experience, which is what will most balance you.

If you fall into the *trap* of your center and worry—negative thoughts leading to negative feelings, leading to still more negative thoughts and still more negative emotions, forming a vicious circle—the way out is to do something. This is accomplished by distracting your emotional part: instead of worrying your thoughts to death, put on some music, look at some art, or anything else that will allow you to have emotions about something neutral, until you can gain control enough to take positive action.

INTELLECTUAL/PHYSICAL

If you are *intellectually centered*, in the *physical* part (secondary), it means that your first reaction is to analyze, and then you more-or-less automatically physicalize your thoughts in your body once they are crystallized in reaction to something that occurred. Your thoughts directly affect how you feel physically, so changing your thoughts can quickly change your body.

The positive pole of the intellectual center is *thought*, the negative, *reason*, which, in this context, means mechanical thinking that's asleep, not seeing with fresh eyes and engaging in original thought. Those who are intellectually centered might be especially drawn to reading and analyzing. One can almost see the wheels turning in their head when they react to something.

The weak link when your primary center is intellectual and your secondary is one of the body centers is the emotional center. You don't react from your emotions first or usually second. Therefore, you and others may not necessarily know what you're really feeling; your intellectual reaction may, for example, be anger, but your real emotion might be one of hurt.

If you fall into the *trap* of embodying your negative thoughts, leading to still more negative thoughts, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to feel and maybe express your true feelings. This is accomplished by distracting your physical part, perhaps through soaking in a hot bath, getting a massage, or exercising. Then allow your true feelings to arise.

INTELLECTUAL/MOVING

If you are *intellectually centered*, in the *moving part* (secondary), it means that your first reaction is to analyze, and then you more-or-less automatically act on your thoughts once they are crystallized in reaction to something that occurred. You put your ideas into action.

The positive pole of the intellectual center is *thought*, the negative, *reason*, which, in this context, means mechanical thinking that's asleep, not seeing with fresh eyes and engaging in original thought. Those who are intellectually centered might be especially drawn to reading and analyzing. One can almost see the wheels turning in their head when they react to something.

The weak link when your primary center is intellectual and your secondary is one of the body centers is the emotional center. You don't react from your emotions first or usually second. Therefore, you and others may not necessarily know what you're really feeling; your intellectual reaction may, for example, be anger, but your real emotion might be one of hurt.

If you fall into the *trap* of acting on negative thoughts, leading to still more negative thoughts, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to feel and maybe express your true feelings. This is accomplished by distracting your moving part: instead of acting automatically on your negative thoughts, move your body in a neutral way, as in exercise. Then allow your true feelings to arise.

PHYSICAL/EMOTIONAL

If you are *physically centered*, in the *emotional part* (your secondary center), it means that your first reaction is to have bodily sensations or "gut feelings," and then your emotions more-or-less automatically take shape based on what you feel physically. You most easily change your emotions for the better by changing how your body feels: maybe getting some exercise, sleep, good food, a massage, or sex.

The positive pole of the physical center is *amoral*, the negative, *erotic*. (Alternate terms are + *alive*, – *stimulated*.) "Amoral" here means that you fully feel all your sensations without judging them; "erotic" suggests that you interpret your sensations in overly narrow or personal terms, not necessarily sexually, although it could be that. In Yarbrow, this center is called the "sexual" center, with the caveat that it refers to all physical excitation. I use the term "physical" to avoid misunderstanding. However, people with this center are perceived as being sexier, all things being equal. With this centering, you are likely to be better in touch with your body and its needs/energy flows.

The weak link when your primary center is physical and your secondary is emotional is the intellectual center, meaning that you might feel physically (or act) and emote without adequately processing them through analysis. Therefore, intellectual reflection before reacting is what will most balance you.

If you fall into the *trap* of being overemotional in response to your body's sensations, which may push you out of balance and further exaggerate your emotions, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to sit and think. This is accomplished by distracting your emotional part: instead of continuing to cry, for instance, or whatever emotion is coming up, attune your feelings to something neutral, like music, until you can gain enough control to think clearly. Sometimes writing is an aid to sorting out your thoughts.

PHYSICAL/INTELLECTUAL

If you are *physically centered*, in the *intellectual part* (your secondary center), it means that your first reaction is to have bodily sensations or “gut feelings,” and then your thoughts more-or-less automatically take shape based on what you feel physically. You most easily change your thoughts for the better by changing how your body feels: maybe getting some exercise, sleep, good food, a massage, or sex.

The positive pole of the physical center is *amoral*, the negative, *erotic*. (Alternate terms are + *alive*, – *stimulated*.) “Amoral” here means that you fully feel all your sensations without judging them; “erotic” suggests that you interpret your sensations in overly narrow or personal terms, not necessarily sexually, although it could be that. In Yarbro, this center is called the “sexual” center, with the caveat that it refers to all physical excitation. I use the term “physical” to avoid misunderstanding. However, people with this center are perceived as being sexier, all things being equal. With this centering, you are likely to be better in touch with your body and its needs/energy flows.

The weak link when your primary center is physical and your secondary is intellectual is the emotional center. Therefore, you and others may not necessarily know what you're really feeling emotionally. For instance, your reaction may be testiness (because your body is uncomfortable), but your real emotion might be hurt.

If you fall into the *trap* of uncomfortable sensations (frustration, repression, irritation, etc.) feeding negative thoughts, leading to even more uncomfortable sensations, forming a vicious circle (until perhaps you explode or break down), the way out is to feel and appropriately express your true emotions. You can accomplish this by distracting your intellectual part: instead of thinking about the

thing you're reacting to, do a crossword puzzle or read. When you feel sufficiently disengaged, then allow your true feelings to arise.

PHYSICAL/MOVING

If you are *physically centered*, in the *moving part* (your secondary center), it means that your first reaction is to have bodily sensations or “gut feelings,” and then your actions or movements more-or-less automatically take shape based on what you feel physically. Those with body centering often love to travel—they experience life primarily through their body. An unusual chart element for you is that your center and part of center are on the same axis (action), giving your reactions a concentration that can also lead to imbalance if you're not careful.

The positive pole of the physical center is *amoral*, the negative, *erotic*. (Alternate terms are + *alive*, – *stimulated*.) “Amoral” here means that you fully feel all your sensations without judging them; “erotic” suggests that you interpret your sensations in overly narrow or personal terms, not necessarily sexually, although it could be that. In Yarbro, this center is called the “sexual” center, with the caveat that it refers to all physical excitation. I use the term “physical” to avoid misunderstanding. However, people with this center are perceived as being sexier, all things being equal. With this centering, you are likely to be better in touch with your body and its needs/energy flows.

The positive pole of your secondary moving center is *enduring*, the negative, *energetic*, which, in this context, means your reactions are not as well harnessed. The analogy of building a fire comes to mind: in the positive pole, you use hard woods that burn well for a long time; in the negative, the wood burns up too quickly and wastes energy.

The weak links when both your primary and secondary centers are on the action axis are your emotions and intellect, meaning that you might act without adequately processing your actions through analysis and/or noticing what you are feeling emotionally. Therefore, intellectual reflection and being aware of your emotions before reacting are what most balance you.

Your *trap* is acting compulsively when your body is overstimulated, which can make you feel still more overstimulated, forming a vicious circle. The way out is to sit still, feel, and think. It might help to distract your moving part with perhaps a massage or a soak in a hot tub until you can gain enough control to think and feel clearly. Writing or meditation can be aids to sorting out your thoughts.

MOVING/EMOTIONAL

If you are *moving centered*, in the *emotional part* (your secondary center), it means that your first reaction is to move or act, and then your emotions more-or-less automatically take shape based on how you experienced the action you took—your feelings tend to be informed by your movements.

The positive pole of the moving center is *enduring*, the negative, *energetic*, which, in this context, means your reactions are not as well harnessed. The analogy of building a fire comes to mind: in the positive pole, you use hard woods that burn well for a long time; in the negative, the wood burns up too quickly and wastes energy. Those in the moving center can excel at athletics or dance, and often love to travel.

The weak link when your primary center is moving and your secondary is emotional is the intellectual center, meaning that you might act and emote without adequately processing your actions through analysis. Therefore, intellectual reflection before reacting is what will most balance you.

If you fall into the *trap* of being overemotional in response to your body's experiences in action, which further agitates your body, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to sit and think. This is accomplished by distracting your emotional part: instead of continuing to cry, or whatever emotion is coming up, attune your feelings to something neutral, like music, until you can gain enough control to think clearly. Sometimes writing is an aid to sorting out your thoughts.

MOVING/INTELLECTUAL

If you are *moving centered*, in the *intellectual part* (your secondary center), it means that your first reaction is to move or act, and then your thoughts more-or-less automatically take shape based on how you experienced the action you took.

The positive pole of the moving center is *enduring*, the negative, *energetic*, which, in this context, means your reactions are not as well harnessed. The analogy of building a fire comes to mind: in the positive pole, you use hard woods that burn well for a long time; in the negative, the wood burns up too quickly and wastes energy. Those in the moving center can excel at athletics or dance, and often love to travel.

The weak link when your primary center is moving and your secondary is intellectual is the emotional center. You don't react from your emotions first or usually second. Therefore, you and others may not necessarily know what you're

really feeling. For instance, your reaction may be angry, but your real emotion might be one of hurt.

If you fall into the *trap* of compulsive actions feeding negative thoughts, leading to still more negative actions, forming a vicious circle, the way out is to feel and maybe express your true emotions. This is accomplished by distracting your intellect: instead of thinking about the thing you're reacting to, do a crossword puzzle or read. When you feel sufficiently disengaged, then allow your true feelings to arise.

MOVING/PHYSICAL

If you are *moving centered*, in the *physical part* (your secondary center), it means that your first reaction is to move or act, and then your physical sensations more-or-less automatically take shape based on how you experienced the action you took. Your body feels good or bad based on how the actions you've taken feel. An unusual chart element for you is that your center and part of center are on the same axis (action), giving your reactions a concentration that can also lead to imbalance if you're not careful.

The positive pole of the moving center is *enduring*, the negative, *energetic*, which, in this context, means your reactions are not as well harnessed. The analogy of building a fire comes to mind: in the positive pole, you use hard woods that burn well for a long time; in the negative, the wood burns up too quickly and wastes energy. Those in the moving center can excel at athletics or dance, and often love to travel.

The weak links when both your primary and secondary centers are on the action axis are your emotions and intellect, meaning that you might act without adequately processing your actions through analysis and/or noticing what you are feeling emotionally. Therefore, intellectual reflection and being aware of your emotions before reacting are what most balance you.

Your *trap* is being overstimulated physically in response to your experiences in action, which can push you into compulsive actions and still more overstimulation, forming a vicious circle. The way out is to sit still, feel, and think. It might help to distract your physical part (body) with perhaps a massage or a soak in a hot tub, until you can gain enough control to think and feel clearly. Sometimes writing is an aid to sorting out your thoughts.