

ly with them and know that they trust, love and accept me just as unconditionally."

The third type of channeler does not channel information from other personalities, but attempts to bring their conscious and higher (spiritual) selves into close interplay. This kind of channeling is very similar to meditation and available to almost anyone, said Sara Jane Thomas, a hypno-therapist who teaches workshops on channeling at the Synthesis Training Center in Eugene.

"What is happening during channeling is that we quiet ourselves and go inward until we find the core of our beings," she said. "The messages we get from our higher self is not verbal; that is, we don't hear voices but get feelings or sense what it is trying to tell us."

Sometimes the messages transmitted to us from our higher self can get garbled or may be misinterpreted, Thomas said.

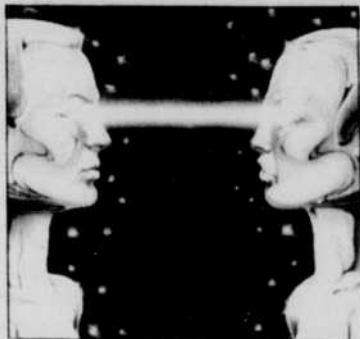
"If we make a mistake channeling information for ourselves, we're the only one who is affected," she said. "But if you make a mistake channeling information for someone else the consequences can be more serious. It's a big responsibility and one that I personally try to stay away from. I'm not perfect. So I would rather teach people how to contact their higher selves for themselves."

Workshops teaching people to channel are available at the center, Thomas said. She uses hypnotism as an aid to help people make contact with their inner selves and also may go into trance with them, she said.

"I can usually tell where people are because I have been there," Thomas said. "There is something electrical I can sense, and sometimes I can tell them how to move or focus to enhance their experience. Other times I just leave it all up to them. It depends on the person and the situation."

With channeling, the chance always exists that the channeler may hook up with negative energies or entities. While this danger may be more acute for the first two types of channelers, opening up to your higher self also can be risky.

"Everything in nature has an aura," Thomas said. "And when we begin to open up through the process of channeling, the aura also expands, and we are more vulnerable. That's



why I advise that everyone learn channeling with a competent teacher and take time to learn how to protect themselves."

Learning how to surround one's self with white light is one of the best ways people can protect themselves, Thomas said.

"Each of the seven chakras (energy centers) in the body vibrates to a different color," she said. "Pink, for example, is associated with the heart and denotes love while green has a calming effect and promotes healing, which is why hospitals often use green in patients' rooms. White light is associated with the highest chakra and is made up of all the colors of the spectrum. Thus it serves to unify and strengthen the whole aura when you focus on it."

People concentrating on protecting themselves with white light should first imagine their aura to be egg shaped and projecting a foot below and above the head, Thomas said. Next, they should try to feel the energy pulsating around them and visualize it as being brilliant, pure and crystalline, she said.

"It's cumbersome at first," Thomas said. "But after awhile you get the hang of it. When you do, then and only then should you try to open yourself up to channeling."

Channeling in small groups also can improve protection for many people and make it easier to tune into their higher selves, she said.

"At first it's hard to channel," she said. "But the longer you do it, the easier it gets. It's like making a groove on a record; pretty soon you can zoom into the higher realms without much strain or preparation."

Although channeling increases self knowledge and awareness much like meditation, the two practices are different and should not be confused, Thomas said.

"Meditation is simply for

you," she said. "But channeling is getting in touch with ourselves for a higher purpose. When you do it you are trying to bring back specific information rather than just expanding and seeing what comes up."

In addition to artists, therapists and spiritual explorers, people involved in martial arts also may use channeling techniques to improve awareness and physical performance.

"Essentially, *chi* is the life energy that exists in all of us," said Wayne Vincent, who teaches an Aikido class through Innovative Education at the University. "Chinese medicine states that *chi* flows through the energy meridians (conduits) that run through the body and feed energy to all the major organs and muscles in the body. Through concentration, breathing exercises, meditation and visualizations we can learn how to project this energy outward and sense an opponent's attack. Extending *chi* allows you to then join and blend with this incoming, aggressive energy and redirect it so that your opponent is non-violently disarmed."

This same sensitivity also can be used to sense where a person's energy is blocked, Vincent said.

"By learning how to channel *chi*, one can facilitate the movement of energy along each meridian in the body as an aid to unblocking muscular tension and revitalizing your whole self," he said. "This practice is especially important after practicing martial arts and seems to help students cool down and focus on relaxation. Energy can also be transferred from one person to another and used to ease the pain of sprains, muscle strains and all-around body tensions. I try to make *chi* massage and *chi* channeling exercises a regular part of my class and encourage everyone to participate in them."

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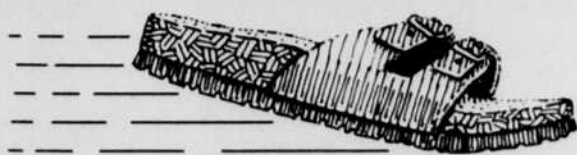


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