

DR. KEESHA EWERS

Processing Trauma Through The Root Chakra

Jason Prall:

Welcome, everybody, to the masterclass with Dr. Keesha Ewers. And today, we're going to be talking about healing trauma through the chakra system. This is a very unique thing that I think Keesha has sort of developed herself with all of her wisdom that she's picked up along the way. And if you missed her original talk in the summit, she studied Ayurveda, and Buddhism, Sexology, Functional Medicine. She studied pretty much everything that I know of. And so she does have a lot of wisdom from a lot of ancient traditions. And she does her own version of the medicine wheel as well, so she's got a variety of tools that she brings in. So Dr. Keesha, will you please introduce us to this method. And I'd love to hear how you kind of came up with it.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah. Oh my goodness. From starting working with people healing their trauma. So when I started realizing that the ACEs study, right, the big impact that trauma had on my own health, and then the people that I was working with, I started thinking, wow. And this is why in my book *Solving the Autoimmune Puzzle*, I call trauma the missing piece of the puzzle. So I've been talking about this and teaching it for years and working in retreat settings with people with autoimmune disease who were working on their genetics, and their gut health, and their toxic burden, and all of the things that we think of normally, and the trauma component that sets off the nervous system that sends the cortisol out, that breaks down the gut wall, that then fights all the bad bugs to come in. So just really making sure that we're working in all five layers of the Ayurvedic Pancha Kosha system, right? So that's how I started to conceptualize this.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

And then I studied with Dr. Gina Ogden, who was a mentor of mine for many years until she died. And I was interviewing her on my radio show lot of years ago. And she was a sexologist too. And I was just trying to find the chair for my dissertation committee in my own doctoral program. And I interviewed her and it was as if when I read her book, like I had written it. And I recognized Andean medicine wheel work in it from my own teacher who you know, and from my process with him. And so I said, "Gina, this is like the South American Mesa that you're describing." And she said, "Yeah, how do you know that?" And so she actually had a Peruvian grandfather, and we went through all this stuff. And then right on air I said, "Will you be my dissertation committee chair?" And she said, "I would be honored."

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

And so she became my mentor, and I studied the wheel work with her. And she called it at that time integrating spirituality and sexuality, and the acronym was ISAS. And then that got hijacked. And so then she started calling it 4-D Wheel Work. And I started working with that. And it turns out that some of the plant medicine communities that I study with use that wheel. I just started seeing the wheel popping up everywhere, in some of the native American communities. I was like, "Oh, this is amazing." It goes in across the world, part of the wheel inside of Buddhism. It's everywhere. And so that's where I started

working with ISAS this understanding of the wheel and the body, the mind, the heart, and the spirit. And then understanding the energy of without safety, we can't move forward.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

So then I started thinking about it in terms of the chakra as like, this is a way people can track it for themselves. If I don't have my root chakra managed, right, then I can't be doing spiritual bypass stuff and just working up here, hanging out with the angels and chanting and praying. It was great, but that's just to make you feel good. You're not really healing your trauma.

Jason Prall:

Right. So it's-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

You're bypassing it.

Jason Prall:

So you came at a lot of this from working with people that had chronic illnesses, autoimmune conditions-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

And cancer.

Jason Prall:

... and abuses and these types of things, right? And so this is a way to sort of map out a process of sort of teaching and working with this stuff. So maybe for some of those who aren't familiar with some of the chakras and how it all works, maybe give us a sense for some of the qualities and how you work with them.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah. So the root chakra is also, we can talk about attachment and development of the child's system. And so in the first zero to six months of age, that's root chakra stuff. And this is what something like Ayurvedic Pancha Kosha and Piaget, they all have, if this development doesn't happen well here, then here are some of the outcomes, right? And so I fold all of that in. If you're wounded at this state, preconception to six months, then here are the things that can happen for you, and insecure attachment and all the downside of that. And then you can have attachment disorders in any of the developmental states. So we go all the way to adulthood is crown chakra. And so each of the developmental states is talked about in each of the chakras. Anodea Judith did a really good job in east... oh, what'd she call it? East-west psychology. She did a beautiful book, I think in the early '90s that put some of that together too.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

So what I do is I start with that root chakra. You don't have to remember your traumas. This is really important. People will often say, "I don't really want to go back and open that up again." And I say, "Yeah. No, I don't want you to either. You don't need to." Right? What I really want to teach you to do is to track your trauma. You become your own tracker so that you and I use the hurt model that I developed from

my doctoral studies of healing unresolved trauma of how to track what the meaning is you made up around that event and the belief that got put in place and the adaptive behavior. And so is that a maladaptive behavior today? So in the hurt model, it has a bifurcation. And over here, if you keep doing what you've always done and you're not willing to self confront, then you're going to have a lot of judgment and rumination. You're going to keep sending your sympathetic nervous system off to the races. And eventually over time, you're going to have organ breakdown. Right? You're going to get disease.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

And that's just how it works. And the ACEs study says that. So that side is the hurt model. The right side of it is, oh, I've been challenged. I have a moment here. I'm aroused. Right? Now I have an opportunity over here to self confront if I'm willing to do that, to really have that compassionate, curiosity and state having mind, a witnessing mind. In doing some of this work that we're talking about, then I don't have to have what's going on over here. It's not maladaptive anymore. Okay? It's bringing something new from the wisdom that I'm learning from these old wounds. So we start with establishing a calm, safe place at the root chakra. We can do that right now if you want to.

Jason Prall:

Yeah. How do we do that?

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Okay. So I always think, and this is like Skyler needs to learn this, every preschool child needs to learn this. If all humans learn this, it would be such an amazing thing. Because if we could each be taught that we can find a calm, safe, peaceful place inside of us, then we don't have to control everything out here all the time. Right? The biggest addiction humans have is to control. And often it's from early trauma. Like if I just control this, it'll be safe.

Jason Prall:

The sense of safety. Yeah.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Right? Yeah. And so finding it inside of you establishes a ground of being that is ultimately can witness itself as safe, unless someone's chasing you down a dark alley, and then you're not going to go here. Right? You're going to let that sympathetic nervous system take you away. It needs to. But if it's something like someone's threatened your ego, you're feeling upset about politics or a football game, or-

Jason Prall:

I've got too much work and deadlines that are-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Too much work and deadlines, right? The dog's barking when you're doing an interview. All these moments where instead of getting uptight about it, you can actually drop yourself into this calm, safe place. So one of the things that happens is for every five minutes you're upset, it takes your body eight hours to recover. So what this is doing is it's allowing you to go more one-to-one. Okay? So I'm upset for a minute, I can recover myself in a minute, and I don't have to wait for eight hours for homeostasis. So when you're establishing a calm, safe place within, I always have you pick a place from nature, not your

house, not someplace where other people are. This is just yours. So it could be the beach, it could be a forest, it could be the mountains, it can be a secret garden, a meadow, a river. Some place in nature that feels really grounding and very calming to you. I had one person want to do it in space one time. And I said, "No, we're really wanting grounding." Right?

Jason Prall:

You want like a nurturing aspect to it, right?

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Nurturing, right? Very grounded. So for you, Jason, where would that be?

Jason Prall:

It's actually, I'm from the Pacific Northwest, so it's in like the deep, old, old growth forests. Yeah.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

I could just turn my camera slightly and you'd be there. So everybody, unless you're driving or operating heavy machinery, if you can, you can close your eyes and choose your place from the natural world that's only yours. And go ahead and fill in all of the colors of this place.

Jason Prall:

Keesha, as I'm doing this, I'm actually noticing emotion come up. There's a little bit of sadness and a little bit of...

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah. So just witness that. Allow it to be. Whatever happens, just be aware of it and let it be there. And then the sounds, and the smells, even how the air tastes on your tongue, and then what it feels like the temperature of this place. Is there sun that hits your skin, a breeze that lifts your hair slightly? How it feels under your feet and under your hands when you're seated.

Jason Prall:

Just naming something here. I'm noticing my natural, deep breath, my system seems to be calming.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah. Yeah. Because Jason is becoming in tuned and attuned right now to the massive old growth trees of the Pacific Northwest forest with the moss, the old ones that watch that forest. You'll notice your body's rhythms will begin to match this place. And what do you feel while you're here? Jason, I'll have you just-

Jason Prall:

Yeah. So I actually noticed them. I noticed my body more. I noticed my digestion increasing. I can feel and hear things moving. I noticed my breath sort of softened and slowed, and then the occasional deep sigh that felt very calming. Everything kind of just quieted down energetically.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

If you were to pick a word, like calm or peace or-

Jason Prall:

Serene.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Serene? Okay. So say your word of how you feel while you're here three times in your mind silently, really feeling that serenity. Notice in your body where you feel the serenity. Where do you feel that, Jason, the most?

Jason Prall:

I feel it in my heart.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Okay. And then if you were to give serenity a color, what would it be?

Jason Prall:

Green.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Okay. So allow that green light to be there in your heart center, as you're witnessing and embodying and feeling that serenity. And now, from this point forward, any time you say the word serene three times in your mind, you can drop right back here again.

Jason Prall:

So it's almost like we've laid the tracks neurologically of this emotion and this feeling, this embodied place.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Right. No, it almost like, you did.

Jason Prall:

Right.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah, you did.

Jason Prall:

So every time I get overwhelmed, and maybe not every time, I don't notice it. Right? I don't bring awareness to it. And then I forget, and I'm literally just trapped in my own overwhelm. But occasionally, and hopefully more of the time, I can bear awareness and come back to this place, and it becomes a quick-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Well, there's something intentional to do about that. So the next thing is that I ask for people to do is to set an alarm on your phone, just a little ding, just one little ding every hour for a while. Right? And whatever you're doing, you can say the words or anything in your mind three times. And you can drop into that. You don't even have to close your eyes. You can do it while you're driving, while you're surfing, while you're shopping, while you're engaging with your family. Always you can do it. Now you've laid the tracks. Now you're starting to travel on them. And you're really creating a beautiful pathway into that heart center, into the feeling of that old growth forest, and you're learning to embody that at the drop of a hat. So you don't leave it to chance of hopefully I remember. Yeah. Yeah. You're really practicing traveling on that trail now.

Jason Prall:

I love that. And it's undoubtedly, if you're doing it every hour, I think most of us are going to have some sense of unsafety, right? Of this feeling of unsafe. Perhaps not just to huge degrees, but on some level there's going to be this unrest in my system where this practice can then help resolve. And even more than that, even if I sort of in my mind feel that I'm safe, even just practicing this is going to burn in these tracks more and more, right? So it's a practice that is going to help in just like anything else. If I want to be a really good golfer, I got to practice my swing. And the more I practice my swing, the more muscle memory, the more neurological pathways get laid for this exact same precision-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Exactly.

Jason Prall:

... to do this thing. Right? And so that's really what we're doing. Beautiful. I love that-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

I'm learning to play the harmonium right now. And I've only been at it for two weeks. And I know that the fingering that I'm doing on the keyboard, along with pumping the bellows and doing the mantra, it's all going to quit being so awkward the more that I do it. And every day, I sit down and I do it, because I know that just the doing is important. I have to practice. I can't just do it by thinking about it. I have to practice it. I think about it as like I hike a lot, and here in the Pacific Northwest, there'll be these deer trails that will lead to water sources when I'm out hiking. And you know how many animals have traveled those trails by how compressed the vegetation is, right? And so if you want a really nice trail that's got no nettles and blackberries to scratch you, then you want to go along with a machete and keep it clear, right? And so you want to make yourself a trail. So you have to put that effort into it, whacking away anything that gets in the way, that wants to overgrow it.

Jason Prall:

Absolutely. And again, you've got a whole course on this, right? That you teach this whole process.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

That first process that I teach very first is to do that. And we want to establish a ground of safety so that in the work that you're doing as you're healing your trauma, you have this place to return to again and again.

Jason Prall:

Right. That's critical. I don't think that a human on the planet, that I know, that wouldn't benefit from something like this, especially for most of us who recognize that we have these things that we want to work through. This is such a critical one. And even if we have this sense of safety, right, I want to highlight the fact that we can deepen the sense of safety, right? And I think this is something that surprised me with the various levels of work that I've done is I think I've got something, and then I recognize, oh, there's a new depth. And then I get to that new depth. And I'm like, oh, that must be the bottom. I don't know why I don't learn, but it feels like that's the bottom, like whoa, that's really deep. And then somehow out of nowhere, I get blindsided with this new level of depth or breadth. And I'm like, oh my God.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

I used to conceptualize it as babushka dolls, like nesting boxes or dolls. And I would think, I would feel the constriction of the place I was in developmentally. And I'd climb up over the edge, and drop into this place that I could see no boundaries to it. And I'd be like, oh, I'm free. And then eventually, I'd get to the boundaries of that, and climb up and over. And what I started realizing now even outside the babushka dolls is, oh, under the ground, we have this mycelial network, and we have this galaxy of stars that are networked, and we're in between those two. And there's just this such a huge, limitless, infinite, cosmic expanse that, now, I think wow. And I know there's more. And so it's that willingness to climb out of the thing that has kept you safe in your mind.

Jason Prall:

That's amazing. Yeah.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Right?

Jason Prall:

I love that.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah. And explore.

Jason Prall:

And so we'd have to walk through all of them, because I'm sure the practice is similar, but give us a sense for how we graduate to these sort of next levels in your course and what it looks like to go to the second and third and fourth.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah. So the way I teach it is it's definitely not this way. It's a spiral. And so what we've done is we've established that root chakra safety. And then I do a practice about finding, tracking the hurts to your beliefs and those patterns that you created when you were a kid. And so then we go into, so then with the adaptive behavior that you established for that, who is the part of your ego that was born in that moment? And we all have these really beautiful inter... Richard Schwartz in Internal Family Systems has identified this, but he wasn't the first one, that this was based on voice dialogue of researchers from

earlier. And then Shamanic worked from before that. And spiritual work with spiritual directors and their congregants, right?

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

So this is learning the voice of your ego. And there are many of them. So we all have protectors that have come in. They haven't come in, we've developed them to protect the fragile little psyche of the little child part who feels like maybe they won't survive. So I have a really, really good protector. I call her the iron lady and she was, I just realized it was Margaret Thatcher's nickname too. It was the first time I realized that. That she will create this like iron wall around my heart so nobody can penetrate it when she's out. And she just circles around it. And she's protecting. And of course what that does is I made it so that I also can't feel. It creates this numbness of get it done. I can get stuff done. I don't have to feel anything. That I've totally and completely abandoned myself, my little child self, right, in the name of getting stuff done and not hurting.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

And so I've learned over the years to notice when she's out and to be able to allow her to stand down and to be able to say, "Thank you so much for your service." Right? And then to bring the mother part of myself and to coax out the little one that's afraid and say, "Hey, I've got you." And so you're bringing in all of your parts. We all have managers, and we have judges. Oh my gosh, I had such a heavy judge. And she's got like a bun on top of her hair, and she's got pursed lips. She's just really nasty, and has a ruler in her hand. She's always whacking it. And so I got to be able to give her a retirement package and thank her for her service, because she kept me from doing, knowing right from wrong.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

So relaxing these parts that can get in the way and running your fears that are leading in front of everything. We start learning and identifying those parts and putting some personality to them, that you're identifying actually the part of your personality. And so you're also identifying the ones who are being protected, right? And I called, I always think about those as the, like in the Nutcracker, whenever I... I call them the Voldemort babies, the ones that we don't want to see ourselves and we don't want anyone else to see. So if you ever saw the Harry Potter at the very end, the movies, there was like this decrepit little thing wrapped up underneath the bench in the train station at King's Cross. And Harry's talking to Dumbledore and he's like, "What's that?" It's basically a disowned part, right? And so the Voldemort baby is the one that like the crazy like, oh.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah, women really have a lot around this one, of not wanting anyone to think they're crazy or bitchy. For me, it was the stupid one, like the one that's not intelligent. I'm not allowed to have a weak mind. And so I was like, "Oh, come here, stupid one. You're allowed to come out. Come here. I love you." And just being able to witness those parts that we just don't even want to know we have inside of us. I remember dancing downstairs one day and coming down. My husband was doing the dishes, and I had just gotten off the meditation cushion. And I said, "I just met my murderous." He was like, "Good. Should I be worried?"

Jason Prall:

Congratulations.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Congratulations. I don't know if I want to meet her.

Jason Prall:

Yeah. What you're talking about here is self-acceptance, right? And I think sometimes we don't even recognize how much of ourself there is, right? Like the murderous-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

It's actually even more than self acceptance, it's integration. It's bringing all the parts together to the whole that you are, and right? You're not just accepting, you're loving them. And then you're integrating them. You're saying, "Oh yeah, I've got a murderous. Yeah." And here's what would trigger her and being able to say, "Oh, but I don't need to have you do that." Right? It's okay. The spiral aspect of this course is sometimes the things I'm talking about right now, where you're meeting the deepest, darkest part of yourself that you don't want to see and you don't want anyone else to see or meet, you have to have a ground of safety there. You have to have a good, healthy relationship with power dynamics, not being powering over, powering undering the parts of yourself. So we'll talk about power dynamics and the third chakra before we get to this part in the heart center.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

So all of these are important. You have to have learned how to track your hurt. You have to know what your beliefs are, your behaviors, and who's doing those behaviors. You have to understand power dynamics and to know whether or not you're powering over parts of yourself or powering under parts of yourself, or are you doing power with? So I teach all of that leading into, now, let's meet the cast of characters that's you. Then you learn how to integrate them, become whole, and love all of you, all of you. And then to be able to give voice to all of you in a way that is supportive of your life and your mission and purpose on the planet.

Jason Prall:

Yeah. And I think, and not to put words in your mouth, but to all beings, right?

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

To all beings.

Jason Prall:

That's what gets to show up. And then we can step into who we really are as we get to support not only ourselves but all beings from a true, aligned, whole, integrated depth that is continuing to deepen as we go. Right? So super important. And you've already, I think, given us a lot, right, in this very real practice of finding a deeper sense of safety and a more consistent basis to stabilize that in our system, not from the mind, but from really in the nervous system and in our entire system. And then you've just mentioned that. But still, these are things that if one has already started to look at these things or has the even just the curiosity to do what you're talking about, they can do this on their own, right? They can start to analyze their own characters as they come up and recognize them and witness them. And then do their best to find compassion for them. And so you've already given us, I think, a lot to sort of self-start in this process. And I think your course undoubtedly has a much more, but also a structure that allows-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

It does.

Jason Prall:

... it to go deeper into this. So-

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Nine modules of very supportive-

Jason Prall:

Beautiful.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah. With practices and meditations and yeah. And spiraling back again to the beginning and really making sure that you're not leaving behind what you've already learned so that you're integrating on a deeper and deeper and deeper level as you go.

Jason Prall:

And this is a good time to mention sort of that second chakra, which is about support, right? And some of us, me, I've learned to avoid support and do things on my own a lot, or when it's showed up, showing up for me, I have even a difficulty accepting it and fully integrating it. Right? That's an area for me. It's continues to be an edge that I am hoping to push. So this is an opportunity for those that feel like they can do this all on their own to really reflect on that and ask yourself if that's the real honest truth, and if there's a better way to move forward, to step into a new pattern and explore what it looks like to accept this support from the others that is very real. And even just the act of doing that, it starts to heal that imbalance or that maladaptive pattern, right?

Jason Prall:

So it's interesting how this all works, that even your offering of a course is part of this aspect of finding support in this process. And undoubtedly, the people that are watching this are stepping into that, or have at least started to really work and have a healthier relationship with that support, because that's really what this is about, is it's providing that support. So again, Keesha, please tell us what the name of that course is and where they can find it too, for those who want to learn more.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

It's Healing Trauma Through the Chakra System. And it's at drkeesha.com, but we can set up something so that we offer it at a discounted rate for your audience.

Jason Prall:

Beautiful, beautiful. I was going to say, "We'll put a link," but if you can give us a discount, heck yeah.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah.

Jason Prall:

We'll definitely sort that out. That's beautiful.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Yeah.

Jason Prall:

Thank you so much that.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

And a webinar that goes through more of it and like... Yeah, absolutely.

Jason Prall:

Beautiful. Well, thank you, Dr. Keesha. You're amazing.

Dr. Keesha Ewers:

Thank you.

Jason Prall:

Please continue to keep doing the work you're doing. It's always impressive what you've got to share. So I hope everybody's enjoyed this. Please put this into practice. I know I will. It's not a statement, it's an intention that I will put this into practice. So thank you again, everybody, for joining us. And we'll see you on the next one.