

KUNDALINI AND INCEST

HEALING THE SPECIAL WOUND

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Kundalini and incest have been two powerful forces in my life. In this article I will be focusing on three aspects of my experience with these energies. I will begin with some background information on the transformative energy of Kundalini and a discussion of the similarities I find with incest. I will then look at my responses to both Kundalini and incest with emphasis on how I've used these experiences to create a sense of being special. I will conclude by exploring the healing journey back from this special wound, specifically through the Core Energetic model of Mask, Lower Self and Higher Self.

Kundalini is a transformative process that is becoming more common in the West. It is important for us as healers to understand this process so that we can help clients identify and open to the transformation taking place within them. Kundalini is integral to many esoteric teachings such as Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Taoism, some American Indian Tribes, the Bushmen of Africa and others. However, it was in Hindu India that the process was most carefully studied and conceptualized. Kundalini, or "serpent power", is thought to be a form of psychospiritual energy. It is the energy of consciousness. This force or energy is believed to be at rest in a dormant state in the human body. It lies coiled at the base of the spine, below the first chakra, until one is awakened to it. It then begins an upward movement through the body, piercing the chakras until it reaches the crown of the head. In some traditions the energetic movement is seen as the rush of a divine Goddess, Shakti, who is released and charges up through the system to be reunited with her love, Siva, the universal consciousness that awaits her. In Tantra Yoga Shakti is referred to as the feminine or dynamic aspect of ultimate Reality while Siva is the masculine or static aspect. On the higher spiritual levels, both are forever inseparable. But on the level of normal human consciousness, they appear separated. So we experience only a small part of transcendental Consciousness

and have access to an equally small part of transcendental Power. Restructuring is needed in order to build a vehicle strong enough to contain the spiritual energy and insight of the truth of unity, to dissolve the illusion of separateness and duality. Some Eastern teachers believe that the Kundalini process does this by entirely redesigning the structure of the cells and the human brain physiology.

When Kundalini is awakened, one is usually thrown into physical, psychological and spiritual chaos. The experience is sudden, unexpected and undeniable. The dynamic activity of the energy will burn off all kinds of impurities. Any blocks in the pathway upward will eventually be dissolved. It affects one's entire being. What has been in darkness comes into the light for very close examination and ultimate clearing. Kundalini demands that you reorient your life. It is a process, an intelligence, that is not random and that is unfolding at a pace that is organic to you, although at times I've felt catapulted way beyond my capacity to cope. This process can take years or lifetimes. It affects every chakra and every layer of the auric field. Because there is such an intense movement of energy and a restructuring of the physical system in order to handle it, there is an enormous impact on the body and strain on the system trying to integrate it.

Everyone's experience with Kundalini is slightly different— unique to that individual. My initial awakening to this energy happened during a trip to Egypt in March of 1989. It was in the Temple of the Sphinx that I felt a tremendous energy, golden white strands, rushing through my body. I saw snakes weaving their way up from my genitals towards my head. I was filled with a sense of ecstatic bliss. This went on for 20-30 minutes. It began a shift from outer to inner exploration that was quite dramatic. I felt an urgency from within, a strong desire to connect to the Divine. I had no idea what was in store for me.

Eight months after my initial blissful experience, I began a journey of cleansing that has been very challenging. Fear, terror and panic has been the predominant backdrop to my experience. The difficulties I've encountered in response to Kundalini are directly related to my personal history, my physical and emotion

al armoring and my resistance to surrender to the process. The difficulties are directly related to my wound of incest.

It's important to understand that for incest to occur there has to be an environmental foundation that sets up the child's vulnerability. With father-daughter incest, it is common for the child to feel abandoned by her mother, in some way un nourished by her. So the child seeks out her father to get affection and attention. Children are totally dependent on adults for their basic needs and they will do whatever is perceived necessary to preserve this relationship. It's a matter of survival. Although children have sexual feelings, it is the adult who determines the sexual nature of the relationship and who bears the responsibility for it. Because the child fears abandonment, she will not protest. She will do whatever is necessary to be cared for.

My father was sexual with me from ages 3-7. The powerful influx of sexual energy created an expansion that I was unable to handle. It was sudden, unexpected and undeniable. I could not integrate the energy, so I contracted around it. I was thrown into physical, psychological and spiritual chaos. I had to reorient my life, creating beliefs based on my 4-year old limited range of life experience. Incest affected every chakra and every layer of my auric field. The energy, because it was not integrated at the time, got stored in my body at a particular vibration. As long as I lived my life at other vibrational levels I could avoid accessing the memories. The raw energy of Kundalini and the raw energy of incest both operate at a similar vibration because they are both sexual, life force energy. So as soon as Kundalini began, an energy at the same vibrational level, then the incest memories were knocked to the surface. This opened me to the original pain and began a process of healing.

There are many systems that have been created to define the auric field, or energy field that surrounds the body. All the systems divide the aura into layers and define them by location, color, form, fluidity and function. The aura holds the physical body together in its form, nourishes it with life energy and integrates information that keeps the body functioning. Barbara Brennan, a scientist, healer and author of two books, has observed seven layers in the auric field. According to her observations, the layers interpenetrate each other with each succeeding

layer extending further from the body and having a higher vibration than the one below it. Because of the different vibrations, each level of the auric field will interpret energy differently, translating it into physical, emotional, mental or spiritual experience.

On the first level of the field we experience bare sensations. With Kundalini I felt vibration, shaking, heat, and the accelerated beating of my heart. I felt detached and in a dreamlike state. At times I felt intense sexual energy. I also felt hyperactive with nervous energy, as if I were plugged into an electrical socket. Sometimes this hyperactivity would be followed by collapse. With incest there were similar sensations. And because the incest was confusing for me I felt in a dreamlike state, not sure what was happening, not knowing what was real.

The second level of the auric field holds emotions. With the clearing of Kundalini, I experienced sadness, grief, fear, anxiety, and rage. All of these emotions were thrown up in my face with an intensity I had never before experienced. I did a small survey of 13 women who have also experienced incest and the similarities of response are noteworthy. One of the difficulties in healing from incest is that many polarities of feelings exist. For example, it is common to feel both love and hate or longing and rage for your perpetrator. You may at times find the incest causes fear and excitement, bliss and terror, safety and danger. You may feel personally seen or invisible. Ten of the 13 women I surveyed felt they were in some way special and 9 of those also felt they were worthless. It is necessary to come to terms with both ends of this stream.

Thoughts are contained on the third level of the field. This is where my mind took over and I had numerous concerns about my well-being, most of which created fear for me. I'm sure I must have experienced this as a child too. Fear needs the ally of linear time to exist. It extrapolates on the present condition and stretches it into the future. Thoughts such as "What will become of me? Maybe I'll always be like this. Maybe I'll never be normal again." would fill my mind, creating fear. Initially I thought I was going crazy. I've learned a lot about fear these past five years. I know how it smells. I know the texture of it, the slight differences in each arousal. I know many ways one can surrender and

dissolve fear. It's very helpful when working with clients because every one of us is afraid. Every one of us has our own story and scent of fear, but it's all about separation, the veil I believe less and less each time I see it.

When the energy of Kundalini bursts I always feel a moment of bliss and indescribable joy (level 6, the level of divine love and spiritual ecstasy). I fill with love for everyone around me (levels 4 and 6, the levels of relationship and divine love respectively). There is a deep sense of appreciation and wonder. Linear time does not make sense to me. Nor does our concept of space. I simply can't wrap my mind around either of these ideas when I'm in the midst of Kundalini. Kundalini opens me to the truth of life. Incest created chaos and distorted beliefs. Beliefs are held in the 7th level of the field. I created many beliefs about life from my experience of incest. Many of these had to do with believing I was alone, separate and special. The energy of Kundalini uproots these distortions and blasts them into the light to be transformed. Then I am able to catch glimpses, with my entire being, of the greater pattern and perfection of every minute detail of life (level 7). These experiences on the spiritual levels filter down and nourish my entire being. Although the incest came wrapped with many things, I can imagine that as a child I felt a wonderful sense of merging and love with my father. It is the merging that is felt on the higher levels. On level 4 I felt love for my father. On level 6 I experienced the bliss and joy of this union. This merging was also experienced on level 7 where God (Daddy in my child eyes) and I are one. Level 7 also holds beliefs, but the beliefs I held were distorted. As they filtered down through my auric field there was no nourishment for my growth and true happiness.

Although the sexual exchange with my father was difficult and traumatic there was also a nurturing component to it. I felt my daddy loved me best and that I was special. When he left me for my sister, whom I shared a room with, it was devastating. I lost all physical contact with my father, not just the sexual part, but the nurturing part as well. It was so painful the only way to cope was to create a place for myself where I would not have to feel pain. I needed to find safety. I did this by creating a sense of being special, of being the chosen one, of being different than or

better than others. I told myself that I didn't need other people because ultimately I would have my daddy. He would return to me because I was really his special one. I've waited most of my life for him to return and make me feel alive again. This buried hope was a coping mechanism that was effective in protecting me from the pain of his abandonment.

When I was 7-10 years old I avidly read all the books I could find about Pippi Longstocking. Pippi was my heroine. I resonated with her life and wanted to be just like her. She lived by herself. "Naturally, she had had a mother but that was so long ago that Pippi didn't remember her at all." But Pippi had not forgotten her father. He had been a sailor and she refused to believe that he had been blown overboard in a storm and disappeared. Pippi convinced herself that he would come back. "As soon as my papa has built himself a boat he will come and get me, and I'll be a ...princess." So she waited for him in the old house he had built many years before. Pippi had red hair and freckles, like me, and was often portrayed with a sword in one hand and a gun in the other (just ready for the Lower Self to emerge). She was physically strong, smart, and very mischievous. She didn't believe the rules applied to her and so she broke most of them, always coming out on top. Pippi was special, "a remarkable child," and everyone knew it. I emulated Pippi and applied her well to my own painful circumstances at the time. The illusion of specialness that I was able to create provided me with a sense of separateness, which I equated with safety. It kept me safe from pain that I couldn't tolerate. As an adult I continued to find many ways to convince myself that I was special. But when Kundalini came along I felt special in a whole new way. This Kundalini energy would meet a block and come to my full attention about once or twice a month. It was captivating. I never knew when it would begin, much like the uncertainty of the incest. Over the past five years I have had some pretty wild times with this energy. I've had intense dreams in which energy, in the form of blood or mucus, was blasted from both ends of my body. I would wake up and look to see if in fact I had made a mess somewhere. I also had strong sexual visions and spontaneous orgasms during meditation. Sometimes at night I felt as if I had made love to the Gods. This was major excitement. Indian healers would come into my

dreams and teach me how to draw the energy up the sushumna or central channel of my body. They would check inside my brain to see if the necessary changes were happening. It was incredibly vivid. I felt as if I was being totally reorganized at all levels of my being, beginning at the cellular level. It was equally exciting and frightening to me, much like incest. I felt that I must be the chosen one, that I was special and somehow better or different from those around me. My ego grew in direct proportion to my attachment to Kundalini and the difficulty I was having with it. I used my experiences of both incest and Kundalini to feel important and valued, necessary and worthwhile. I felt necessary to my father's happiness and necessary to humanity because of my spiritual experiences. To view Kundalini as simply a sexual energy would be a very limiting way of looking at it. It is an energy of transformation. While incest brings separation, Kundalini brings the truth of no separation. Both incest and Kundalini create expansion because of the huge influx of energy. But because of the fear I contracted around the energy, I was afraid of it and I became afraid of life.

The movement of Kundalini has been a powerful movement upward through my body that has released the blocks that I put in place to keep the sexual energy of incest down. I loved my father and when he left I promised myself that I would never love like that again. That may appear to be simply an emotional (level 2) statement, but it gets played out in the physical body as well. I shut down my pelvis and my heart. Now that this separation is causing me pain I have to reopen my whole body and allow that flow to move through me.

I have made use of many different avenues for healing: poetry writing, meditation, Hands-On Healing, and especially Core Energetics. I work in an active way to help move through blocks that inhibit a free flow of energy through my body. It helps me to connect to my Core, connect to love. Bodywork has been essential to my healing. I expend a lot of energy not feeling my pelvis, not allowing the flow of sexual feelings up to my heart. With a good Core Energetic therapist, I've begun to allow the energy to fill my whole being. I'm now learning to tolerate pleasure as more of the fear gets released. It has been very powerful to work in a safe environment with energy and feelings

I've been afraid of. When I'm able to allow energy to move through my body then I am able to feel my heart and make choices from the center of my being. That's how I was as a child, that's how I was with my daddy, and that's what needs to be reclaimed. This involves a surrender.

As a child I had no choice but to surrender to my father. The power difference and my fear of abandonment was too overwhelming. The lack of safety I felt in surrendering was carried over to my attempts to surrender to God, to the Kundalini process. This was because, like most children, I viewed my daddy as God and God as Father. The 5th level of the field is the level of Divine Will, where God's will and mine become one. It means surrendering my outer ego will to that of God's. Although on the intellectual level I understood how I was confusing my daddy and God, when the chips were down surrender was still out the door. Also, both Kundalini and incest involve a merging, a dissolution of boundaries. Because I felt betrayed by both my father and by God, the merging created for me both bliss and terror. I initially experienced Kundalini as coming from outside of myself, a force that was being imposed upon me, much like my father's energy. I was not viewing this as an inner choice, an inner movement of unfoldment. So I've needed to create a new image of God for myself, one that is more loving, expansive and accepting, one that I can surrender to. My concept of God continues to broaden as I discard what no longer serves me. This allows for a greater sense of safety in letting go.

According to Core Energetics, everyone has a Mask, a Lower Self, and a Higher Self. This framework has been very helpful in illuminating my distorted sense of specialness. I found that a good sense of humor was essential because it was amazing to realize some of the things I believed.

The Mask is what we show to the world because we think it's what they want to see, what will make us acceptable to other people. It gets formed early in childhood when we needed to survive and when so much of what we wanted to express was unacceptable to our parents. The Lower Self is full of intense energy and blocked emotions. It stays alive by recoiling from life and from love. It is the part of us that refuses to be enlightened, refuses to connect and to love. Hate and a desire for revenge

often cover over our unexpressed primal feelings of pain and fear. In order to get to these raw feelings we need to energize and express the anger and hate. Once the pain of the Lower Self gets released we have easier access to the Higher Self. Our Higher Self or Core is our true nature, which is love and creativity. In order to reach the Core we have to remove the Mask and express the Lower Self. In our human condition the Real Self is a combination of the Lower Self and Higher Self, an integration of the two.

My Mask had a lot to say about both incest and Kundalini. About incest I felt that Daddy loved me best, that's why he was sexual with me. I felt special. And by feeling special, like the chosen one, I was able to keep away the pain of feeling worthless and abandoned. I felt these same things with Kundalini. I thought God must love me best, that's why he shot me full of Kundalini. I felt special, like I was the chosen one. I wanted both of these experiences to be believed but I was terrified of having my illusion of specialness taken away.

When I entered therapy I was very hesitant to share my experiences of Kundalini in any way that would make me vulnerable to having it misunderstood, minimized, or worse, dismissed. I didn't think that my therapist would be able to understand how special I was. None of this was clear to me at the time - it was simply operating behind the scenes. I slowly talked about it and brought more of my experience into therapy so that I could have help working with the energy when it was present. But I didn't want to risk fully exposing myself. During one session when I was being held I started to shake some, not particularly unusual for me. My therapist said something about me having "a lot of emotional energy." I left feeling misunderstood and angry. I felt like she was totally missing the point. I returned the next week to set the record straight. So I told her that it seemed like she viewed all energy as the same— emotional, spiritual, physical. She shrugged her shoulders and smiled. I couldn't believe it! She had no idea how special I was, how special my spiritual experiences were! The potentially devastating part of this for me was that to admit that Kundalini was not some special experience would mean that I would be like everyone else. Certainly this would end my sense of separation

from others but at what felt like the price of defeat. As a child, to be second (to my sister) was to be nothing at all. I felt that maintaining my separateness and specialness was essential to my survival.

After one intense experience with Kundalini and still in a very expansive state, I showed up for our monthly Core Energetic Process Group. I was very sensitive and found it hard to be around the intensity of energy that was there. I spoke about this a little because I didn't want to participate in an exercise of anger. My position was not welcomed by everyone. That night I woke up from an intense dream in which I had thrown up and pulled sticky green tar from my mouth. This was probably the energy of rage. I also felt a very strong desire to go to the Siddha Ashram and meditate. Had I been able to arrange transportation at 2 a.m. I would have gone. The next morning I was talking to a friend about perhaps not going to the day's group meeting. Although I felt in the midst of some high spiritual calling, there was something about my motives that bothered me. So I decided not to go to the Ashram. Later I realized that I had wanted to punish my group for not understanding how special I was the night before. I wanted to hurt them by letting them know they couldn't begin to compete with the spiritual experience I was having. In fact, they could never begin to understand how deep and truly profound I was. That was when it became clear to me that this special thing was pretty deeply rooted.

As my Mask became more transparent, my Lower Self began shining through. I wanted to destroy everyone for not knowing how special I was. I felt delighted by my ability to not let anyone connect with me. There has always been a sense of pride about being able to not feel, to not let people get to my heart and have an effect on me. Of course, underneath this are the raw feelings of terror and hurt and the pain of abandonment. It takes energizing and expressing the anger and vengeful parts to allow the raw feelings underneath to be released.

I'm including two poems I wrote that illustrate the two aspects of the Lower Self. The first poem, *Sister Love*, expresses my rage towards my sister, who I felt stole my father from me. She took my place by becoming more special than I had been. I get triggered into feeling this pain when my mask of specialness is

threatened. It can happen if I have to wait more than about 10 minutes for my individual therapy appointment. I begin to feel threatened, like I'm losing ground, losing my place. I imagine that her other client must be more important, more special than I am. It makes me enraged.

Sister Love

**boiling red rage courses through my body oozing from
every pore
red life erupting and burning everything it touches I will slice my hands into
your body ripping your heart out and squeezing it between my hands
holding it up, your life juice will drip onto your face you are totally under my
control I could destroy you with my thoughts alone the image I can build in
your mind would terrify you one drop of my potent rage could blow you
apart smattering the corners of your small life against the sky your precious
world forever blasted apart**

As long as I'm able to stay in the rage, I don't have to feel the pain and longing underneath. *Night Whispers*, the second poem, expresses some of the raw primal feelings beneath the rage. My attachment to the past, my child longing for Daddy, diminishes as I release these feelings and the energy associated with them. This allows me to live my life in a more responsive, less reactive way.

Night Whispers

**my arms reach towards my daddy my body aches for his touch screaming
arms reaching into the dark across the emptiness screaming and waiting
reaching and screaming until sound ends
the silence held in the walls of my room the sad screams woven into the
blankets that cover my body
burning holes in my body**

squeezed by the screaming black night *my heart blows*
apart disappearing like sand in the wind I am dying where
are you, daddy ?

After the energy of the Lower Self finds expression, the Higher Self can start to emerge. It is my Higher Self that wants to claim my own body and life energy and allow it to nourish me. I continue to learn about surrendering both to my own sexuality, which I could not do as a child, and to Kundalini, to life and to God. My Higher Self challenges me to connect to others, to open my heart and see God in everyone.

One of the clearest experiences of my Higher Self was after an intense therapy session. During this time I let out a lot of my Lower Self, yelling and hitting and directing it towards my therapist. I wanted to rip her heart out. It was quite an exhilarating feeling. The energy was direct and powerful. But what happened for me afterwards was unexpected. I found that I was able to see her clearly, to see her caring and commitment to her work. I felt honored and grateful for all that she gave me. I felt a sense of specialness that was different than what I had experienced before. It didn't have anything to do with competing to be number one, to be her favorite. It didn't come as a result of clenching or holding on tight to some imagined position. It came from a relaxed heart and clear vision, expansion.

My experiences with Kundalini have taught me a lot about energy. When it is not colored and distorted by personal history, then it is simply energy. I can choose to use it to create whatever I want—pain, despair, joy or happiness. Sometimes the intentions behind two actions seem different so we don't recognize the source as being the same. Kundalini is a movement towards union, towards our core essence and the experience of the ground of love. Incest appears to be an act of cruelty. But if you broaden your perspective you may begin to see love as the common source. We come into our lives to heal the places in us that are wounded and in shadow. Without a wound there is nothing to heal and no gift to receive. Healing our wound brings us to conscious love, the ground of our being.

When a soul comes into this lifetime to experience Kundalini

she may be drawn to parents or situations where this will be recognized, even if only on a limited, sexual level. When the incest occurs, a spark or charge gets ignited, something that jump starts the Kundalini process she has chosen for herself. Because she is so young when this energy comes to her, it may take years for her to learn how to integrate and use this gift of life energy. It is a journey from contraction to expansion, from separation to connection. I'm not suggesting that the offender be excused from taking full responsibility for his actions. But the "victim" also needs to take full responsibility for her own healing, to illuminate her own distortions and blocks to love. Connecting to my father through incest began a personal journey of unfolding love, creativity and joy. As I heal, the wound and the gift become one.

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