

## The Happy Highly Sensitive Life Podcast

*Got Empath Overload? What Human Design Shows You About Being an Empath + How to Cope*

Podcast Transcript  
Episode 11

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One of the traits of being an HSP is being empathic. And it's always struck me that empathy shows up differently in different people. And in varying degrees. My way of experiencing empathy may feel different than yours.

When I discovered Human Design, I finally had a framework for understanding how we empathically take in and experience other people. And I knew the information I'm about to share with you could lead to profound self-understanding for HSPs and empaths.

When you know and understand how your empathic transmissions occur, you can lean into the strengths that come with them and use mindful awareness to reduce the emotional toll that comes from experiencing others so strongly.

This episode is inspired by the questions I've received from HSPs. You are living and working led by your big caring hearts. On one hand, it feels so meaningful and important and is such an honor to understand others so deeply through your empathy. And on the other hand, taking in the energy of other people can make your own emotional load feel heavier and heavier. You may feel the quality of your own life evaporating.

So in this episode, you will learn:

- The 4 Centers in Human Design where you most powerfully take in the energy of others.
- The Center that's responsible for analysis paralysis that also shows you how to move past it.
- Strategies for reducing the emotional toll of being an empath
- Why my Open Identity Center led me to abandon my Instagram account
- Why decisions are not meant to be made with your mind and what to do instead to tap into your inner knowing.

My goal is always to share information that will empower you and help you see new possibilities for living a life of greater ease that lights you up, and my hope is that this information will begin to do just that.

Now If you haven't listened to Episode 10 yet, [An introduction to Human Design for HSPs](#), that's a great place to start so you have a solid foundation for understanding this episode.

And also, if you can, grab your Human Design chart so you can look at it while you listen. If you're driving or walking, and you need a quick refresher once you have your chart in front of you, visit the transcript for this episode on my [website](#).

To run your free chart using your birth date, birth time, and birth city and state, go to [Genetic Matrix.com/free-foundation-chart](#). I will include this link in the show notes. You don't need to supply your email address to run this chart.

You may find your birth info on your birth certificate. If your parents kept a baby book for you, you may find it there, or you can contact the Division of Vital Records or its equivalent for where you live.

When you're looking at your chart from Genetic Matrix- you'll see an outline of the Human body with 9 geometric shapes over top of it. These are called Centers and are energy hubs. They function like the chakras. And each Center has a particular theme.

Defined or Closed (Colored) Centers are the areas where you have consistent access to your own energy. They represent more fixed aspects of your personality.

Your Open or Undefined Centers (they are white) are the Centers where you experience and feel the energy of other people. And when you take in the energy of others, you feel that energy strongly. It's amplified or magnified. And also, you experience the aspects of a Center in a variety of ways, depending on who you are with.

Undefined Centers are where you are very Open to learning and growth and you become wise from taking in this energy through different people. This is also the place where Human Design says we take in conditioning. Conditioning comes as subtle and overt, direct and indirect messages from others about how we're too much or not enough. And about what we should and shouldn't do.

By knowing the areas you are Open, you can begin to notice when you are experiencing the energies and influence of other people through these Centers. So you can lean into the strengths that come with this Openness and be mindfully aware of the energy exchange that's happening, so you can choose how you respond to and release those energies coming in.

Today, I'm going to focus on 4 Centers where you powerfully take in the energy of others.

And the first is the Open Emotional Solar Plexus.

### **Open Emotional Solar Plexus**

The Solar Plexus is the large triangle on the bottom right side of the Body Graph that's associated with emotions. This Center is an awareness Center and a motor Center. If this Center is white for you, it's Open or UnDefined and you are an emotional empath. 50% of the population has an Open Emotional Solar Plexus.

When you hear the term empath, you probably are thinking of an emotional empath. For example, you're around someone who is feeling a certain way, perhaps they are sad or anxious. And you feel their sadness or anxiety.

The empathic gift of this Center is that you deeply understand and see other people.

My husband Adam is an emotional empath. The first funeral we ever went to together, as he was giving condolences to the young woman who had lost her father, I looked over and he had tears streaming down his cheeks. "It's just so sad", he said. He could feel her sadness so strongly.

To help you understand how this energy functions, let me tell you about how this Center operates when it's Defined or colored in. This Center is a motor and when it's Defined, or colored, you experience emotional energy in waves. Imagine a rolling sine wave with undulations of up and down, higher frequency energy and lower frequency energy. For those with this Center Defined, there's a more fixed way that you experience emotions through your wave.

With this Center Open, you experience emotions in a variety of ways depending on who you are with.

When you take in other people's emotional energy It's easy to think that the emotions you are experiencing are your own. But in reality, with an Open Solar Plexus, you don't have your own emotional wave. However, when you take in the emotional waves and energy of others with a Defined Solar Plexus, you strongly feel their emotions in an amplified way.

As an emotional empath, it feels painful to be in conflict with other people. Because that negative energy feels magnified or amplified, it's common for people with an Open Emotional Solar Plexus to avoid conflict, to present a pleasant face to the world and to try to make other people happy to maintain a peaceful environment.

Watching Adam, I know how distressing it can be when you're thinking about setting a boundary or taking a stand and fear you'll end up in a conflict. I also saw this with my dad. He would withdraw into himself and wait for the conflict to pass. The amplified energy that comes with having someone mad at you can feel very jarring.

Knowing how this Center works, you can use present moment awareness to notice emotional energy and to allow other people's energy to flow over you without taking it in as your own energy.

You want to focus on Observing not Absorbing other people's emotional energy. Observing is about watching a scene unfold in front of you, rather than internalizing a scene.

Here are some things that can help with that.

- Build a daily meditation practice. I talk about how to meditate in Episode 3, [How to Cope with Intense Situations](#). Your meditation practice will help you be aware from moment to moment of how other people's emotions are penetrating you. You'll start to feel if you're absorbing other people's emotions.
- When you're in the presence of another person, reinforce your emotional boundaries by quietly, in your mind, labeling the feeling the other person is expressing by saying, "this is their feeling, "this is Mary's sadness."
- Place your hand over the middle of your chest and give yourself a hand of support, putting positive centering loving energy into your body.
- Spend time alone to disconnect from the energy field of other people. Build time into your day to empty out the emotional energy you pick up. If you don't have much time, spend five minutes re-Centering by focusing on your breathing and deepening your exhale.

- Use the strategies in Episode 3, [How to Cope with Intense Situations](#), to recalibrate your nervous system and release stress from your nervous system every day.
- Get out in nature every day, even if it's only for a few minutes. The energy of nature will rebalance and release unwanted energetic frequencies. Reground yourself by sitting and leaning against a tree, or putting your bare feet on the ground, or walking by a stream, taking in sunshine. Hugging your pets, or gardening and putting your hands in soil can feel really good.
- An epsom salt or sea salt or himalayan salt bath can pull accumulated energy out of you. When you're feeling weighed down by energetic frequencies you've picked up during the day, taking a bath can really change how you feel.
- Smudge yourself and your home with white sage when you're feeling anxious or sad. This will help to clear negative energy from your energy field. And helps if you're feeling very disconnected from yourself. I have a smudging ritual that's very cathartic, and calming and often leads to an emotional release. I smudge and listen to [Yo Yo Ma's Méditation from Thaïs by French composer Jules Massenet](#). Sometimes I Open the windows when I'm doing it to let the old energy out. I'll link this song in the show notes on my website.

To support your awareness in the moment, repeat this affirmation:  
*I observe rather than absorb emotional energy.*

Let's talk about the second Open Center where you powerfully take in the energy of others. That's the Open Spleen.

## **OPEN OR UNDEFINED CENTER: SPLEEN**

The Spleen is the triangle on the bottom left side of the Body Graph and is an awareness Center. The Spleen is connected to intuitive and instinctual safety and survival awareness, body wisdom, health, well-being, and timing.

It's the Center that's connected to the fight or flight response. If you are in danger, a Defined or colored in Spleen would send you an instinctive and intuitive pulse of energy that tells you there's something you need to pay attention to. It's a intuitive gut level feeling that's in the moment and just shows up once.

It also gives you pulses of knowing about what to do to take care of yourself and to stay safe, healthy and in a state of well-being. You have intuitive knowings and gut feelings about what you should or shouldn't do.

With a Defined Spleen, you tend to have one distinct and consistent intuitive way of hearing these messages. You may feel that something needs to be taken care of, you may smell that something's fishy or off, you may just know something needs to happen, you don't know why or how, you just know. You may sense something is off. Or see an image in your mind's eye to follow.

But when you have an Open Spleen, you pick up on many pulses and signals about survival and well-being, in a variety of different ways, based on who you're with.

The empathic gift of this Center is that you intuitively know what other people are experiencing.

With an Open Spleen, you may be intuitive about what's occurring with other people's bodies and health. You may feel in your body, what they're feeling in their body. You empathically pick up on the fear signals that the people you're with are experiencing. Intuitions are coming in in so many different ways, you may not know which signals to trust, follow and act on. This can make you feel very vulnerable and anxious as you go about your day. You may not carry with you a baseline sense of feeling safe.

With an Open Spleen, you tend to want to be prepared for whatever may come your way to counteract the anxiety and vulnerability you feel. Your energy field likes to be with people who have a Defined Spleen, which creates a sense of safety. You may like to hold onto things so that you'll be prepared just in case you need them. Perhaps you hold onto stuff or habits and routines, or relationships, that create a sense of security.

With an Open or Closed Spleen, your Spleen can create a pulse of fight or flight energy when there's nothing wrong and when you're just stepping out of your comfort zone. As HSPs, we know about this, right? Your heart pounds and your palms sweat when you go to make a presentation at work or to have a hard conversation.

This is the Center that is responsible for feeling stuck in analysis and paralysis, which makes moving forward feel so hard. However, when you're not faced with real danger and you're just doing new things in your life, we can push through the fear and do it anyway. But to bust through the fear, you need to have a knowing that taking this action is aligned. Determine what's aligned for you to do by following your Strategy and Authority as I described in Episode 10.

When you take action following your Strategy and Authority, and you have faith that you're doing the aligned and right thing for you, that faith sustains and supports you to move forward when it feels hard.

You have an ability to intimately know others and what they're facing.

Being aware of the dynamics created by having an Open Spleen is the first step for managing an energy field that's so sensitive to the vulnerabilities of others. Just knowing you're intuitive when it comes to health and well-being and that you may be picking up on other people's fears can help you.

The phrase "no feeling is final" really applies to you, since fears may be moving in and out of your energetic awareness all the time. You'll use many of the same strategies that I described for emotional empaths with an Open Solar Plexus.

- Build a regular meditation practice. Your meditation practice will help you establish a centered baseline so you can observe the fears that pass into your energy field without identifying with them quite so strongly.
- Place your hand over the middle of your chest and give yourself a hand of support, putting positive loving energy into your body.
- Have time by yourself to disconnect from the energy of other people. Build time into your day to be alone and release the splenic energy you pick up. Practice deep breathing to calm and center your nervous system.
- Smudging, being in nature and salt baths can all help discharge the energy you've picked up during the day.

With an Open Spleen, you may be very sensitive to alcohol and medications and need a lower dose than other people. My father had both an Open Spleen and an Open Emotional Solar Plexus and as a result, when we were kids we rarely took medications. And instead we used homeopathic remedies. He also did a lot of self-care. He meditated twice a day, did Tai Chi and gentle exercise to release stress.

To support your awareness in the moment, repeat these affirmations:

*No feeling is final.*

*I easily release the things that don't serve my highest good to make space for something more aligned to enter my life.*

Let's talk about the third Open Center where you powerfully take in the energy of others. That's the Open Identity or G Center.

## **THE IDENTITY & PURPOSE CENTER-**

The Identity or G Center is the diamond in the Center of the chart. The Identity Center is concerned with love, and life direction or a sense of personal mission and purpose. It aligns you to who you are. It's the Center of self-love and connects you to your soul.

With an Open Identity Center, you are deeply sensitive. The empathic gift of this Center is that you can deeply experience the essence of other people. You feel the identity and purpose of people around you. With this Center Open, you're not technically emotionally empathic the way the Open Emotional Solar Plexus is but you are very attuned to others' identity and also to the energy of spaces.

Many intuitives and therapists have Open Identity Centers, giving them the ability to intuit other people's values, perspective, mission and purpose. With an Open Identity Center, since you are experiencing a lot of different life perspectives, values and options, figuring out your direction and purpose can feel tricky. As you connect with someone with a Defined Identity Center you can feel who they are, their interests, aspirations, goals, wants, viewpoints and values. Through sampling the identities of others, you become wise about the experiences of other people.

It's easy to feel like their way is the right way to be and you should be more like them to be likable.

I have an Open Identity Center and in episode 9, I talk about how I used to lose myself in relationships. When I was my 20s, I'd become quiet and censored myself around other people. I held back from saying what I thought. I tried to blend in and become a matching replica of the people around me. And that's when I started discovering how important it was for me to be in congruent and aligned relationships or relationships that brought me closer to being a fuller version of myself, rather than silently censoring myself.

I also felt like I needed to really explore what I wanted for my life. Did I want to get married and have kids or did I just think that I did because that's what I'd been conditioned to think? I looked around at my friends and peers and they just seemed to automatically know what they wanted. My 20s and 30s were a time for me to get to know who I was and what I wanted. I needed to actively do that, whereas my friends



with Defined Identity Centers just seemed to know. And I always felt like my life timeline was off, because I was still looking for these answers as my friends were walking down the aisle and having kids.

For people with Open Identity Centers, you have a flexible identity and sense of self and you may begin to share the identity of the people you are with and the environment you are in. That's why, in spending time with aligned people, you can come home to your true self. Rather than adopting a persona that's not really you.

It's also important to be in the right place. My Human Design instructor, Karen Curry Parker, calls this *geomagnetic alignment*, being in the right place with the right people, in a way that feels like home. Allowing your internal compass to determine the right fit of a situation. You need to feel good where you are.

With an Open Identity Center, being in the right place is very important. This extends to living and working in the right place with the right people. If you walk into a space and it doesn't feel right, it's not the right place for you to spend your time.

My husband, Adam, and I both have Open Identity Centers. When we were getting married, our plan was to have a small DIY wedding at my sister's house. And then a low-key honeymoon exploring Charleston, SC. A hurricane was coming straight for Charleston and we had to change our honeymoon destination. We impulsively decided to drive to Nashville, Tennessee instead. We would break the trip up by staying the first night at a nice golf resort since he loves golf. We loved that hotel. It was peaceful with a breathtaking view of the mountains.

The next day we drove to Nashville. We got to the hotel we'd picked out impulsively by doing an online search. Well we hadn't done our research well enough because as we walked to our room, we both started to feel creeped out and like we were in a haunted house. The bellhop helped us bring our bags to our room and on the way he asked us if we wanted to know the haunted history of the hotel. No wonder we were feeling creeped out. And it didn't help that the hotel was playing up the creepy feelings with their furnishing and pictures. I will share a picture of our hotel room in the show notes. After looking at 2 rooms there, we knew we couldn't stay. We checked out and went to another hotel we randomly picked, and that felt like a giant mildew-ey cruise ship. The next day we ended up driving back to the first hotel in the mountains 8 hours away.

With our Open Identity Centers, a few times, we've walked into hotel rooms that haven't felt right and checked right back out.

When we were looking at homes together, we looked at one with a beautiful view of the mountains. I had an intuitive sense that this was the place we needed to be. I didn't know the term *geomagnetic alignment* back then, but I sensed it. I just knew this was where we needed to be. Being in this spot gives me such inner peace and a sense of rightness that goes beyond words.

With an Open Identity Center, you feel very tuned into who you're with and where you are.

And that brings me to why I'm no longer actively posting on social media and by social media, I mean Instagram. Because I haven't been on Facebook in probably over 5 years. My Open Identity Center is the reason. I strongly feel the energy of a space. And a few months ago when Instagram was down, I had a chance to see how it felt to have a clean break from that energy. And it freed up so much energy to be off of it. There's more and more research that shows how toxic social media is. And people are pushing the envelope on Instagram more and more every day to grab attention. The other day I learned that someone did a live-stream of their 7 hour home birth on Instagram. If that home birth had popped up in my algorithm, I would have taken in the intensity of her pain and it would have energetically thrown me off my Center. I can be on Instagram for less than 30 seconds and feel thrown off energetically by something I see there. So I'd rather not invite that kind of disruption into my energy field.

### **If you have an Open identity Center:**

- Surround yourself with empowering people you trust and who you can be your full self with. Strive to create a sense of alignment and congruence in your life, relationships, and job. So you stay self-connected. Choose people and places and activities that make you more of yourself, not less.
- Trust that if a place doesn't feel right, or the energy of people around you doesn't feel right, it's right for you to leave.
- For times when you have to head into an environment that you know will feel heavy, you can visualize a bubble shield around you to protect you from negative energy. When you're in a peaceful space, before you head into the heavy environment, imagine a bubble forming from your feet up to your head. I used to work as a social worker in pediatric hematology and oncology and as I took the long walk from my car to the medical Center I would visualize this bubble of protection. This is really good for any of these Open Centers to do.

- To stay grounded in who you are, keep your own goals and plans and make time to be by yourself.
- If you're single, being on your own will help you learn about who you are, and give you confidence that you can be on your own.

To support your awareness in the moment, repeat this affirmation: *The most important relationship I'll ever have is the one I have with myself.*

Let's talk about the fourth Open Center where you powerfully take in the energy of others. That's the Open Ajna.

### **OPEN OR UNDEFINED CENTER: THE AJNA**

The Ajna is the upside-down triangle located below the Head Center, the second Center from the top. It's the Center for concrete thinking, processing research and digesting mental concepts. It's the seat of mental awareness.

With a Defined Ajna, your beliefs and thinking are more fixed. You feel certain that you know what you know.

Contrast that with an Open Ajna, you are Open to seeing concepts from many different angles. You can examine all sides of an issue and you are Open to considering a variety of different perspectives. You can digest information in a variety of different ways. There's more than one way to see an issue and you can see all sides and generate a variety of questions and answers about the matter at hand.

You are empathetic to multiple perspectives.

The empathic gift of this Center is that you feel like you know what other people are thinking, you can intuit other people's points of view.

Depending on who you are with, you may feel like your positions are malleable. What you think may change. You may feel uncertain about what you know.

I have an Open Ajna and I have to be careful sometimes about the things that I read. If I don't have a lot of experience with a subject, I can internalize someone else's perspective on it so completely and give them absolute unquestioning authority on a subject. I can be a bit gullible.

What's the solution?

Being aware of how you absorb and take in other people's mental positions will help you notice when you're taking in the ideas of others and being influenced.

Remember there are many legitimate ways to view an issue.

My husband Adam has a Defined Ajna and I have an Undefined Ajna. We often have spirited debates. He presents one way of thinking and I point out all the exceptions to his perspective.

The ideas that are true for you are the ones you come to you using your Strategy and Authority.

To support your awareness in the moment, repeat this affirmation: *It's a gift to be able to see many different sides of an issue.*

I've just covered the 4 Centers where you powerfully take in the energy of others. But there are 9 Centers in the Body Graph, and you can take in energy through any Open Centers, and the more Open Centers you have, the more empathic you are. There is an exception to this though. The Reflector energy Types have all 9 Centers Open and you mirror back the energy of others without absorbing it into your energy field. You're a mirror, rather than a sponge.

I always think it's interesting to know the Human Design for people who are in the public eye.

I just mentioned Reflectors who are 1% of the population and have all 9 Centers Open. Well, actress Sandra Bullock is a reflector.

Actress Viola Davis has 5 Open Centers in total, including an Open Emotional Solar Plexus and Spleen.

Writer and activist Glennon Doyle has 4 Open Centers including an Open Emotional Solar Plexus and an Open Spleen.

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr had 4 Open Centers including an Open Emotional Solar Plexus and an Open Identity Center.

Former President Barack Obama has 7 of 9 Centers Open- including an Open Spleen, Open Identity Center and an Open Ajna.

By knowing the areas you are Open, you can begin to notice when you are experiencing the energies of other people, you can utilize the strengths that come with this openness, and apply mindful awareness to respond to the energy of others and stay self-connected.

### **How to make aligned decisions**

Do you find it hard to make decisions? Open Centers leave you open to feeling influenced and conditioned by who you're with and where you are. When you take in messages from others about what you should or shouldn't do, it makes it hard to figure out what's truly right for you to do and to make decisions that are truly aligned for you. Human Design teaches that we're not meant to make decisions through our mind but through our body wisdom. And you tap into that by following your Type's Strategy and your personal Authority. Listen to [Episode 10](#) to learn how to use your Strategy and Authority.

As an HSP and empath, your attunement to the physical and emotional needs of others is such a gift. You are here for a reason. To lead, to heal, to teach. And you can thrive when you support yourself with intentional loving self-awareness and self-care. Build a life that's aligned following your Human Design Type, Strategy and Authority.

So how are you doing with learning about Human Design? It's a complex system, with it's own language. I find that repetition is key for learning about Human Design. I encourage you to listen to these Human Design episodes multiple times as you're in the early stages of learning.

If you want to go deeper with learning about your unique Human Design, but you're feeling overwhelmed by it, I've created a free guide to getting started with Human Design for HSPs. This guide offers more information about all 9 of the energy Centers and also information about your energy Type and how to begin using your Strategy and Authority to live in alignment. If you're a more visual than auditory learner, this guide will reinforce and expand on what you're learning about in this podcast. Grab it by visiting [HumanDesignforhsp.com](http://HumanDesignforhsp.com). I will link it and all the episodes mentioned in today's episode in the show notes.

I'm so so grateful we've spent this time together.

If you have a question for me about something you heard on this podcast or want to suggest a topic for a future episode, just email me at [questions@happyhighlysensitivelife.com](mailto:questions@happyhighlysensitivelife.com).

If you'd like to receive regular news from me, sign up for my email newsletter by following the link in the show notes. You can also connect with me on Pinterest at [Happy Highly Sensitive Life](#).

If you enjoyed this podcast episode, please share it with a friend, subscribe, leave a positive comment and rate and review it. This helps other HSPs find the show.

Bye now.