

## Preparing for a Mandala Meditation

Sit up, with your bottom all the way to back of chair and your back spine. Relax your shoulders and put your feet flat on floor with your hands resting either on your lap or on the table. Close your eyes and relax.

We all carry baggage around with us: words, abuse, or issues from the past; fights with loved ones, stress from bills, or worries about life's challenges. While you are here in this moment, your baggage is to be left outside the door. To do this, picture those items that weigh you down, that you carry around with you long past any need to. Picture yourself putting it all in a garbage bag. Now take that bag of garbage and leave it outside the door, along with the garbage of others.

With this simple action you give yourself permission to be free of your issues and concerns, worries and fears while you are here in this moment. You feel relieved of a load, lighter, almost weightless without the excess burden. You can sit tall and unencumbered in your seat now. Unburdened, you become one with your surroundings.

As you breathe, as you relax, listen for the sounds outside of the room; distinguish those sounds from all other sound. Now, bring your focus closer, into the room. Distinguish these sounds from all other. Bring your focus in even closer. On the sounds of your own body, your heart beat, your breathing: the sound or feel of it as enters and leaves your body.

As you breathe in, say to yourself, "In, I'm breathing in." As you exhale say, "Out, I'm breathing out." Repeat this as you inhale and exhale. Each inhale should take the same time as it takes to say, "In, I'm breathing in." Each exhale should take the same time as it takes to say, "Out, I'm breathing out."

With each breath in you find yourself more aware of the now, more grounded in this new now. With each release you find peace in this moment, acceptance in this new moment. You are fully present in this new and untarnished now that has blessed your life with its presence. Take a deep breath and release it slowly.

Open your eyes and smile as you become more fully aware of this precious gift of now.

Yes, smile! That's what we do when we are given a new present!

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This is a simple exercise to do throughout the day, especially in the morning to become more fully aware of your part in creating your day. Additionally, using it at night enables you to let go of the day. It allows you to fully relax, unencumbered by the day's challenges.

Meditation is most effective if it is completed without expectation. Seeking a specific outcome projects into the future our current desires. However, what we want now, in this moment, may not be what we want moments from now. Meditating enables you to be *fully present in the here and now* unburdened by distractions that exist around us. Choosing to seek a designed outcome distorts the purpose of this exercise.

## The Colors of a Mandala

The approach you had, the colors you chose, the combinations you used in your mandala say much about how you see yourself and your situation. They also reflect onto the question, concern, or statement you wanted addressed. The following is a starting point if seeking the deeper meaning of your meditative coloring. Your own response to color, your own intuition regarding the choices you made, and your own definition of what those colors mean is the best guide of all.

### The Reflection of Your Mandala:

As you look at your mandala, the choice of colors, the combinations used, and how intense or not the coloring, may all be a reflection of the insights or change that you seek.

Your choices and approach may have been selected:

- based on your current mood (are you happy, stressed, frustrated, relaxed?).
- in a direct response to what you wrote on the back of the sheet (was it about a person, a concern about money, a statement regarding a personal change?).
- by how you perceive color (do some colors have more meaning to you than others?).
- for its aesthetics (were you more concerned with looks than the answer?).
- by what choices were available (there is no special meaning in your color choice!).

### The Symmetry of Your Mandala:

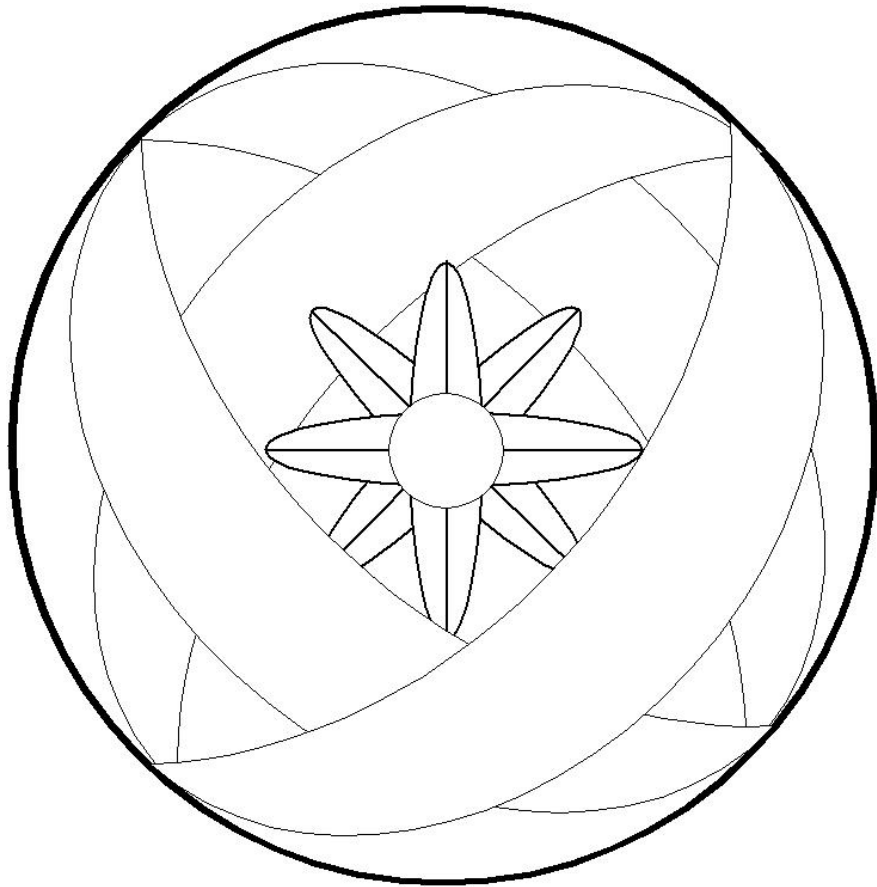
As you look at the various colors in your mandala, consider the combinations. They may hold clarity to what you seek but keep in mind that one person's yin, is another's yang.

Did you:

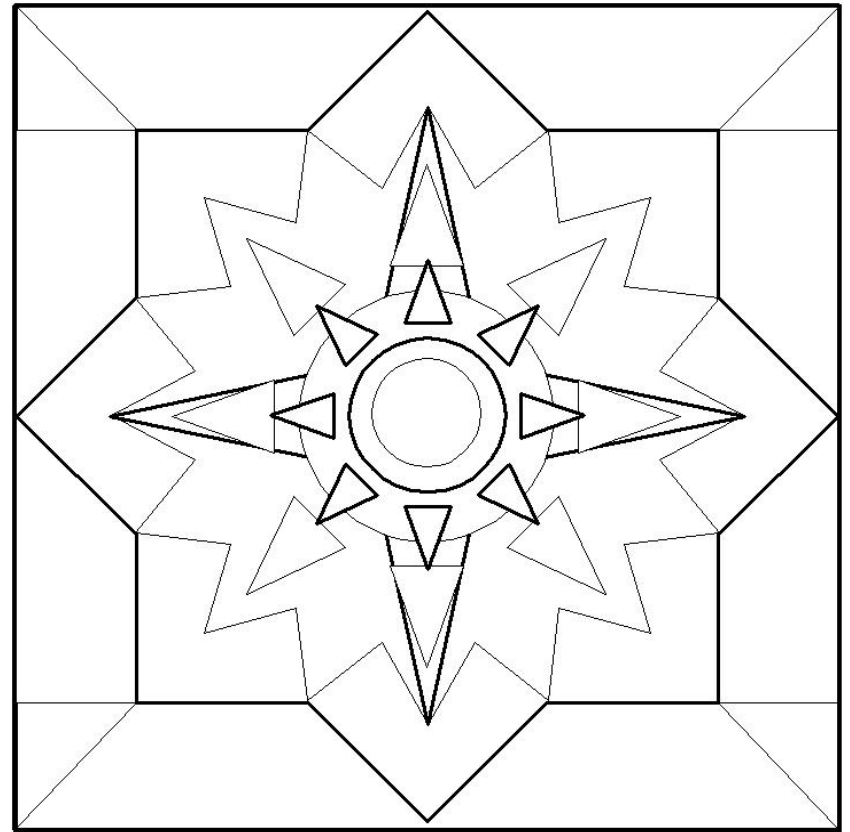
- duplicate the picture in the book?
  - Then you search for, or find yourself in a place of structure and/or routine.
- use a color scheme that is monochromatic?
  - Then you search for, or find yourself in a place of stillness and/or calm.
- choose complimentary contrasting colors?
  - Then you search for, or find yourself in a place of balance and/or harmony.
- pick colors that clash?
  - Then you search for or find yourself in a place of release and/or liberation.
- select bold colors?
  - Then you search for, or find yourself in a place of excitement and/or need movement.
- use light, faint, or pastel colors?
  - Then you search for, or find yourself in a place of restraint and/or simplicity.

### The Definition of Colors in Your Mandala

As to the definition of specific color choices (i.e. red over purple, using a lot of blue, etc): colors have different meanings in different cultures. Additionally, upbringing, lifestyle, and personal preference influence us, as well. It isn't what the color represents to others that is important. What does the color represent to you? Green may mean money to one, environment to another, and nothing in particular to you. You must discover and understand its meaning, if there is one, for yourself.



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