



Creating Mandalas for Insight and Healing



The Meaning of the Mandala

The word mandala comes from the Sanskrit for 'magic circle' or 'circle of mystery.' It symbolizes both center and circumference—a visual expression of wholeness. Across cultures and time, the circle has been a sacred image of connection: from stone carvings and medicine wheels to stained glass windows and Tibetan sand mandalas.

Psychologist Carl G. Jung used the mandala as a tool to explore the psyche's movement toward individuation—the process of integrating all parts of the self. He described mandalas as mirrors of the soul and maps of inner transformation.

“I sketched every morning in a notebook a small circular drawing, a mandala, which seemed to correspond to my inner situation at the time... Only gradually did I discover what the mandala really is: the Self, the wholeness of the personality.” — Carl Jung

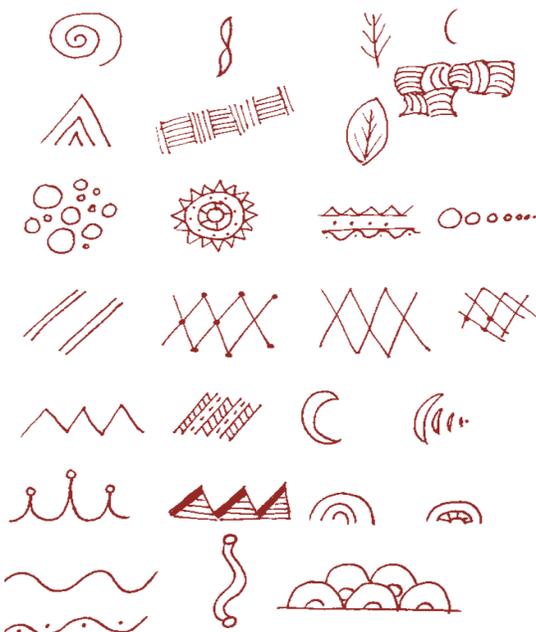
Working With Your Own Mandala

Intuitive Mandalas are not about artistic skill—they are meditative, spontaneous, and healing. The process is as important as the final image.

- Guiding Principles:
- Spontaneous creation: Let go of expectations; allow shapes and forms to emerge.
- Mindfulness: Draw each stroke deliberately and without judgment.
- Imperfection is welcome: What seems like a 'mistake' often becomes the foundation for new patterns.
- Ceremony and celebration: Treat the process as a prayer of gratitude and healing.
- Timelessness: No technology or special tools are needed—only presence and intention.



“When the soul wants to experience something, she throws out an image in front of her and then steps into it.” — Meister Eckhart



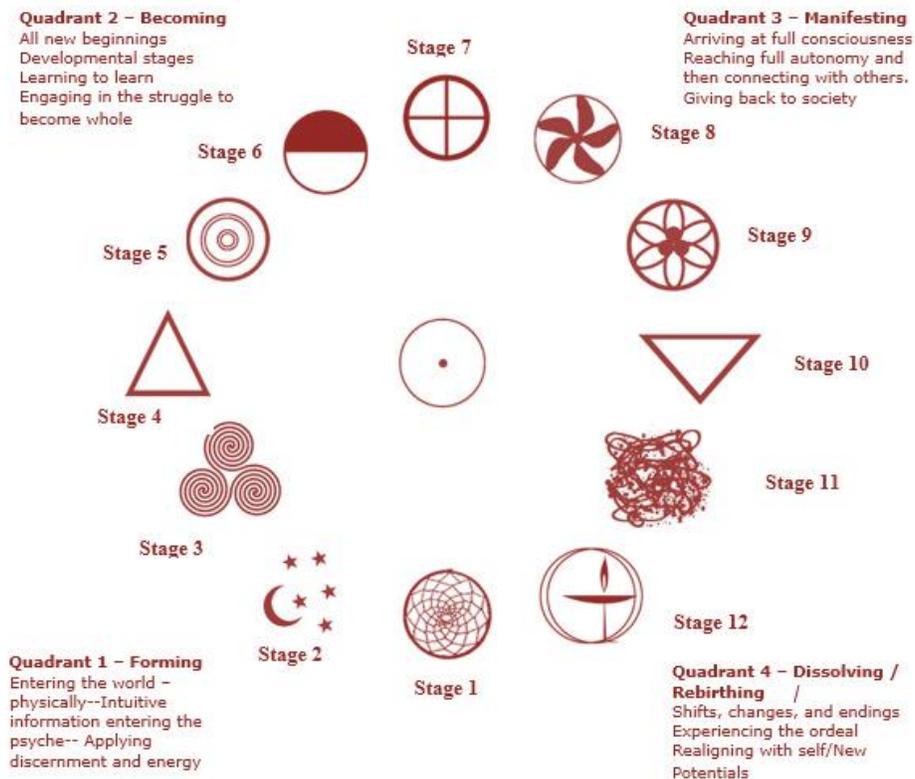
Drawing Your Mandala

- Prepare: Sit quietly and breathe. When ready, begin with a simple circle.
- Start the pattern: Draw a 'string' line from one point on the edge to another.
- Follow intuition: Ask which shapes and patterns want to appear next.
- Fill the shapes: Use lines, textures, and doodle patterns mindfully.
- Add color: Notice which colors draw your attention. Let your feelings guide you.
- Reflect: Sit with the finished mandala. What do you notice?
- Give thanks: Close with gratitude for what has emerged.

“Often the hands will solve a mystery that the intellect has struggled with in vain.” — Carl Jung

The Great Round of the Mandala

Art therapist Joan Kellogg (1978) expanded Jung's ideas through The Archetypal Stages of the Great Round of the Mandala. These 12 stages represent a cyclical process of growth, death, and rebirth—a map of our psychological and spiritual evolution.



Archetypal Stages and Meanings

- Stage 1 – Entry : The descent into matter. Heaviness, disconnection, or feeling 'asleep.' The soul enters physical form and begins its journey.
- Stage 2 – Bliss: Receptivity and openness. Creative ideas flow freely; energy regenerates. Everything is potential.
- Stage 3 – Energy/Path: Life force awakens. Movement and direction emerge; trust in the process begins.
- Stage 4 – Beginnings: Birth of new self. Nurturing, dependence, and readiness to grow. New ideas take root.
- Stage 5 – Target: Focus and boundaries form. Learning patterns, developing skills, and protecting the self.
- Stage 6 – Struggle: Tension of opposites. Breaking free from limitations and seeking individuation—the hero's journey.
- Stage 7 – Integration: Full expression of ego and responsibility. Conscious integration of self and world.
- Stage 8 – Identity: Autonomy and individuality. Doing it 'your way.' Mature sense of purpose and form.
- Stage 9 – Self and Others: Manifestation and contribution. Group belonging and legacy-building. Harmony and satisfaction.
- Stage 10 – Endings: Transitions and change. Crossroads and separations; learning to release and renew.
- Stage 11 – Disintegration: Chaos and dissolution. The 'dark night of the soul.' Breaking down to rebuild anew.
- Stage 12 – Transformation: Rebirth, transcendence, and creative synthesis. Wholeness restored at a higher level of awareness.

Colors and Their Symbolism

Color	Meaning	Color	Meaning
Red	Life energy, passion, courage	Orange	Power, vitality, self-expression
Blue	Intuition, calm, wisdom	Turquoise	Creativity, balance, healing
Yellow	Confidence, clarity, intellect	Black	Mystery, the unknown, potential rebirth
Green	Healing, renewal, compassion	White	Purity, spiritual awareness, openness
Purple	Transformation, spirituality, altruism	Brown	Groundedness, security, foundation

JEWEL TONES

DARKER COLORS

PASTELS

vital, pure intention, clarity

heaviness, stagnant, older—ready to release.

airy and light, lower energy, fading away –
Meditative/Spiritual

Reflecting and Integrating

Journaling Prompts:

- What did you feel during the process of creating your mandala?

- Which shapes or symbols appeared? Do they remind you of any of the stages of the Great Round?

- What colors did you choose? What insights do they reveal?



Sharing:

If sharing with a partner, use the phrase 'If this were my mandala...' to acknowledge that your reflections are personal projections.

Cinquain Poem Exercise:

1. One word (essence)
2. Two words (qualities)
3. Three -ing words (actions)
4. Four-word phrase (meaning)
5. One metaphor word (synthesis)



Continuing the Practice

- Move or dance in a circle.
- Arrange natural objects in circular form.
- Create a collage within a circle.
- Walk a labyrinth.
- Place artwork or photos in a circle and reflect.
- Create an altar on a round table or cloth.

"You must give birth to your images. They are the future waiting to be born. Fear not the strangeness you feel." — Rainer Maria Rilke

Resources

[Creating Mandalas: For Insight, Healing, and Self-Expression](#) — Susanne F. Fincher

[The Mandala Workbook](#) — Susanne F. Fincher



Create your own Intuitive Mandala

