



Mandala as Portal to the Sacred

Embracing the Sacred Feminine Through Creative Practice

Karen Perrell Campbell

"For thousands of years circles have been symbols of the sacred. The moon, womb, earth, medicine wheel, rose window, labyrinth, wheel of life—all remind us that creation itself unfolds in circles. We enter the circle not to create art, but to listen."

Circling Prayers, or Caim Prayers, are an ancient Celtic practice of drawing a sacred circle around ourselves and those we love. We imagine ourselves held within the protective embrace of the Divine Feminine—the great circle of Earth, womb, moon, and Mystery. As we physically trace the circle, the body joins the heart in prayer, creating a sacred vessel of protection, love, and belonging.

To circle is to remember: we are held, connected, and embraced by the Sacred.

Caim

Circle me, Divine Feminine
Keep *joy* near
and *grief* afar.

Circle me, Pachamama, Mother of the Earth
Keep *peace* within
and *turmoil* out.

Circle me, Wild Holy one
Keep *protection* near
and *danger* afar.

Circle me, Shakti, Mother of the Universe
Keep *creativity* within,
and *judgement* out.

Circle me, Sophia, Wise one
Keep *curiosity* near
and *fear* afar.

Circle me, Goddess of the moon,
Keep *light* within
and *darkness* without.

Eternal Maiden, Mother and Crone
shield us on every side.



Mandala as an Ancient Symbol

The circle is an ancient symbol, across cultures, depicting, containing and expressing wholeness. From primitive stone carvings to Native American medicine wheels, to Stonehenge, to labyrinths, to stain glass windows, to Tibetan intricate sand drawings that are completed and swept away, all are representative of the use of the mandala throughout humankind as a significant archetypal symbol.

Mandala: A Symbol in Nature

Tree rings	Sunflowers
Nautilus shell	Galaxies
Full moon	Cycles & seasons

Jung and the Mandala

Following his separation from Freud around 1913, Jung entered what he called his "confrontation with the unconscious." During this period, he painted mandalas almost daily.

"I sketched every morning in a notebook a small circular drawing...which seemed to correspond to my inner situation."

He gradually realized: The mandalas were not art. They were maps. Maps of the psyche. Maps of healing. Maps toward wholeness.

In Jungian terms, a mandala is **the archetype of the Self**—a symbolic map of psychic wholeness. Jung believed that mandalas arise when the psyche is trying to: restore inner balance, integrate opposing forces, guide the dreamer toward individuation.

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Mandala as Symbol

- The *mandala* is an icon of our journey to wholeness.
- It is a symbol that signifies inner transformation from duality into oneness.
- The mandala is a symbol with unlimited potential which continues to unveil itself.
- It is a spiritual map to help guide us back to our natural state.
- The creation of a mandala is a ritual of wholeness, a way to commune with the Sacred Feminine.

Mandala as Portal

"When the Soul wants to experience something, she throws out an image in front of her and then steps into it." ~Meister Eckhart

"The mystery showed me in images what I should afterward live. I did not possess any of those boons that the mystery showed me, for I still had to earn all of them." ~Carl Jung

Art making like is a primary mode of inquiry. Both dreams and art are basic phenomena of human existence. Mandala opens a portal to the soul. Images and symbols come forward as an invitation to live into deeper understanding and wisdom; an invitation to commune with the Sacred Feminine through creative embodiment.

Embodiment & Creativity

The Sacred Feminine calls us to inhabit our bodies. To experience the sacredness around us through our very senses. Creative practice invites us into presence with our senses in a variety of ways. What is beckoning you to be noticed?

Notice the many ways the circle evokes the Sacred Feminine:

The womb, the moon, the earth, the cauldron, the chalice, the embrace, the seasons are archetypal images of the Sacred Feminine—not as gender, but as qualities of receptivity, intuition, creativity, compassion, and transformation. The Divine Feminine invites us not to strive, but to receive.

Creating Intuitive Mandalas:

- The process is as important as the final image.
- Spontaneous creation: Let go of expectations; allow shapes and forms to emerge.
- Mindfulness: Draw each stroke deliberately and without judgment.
- Imperfection is welcome: Allow yourself to receive. What seems like a 'mistake' often becomes the foundation for a new opening.
- Ceremony and celebration: Treat the process as a prayer of gratitude and healing, a communion with the Sacred Feminine.
- Timelessness: No technology or special tools are needed, only presence and intention.



Ways to Engage Your Mandala:



Journaling Prompts

- What title would you give your mandala?
- What symbol is at its center?
- Where do you notice tension? Flow?
- Which color speaks most strongly?
- If this mandala represents your soul today, what is it asking of you?
- What would it look like to live from the center rather than the edges?
- What quality of the Divine Feminine do you want to cultivate in the coming month?

Write a Cinquain Poem In Response to Your Mandala

Line 1: One word (essence)

Line 2: Two words (qualities)

Line 3: Three -ing words (actions)

Line 4: Four-word phrase (meaning)

Line 5: One metaphor word (synthesis)

Continuing in relationship

- Walk the labyrinth with your mandala
- Create a collage within a circle in response to your mandala
- Place your mandala on your altar
- Notice any synchronicities that arise in the days to come
- What song or songs seem to align with your mandala

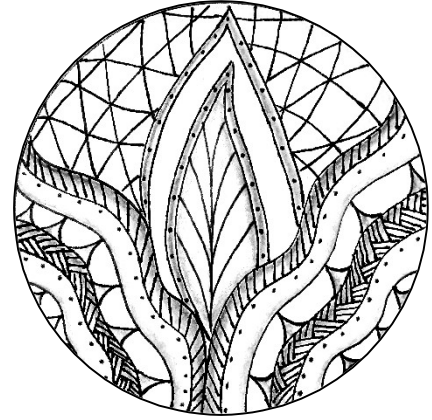


Poetry

I live my life in widening circles

I live my life in widening circles
that reach out across the world.
I may not complete this last one
but I will give myself to it.
I circle around God, around the primordial tower.
I've been circling for thousands of years
and I still don't know: am I a falcon,
a storm, or a great song?

~Rainer Maria Rilke



"You must give birth to your images.
They are the future waiting to be born.
Fear not the strangeness you feel.
The future must enter you long before it happens.
Just wait for the birth, for the hour of the new clarity."

~Rainer Maria Rilke

Resources for Exploring the Mandala

Creating Mandalas: For Insight, Healing, and Self-Expression, by Susanne F. Fincher

The Mandala Workbook: A Creative Guide for Self-Exploration, Balance, and Well-Being,
by Susanne F. Fincher

The Mandala Book: Patterns of the Universe, by Lori Bailey Cunningham



