

Shareable - Meditating with Ease - April 11, 2019

<p>Self-assessment: (before and after the session)</p> <p>Stress level _____ Low High</p> <p>Sleep pattern _____ < 8 hrs > 8 hrs</p> <p>Gratitude _____ Daily journaling Never</p> <p>Physical pain _____ None High</p> <p>Mental chatter _____ Quiet Constant</p>	<p>Our goals for this week:</p> <p>Explore the practice of open-eyed meditation while creating a simple mandala.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Allowing space for thoughts, emotions, and sensations to come through- Allowing and accepting any darker sensations that arise- Continuing the application of paint to a page while in a mindful, meditative state- Noting what arises, and how we continue to return to the page
<p>Notes:</p> <p>1. What worked well in today's session?</p> <p>2. What would you change?</p> <p>3. How did you find the group meditation experience?</p> <p>4. Will you be able to practice this at home?</p>	

Eyes Wide Open Meditation / Art Practice

Summary:

While many people love viewing art, the thought of **creating** art may invoke fear, even panic! This practice will help us lean into that, as meditation helps us explore both the light and dark corners of our minds.

Today's Exercise:

- We begin by preparing the space and making paper, tools, and paint available for use. Having everything close by will allow us to meditate without interruption.
- As with all meditation, we will start by sitting comfortably, and preparing our art space while doing some deep breathing.
- We will listen to music, and paint in silence. Mindful painting is a meditative practice - we use paint and brush or pen as focus objects. The paint we apply is done with focus and intent, as we allow sensations to arise and fall away.
- We will continue for 30 minutes, although there is no need to complete the mandala within this time limit.

Long Version

- We will introduce tonight's activity and invite each participant to take a cardboard square and paint tray. Paint and tools will be shared.
- While this activity may be completed in total silence, for the group activity we will have background music.
- We will breathe into any fears we may have, any self-judgement, and any sense of unworthiness or fear of imperfection we may carry when considering this activity.
- There is no right or wrong way to create a mandala, although most use the traditional circular shape. You may use dots, or any other shapes you are comfortable drawing.
- While symmetry is suggested, we allow ourselves to release any sense of needing to achieve perfection. We are using waste cardboard as a way to acknowledge that the goal of this session is mindful focus, and also to help overcome any fear of 'making mistakes'
- There is no need to consider the historical or religious roots of the mandala, although we've provided a little information. For our purposes, it is simply a focus object we create while meditating.

HISTORY

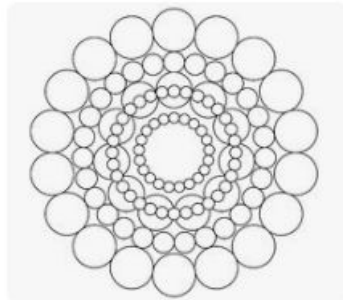
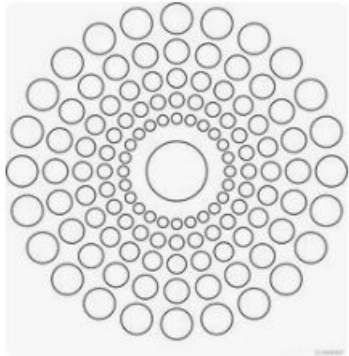
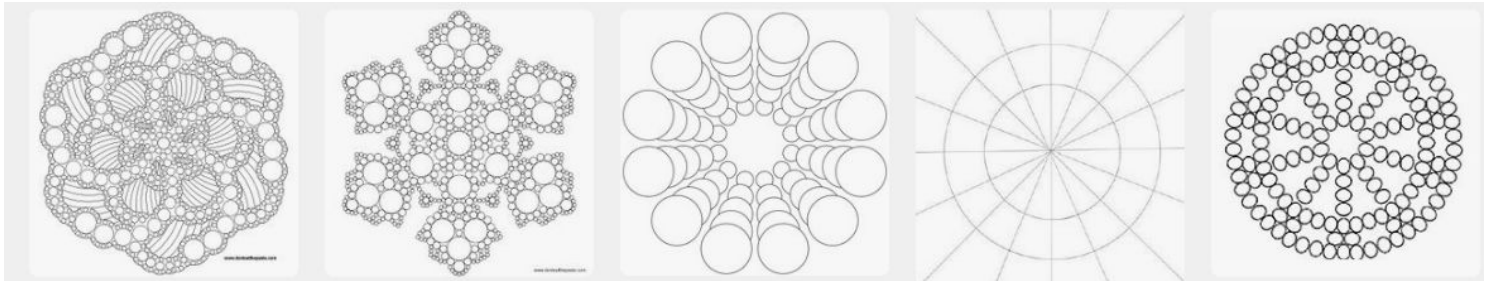
A **mandala** is a spiritual symbol in Buddhism and Hinduism. It's a symbolic representation of the universe with an inner and outer world. The word **mandala** comes from Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language. Literally, **mandala** means "circle." ... The Sanskrit word **mandala** indicates everything that is round or circular.

A **mandala** is often a symbol that is utilized to help people focus in on meditation and achieve a sense of oneness with the universe. It's very difficult for individuals to actually achieve this level of clarity but you can often help individuals in meditation when they study **mandalas**.

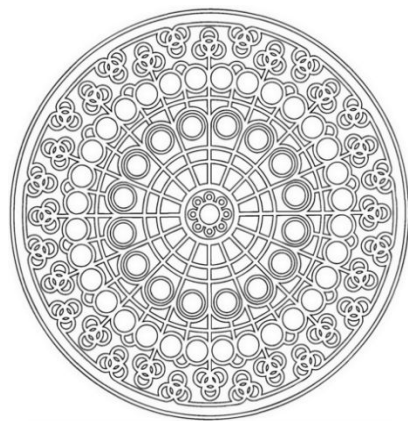
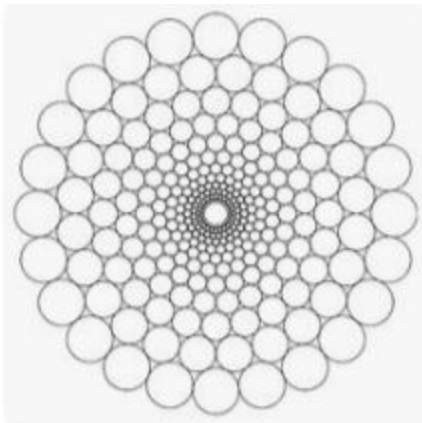
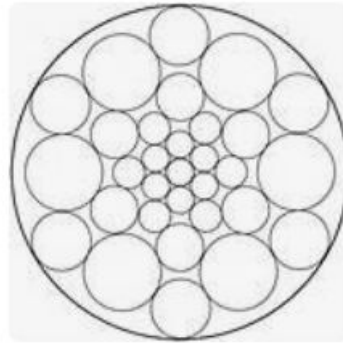
NOTES

- This practice can initially be more challenging than other meditations. If this activity causes you stress, breathe into the sensations and see whether you can release any attachment to the sensation. Lovingly acknowledge what you are feeling, then let it go. Remember that you are not trying to stop thoughts or only allow certain ones to arise. Try to treat all thoughts equally and let them pass away without engaging in their content.
- If you are unable to continue, simply hold silence. There is no judgement here. You may wish to observe others as they work, or to close your eyes and focus on your breath or the music.

Some sample dot mandala shapes



How to Make Your Own
Mandala Coloring Pages for...



CAUTIONS

Please be gentle with yourself if you notice that you are constantly caught up in your thoughts instead of observing them. This is both common and normal. When you realize that you are thinking, gently and compassionately return to observing your thoughts.

If the content of your thoughts is too disturbing or distressing, gently shift your attention to your breathing, sounds, or discontinue the practice.

Thank you for participating in Meditating with Ease!
Your guide: Randa Speller