

Introduction to Mandala Drawing

By Cindy Angiel

Origin of the Mandala:

Maṇḍala is a Sanskrit word that means "circle". In the Buddhist and Hindu religious traditions their sacred art often takes a mandala form.

Forms which are evocative of mandalas are prevalent in Christianity as well. The celtic cross; the rosary; the halo; the aureole; oculi; the Crown of Thorns; rose windows; the Rosy Cross; and the dromenon on the floor of Chartres Cathedral. It is said that the dromenon represents a journey from the outer world to the inner sacred centre where the Divine is found.

In various spiritual traditions, mandalas are sometimes used for establishing a sacred space, and as an aid to meditation and trance induction.

Today's Mandala:

The word **Mandala** is now often used to describe symmetric images based on repeating patterns and circles within circles; images richer and more complex than a simple circle yet echoing the circle's elemental simplicity. However, not all mandalas use repeat pattern art or a series of circles tucked inside circles. Some are created using a mix of symbols or drawings personal to the maker of the mandala.

Because of the beauty found in the Mandala, its rich history and sacred symbolism - it's a terrific creative endeavor to use as an instrument of healing, self-awareness, or personal development while incorporating Line Weaving and "tangled" art.

For many people mandalas are the perfect combination of elements for personal growth or relaxation because of the line work and pattern making, quiet focus, precision, artful play, and a calmness where nothing else is going on except the occasional emergence of an unexpected design. A person can easily lose themselves in mandala making for hours or days. Some folks have even likened it to going on a personal retreat.

There are different types of mandalas such as those created for personal growth and spiritual connection, self healing mandala therapy art, Tibetan mandalas created using sand and semiprecious stones, mandalas in nature, and symbolic mandalas used many different religions.

Just as there are a variety of mandala types, there are also many different ways to create these beautiful creations as well. I've seen them made of glass, stones, corn fields, paint, clay, cement, sand and dirt, sticks, random objects, fabrics and yarns, even humans! Of course I've seen them made using pen and ink as well. Although I do favor mandalas made of sand and from rocks like the one I have created in my sunrise garden - the way I create most of my mandalas is on paper using pen and ink, using colored pencils to add color.

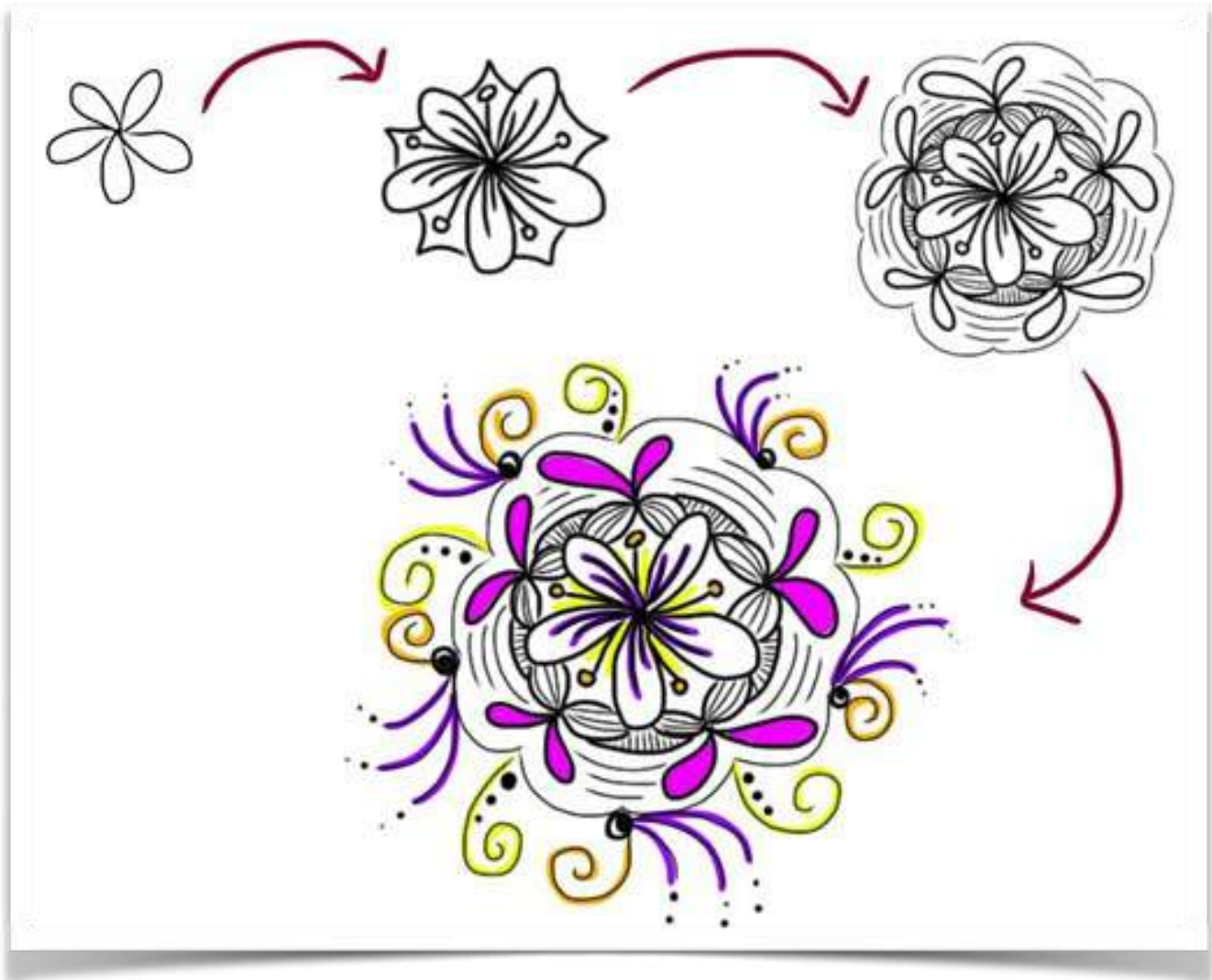
The rest of this document is about methods for creating mandalas by drawing them on paper, using Line Weaving patterns. However, to some extent, you could actually use similar steps to create them using other elements as well.

The tools used for the following methods are basically a sheet of paper, and something to draw with such as pencils, pens, markers, crayons, etc.

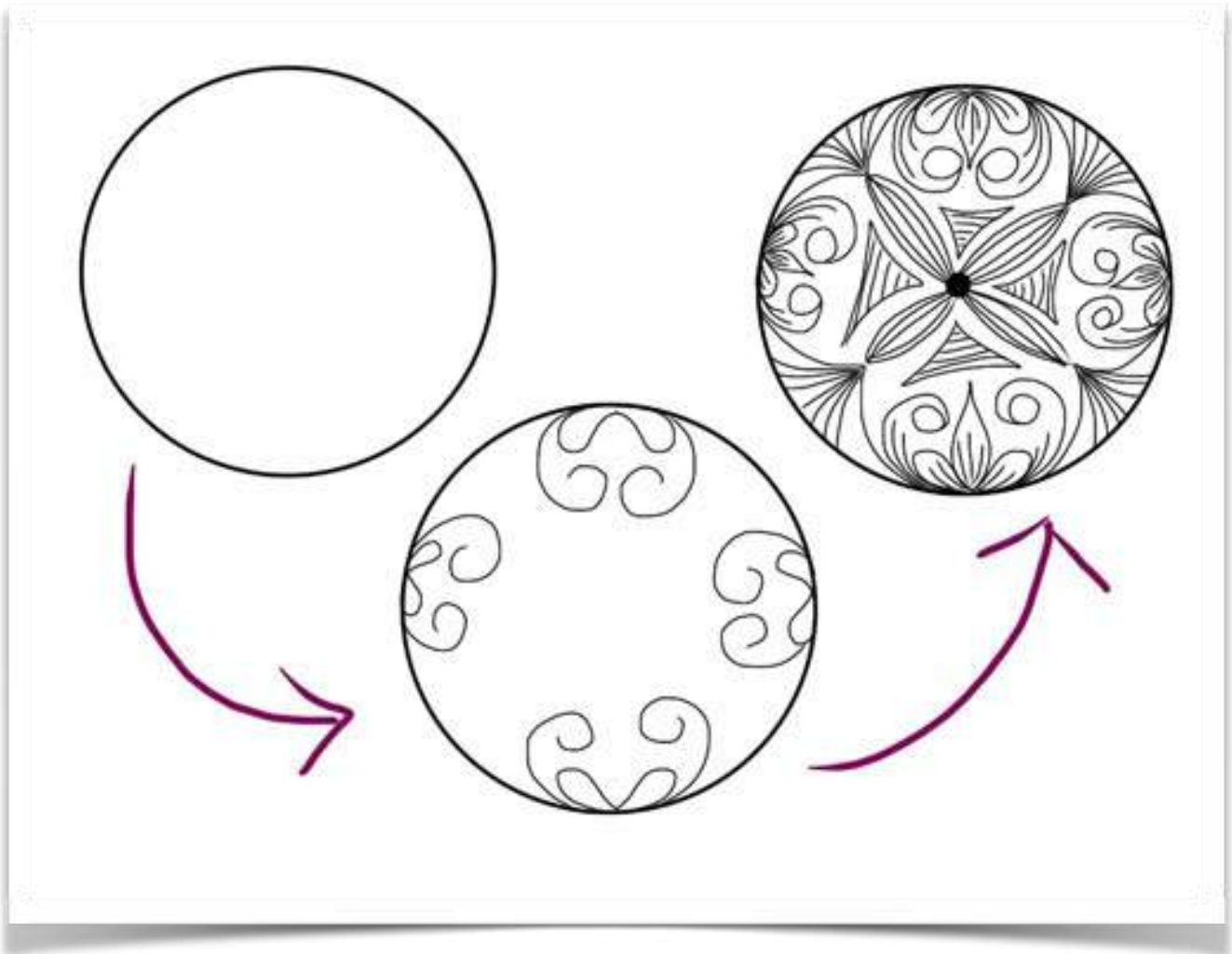
Drawing Mandalas with Repetitive Patterns:

There are several ways one could go about drawing a mandala using repetitive pattern art styles. Here are a few to get you started:

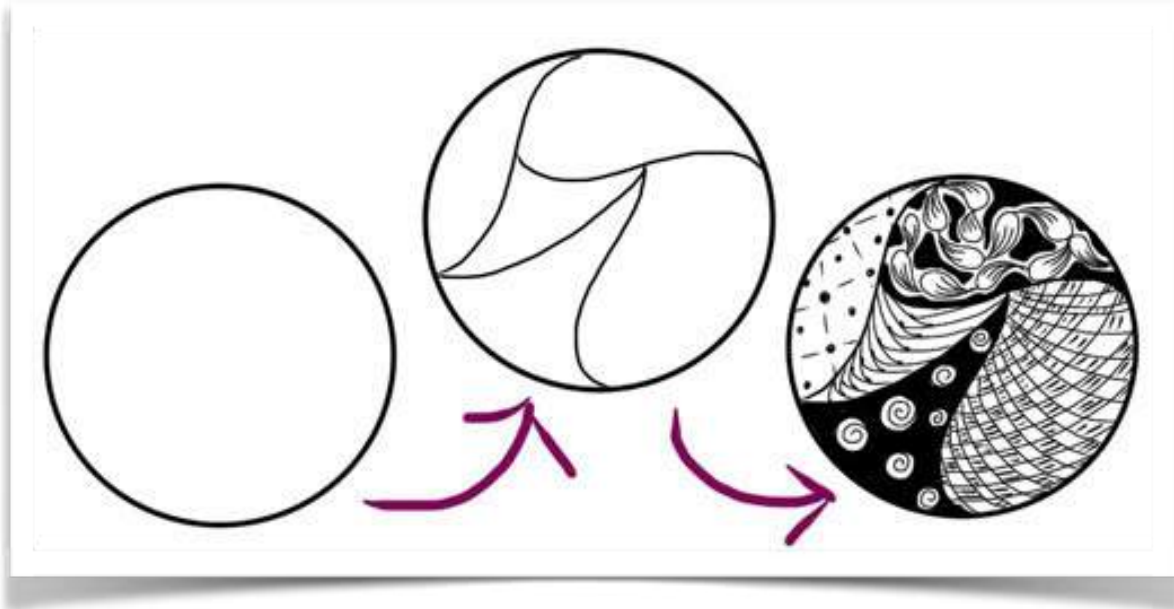
1. One method is to start in the center of your page and draw a shape that can easily adapt to an overall circular design. A circle is of course the most obvious shape, but you could also start with stars, flower petals, even a square. Then working your way outward, continue adding patterns around the center shape, until you've completed your project.



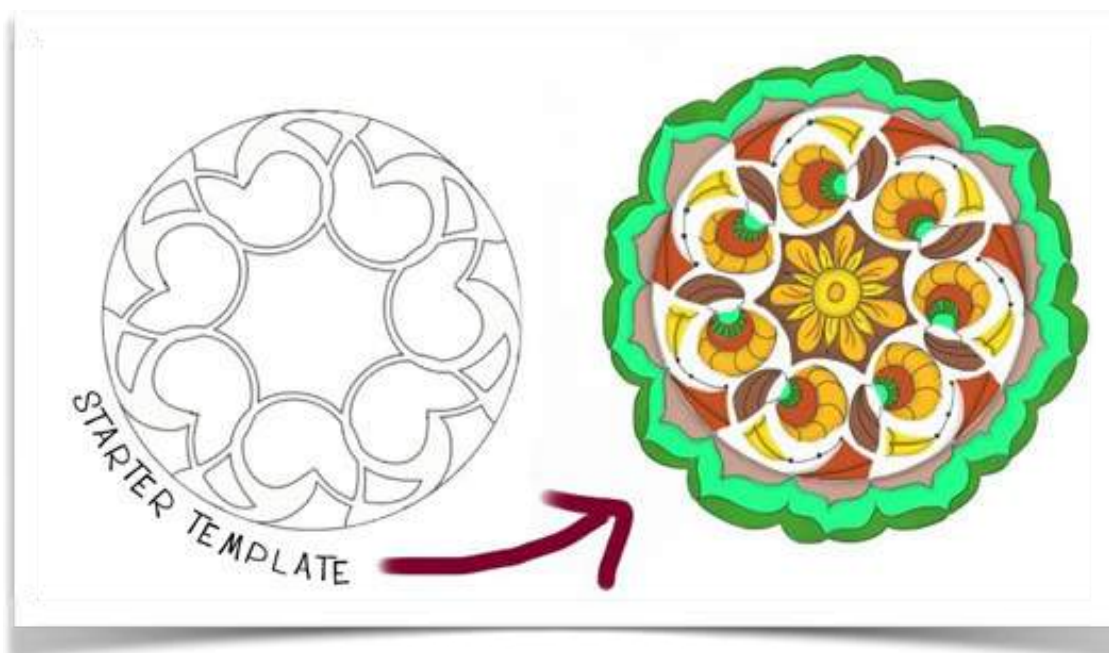
2. Another method is to draw a circle and then add your patterns inside the circle in any fashion you want. You might consider drawing your patterns around the circular shape working from the edges and moving inward or do the opposite - start in the center and work outward.



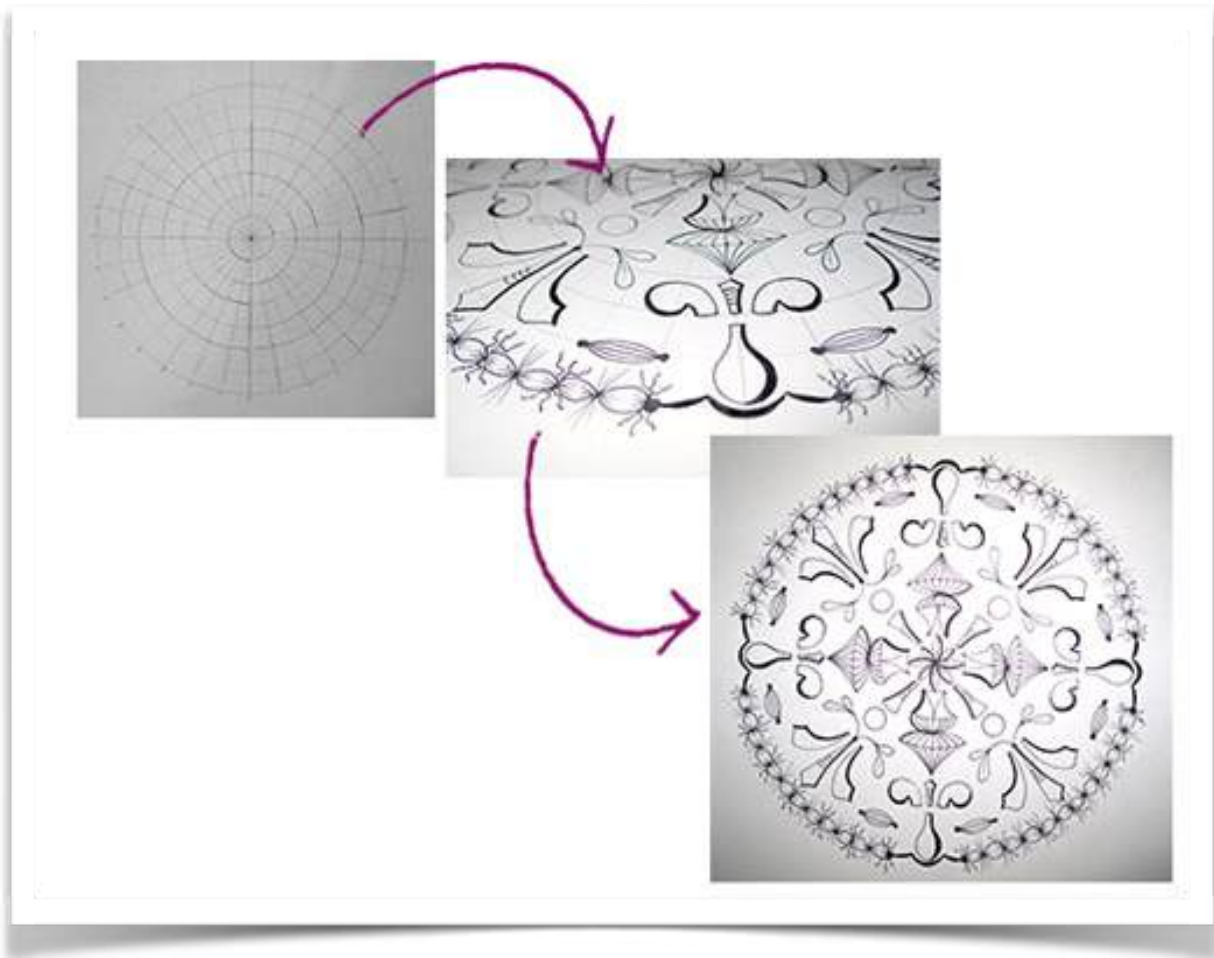
3. The drawing style I personally think is most like the Zentangle® method of drawing would be to simply draw a circle frame to work within. Draw strings or dividing lines inside your circle. Then work various patterns into each section. These steps are similar to how you would use four dots and bordering lines to create the frame on a Zentangle® tile, and a string on the inside to divide up the space - before adding patterns.



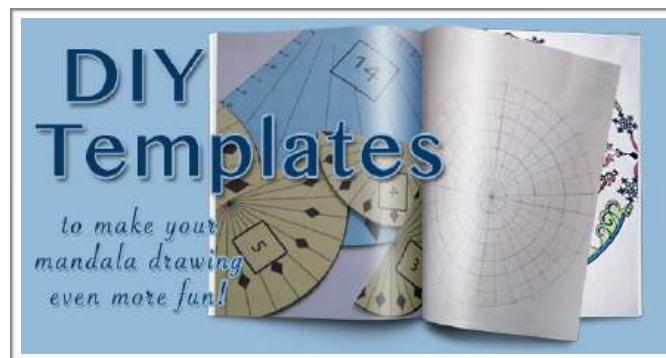
4. A fourth method you might want to go with is to start with a pre-made template such as the free downloadable templates at <http://rainbowelephant.com> and work your patterns into and around the shape(s) of the template.



5. My favorite way of creating a mandala is by starting with a circular grid and then using the grid lines and spaces as guides for adding similar elements and patterned lines on opposite sides of the circle or working my way around the circular rows.



You can create such a grid by using a ruler and a drawing compass. Or if you prefer - handy Do-it-Yourself circular grid drawing guides can also be found at: [Craft Happy Art-Shopette](#). These templates make it easy to create circular grids up to 14-inches.



*I hope you found this Mandala guide helpful! Feel free to share it with your friends.
~Cindy*