

Mandala Work with Your Hands™

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

- C. G. Jung

Drawing the Mandala

Have all your art materials ready. It is useful to use black paper so you can use white for the Buddha family. Oil pastels are nice because you can smudge them, but you can also use colored pencils, markers or paint. The mandala can be any size.

Step 1:

- Sit quietly for a moment and notice how you feel.
- Connect with the self mandala with yourself as the central deity surrounded by the four retinue deities. Feel that the center of the mandala is the seed syllable in your heart chakra as the main deity.
- Imagine light coming from your heart through your hands into the materials you have gathered, bless the materials with your hands.
- When you feel ready, draw a circle and then at the center of that circle, another smaller circle representing the Buddha family, then make four quadrants for the Vajra, Ratna, Padma and Karma families. This can be loosely drawn or carefully measured (using a plate or compass, etc). Then draw whatever comes to you using the colors of each direction with variations of the colors if you have them (like different shades of white, blue, yellow red, green). You can draw the traditional geometric forms that connect to the element of that quadrant such as circles for water and Vajra, squares for earth and Ratna, triangles for fire and Padma, half circles for air and Karma, and points or small circles for bindu and Buddha). You can also make random forms, symbolic forms or descriptive personal drawings of animals, people, or whatever comes to you. Let yourself free within the basic structure.

Step 2:

Once you feel finished, look at your mandala and ask the mandala some questions. Record the answers to all the questions in the Mandala Work with Your Hands™ Tracking Form.

First ask:

What is the main message of this mandala?

Continue by asking questions about specific things you see. Then let the part of the mandala you have asked answer.*

For example: You could ask questions such as: *“What is that circle in Buddha family?”* Then have that part of the mandala answer.

Or: *“Why is there a young girl in the Karma family?”* Then have the figure to answer for herself, for example: *“I am here because I represent the child who was always forced to hurry and do more work. I want freedom.”*

Or: *“Why is there a feeling of agitation from the Ratna family?”* Then let the mandala answer, for example: *“I am reflecting your state of agitation.”*

And so on...

You can ask as many questions as you like, especially those pertaining to the particular family you are working with. Let the mandala answer and write down the answers in the tracking form.

Step 3:

At the end ask:

What can I take with me from this mandala?

Do you have anything more to tell me?

Creating the Mandala in Nature

Gather together materials you are drawn to for your mandala such as rocks, sand, feathers, wood, metal, shells, water, flowers, etc. Have all your materials ready.

Step 1:

- Sit quietly for a moment and notice how you feel.
- Connect with the self mandala with yourself as the central deity surrounded by the four retinue deities. Feel that the center of the mandala is the seed syllable in your heart chakra as the main deity.
- Imagine light coming from your heart through your hands into the materials you have gathered, bless the materials with your hands.
- When you feel ready draw a circle in the ground or sand with a stick. Within the circle make four quadrants for the Vajra, Ratna, Padma and Karma families, leaving space in the center for Buddha family. Then place whatever objects feel right according to the five families into the mandala.

Step 2:

Ask questions as described above in “Drawing the Mandala” section. You can ask any questions that come up and especially those about the particular family you are working with. Let the mandala answer and write down the answers in the tracking form.*

Step 3:

At the end ask:

What can I take with me from this mandala?

Do you have anything more to tell me?

Sand Tray Mandala

The Sandplay therapy was originated by Dora Kalff, a student of C.G. Jung, as a therapeutic way to work with the unconscious and dreams through play. This technique uses a tray of sand and numerous small figures to facilitate creative play. In this case we are not doing Sandplay therapy, but rather using the sand tray and figures for mandala work. If you have access to a sand tray with the plethora of miniatures from the real and imaginary worlds that carry symbolic meaning (used by Sandplay

psychotherapists), you can do mandala work in the sand tray or you can purchase the tray on-line and build your own collection of figures and objects.

Step 1:

- Sit quietly for a moment and notice how you feel.
- Connect with the self mandala with yourself as the central deity surrounded by the four retinue deities. Feel that the center of the mandala is the seed syllable in your heart chakra as the main deity.
- Imagine light coming from your heart through your hands into the materials you have gathered, bless the materials with your hands.
- When you feel ready, draw a circle in the sand with a smaller circle in the middle. Place the objects in the five family quadrants according to the meaning of each one and your intuitive sense of where they should go.

Step 2:

Ask questions as described above in the “Drawing the Mandala” section and allow the mandala to speak to you.* You can ask any questions that come up, especially those regarding the particular family you are working with. Let the mandala answer and write down the answers in the tracking form. You can also have specific figures speak for themselves.

For example: If there is a white horse in Buddha family section, you could ask: “*Why are you there in my mandala?*” Then answer as the white horse, for example: “*I am in the center because I am the spirit of freedom and the wildness of space, I want to take you into spacious freedom.*”

Step 3:

At the end ask:

What can I take with me from this mandala?

Do you have anything more to tell me?

* You do not need to change places as you do in FYD™

Mandala Work with Your Hands™ is a process created and developed by Lama Tsultrim Allione. © Tara Mandala
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MACHIG PUBLICATIONS

Tara Mandala December 2015
PO Box 3040 Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
970-731-3711 info@taramandala.org © Tara Mandala

