

Dear parent,

Mandalas are much more than just patterns in a colouring book. **When children colour Mandalas, it promotes their creativity and improves concentration. Moreover, the activity itself has a calming effect.**

Children are used to living within a constant flow of activities and stimuli, sights and sounds. They hear that time is money, and that they must do things quickly. Even in their early years they lead busy lives, first at home and later at school. No wonder, then, that they find it difficult to sit still, listen to their inner selves, and be calm. Hyperactive children are a modern-day phenomenon. This should come as no surprise, given all the noise, hustle and bustle in the world around us.

The Mandala has been present in art and symbols throughout the ages and is one of the oldest symbols in the history of mankind. The symbol of the Mandala has been found all over the world: It was used by the early Aboriginals in Australia, in Egypt's holy imagery, by the Native Americans, and in all Eastern cultures. In Christianity the Mandala can be seen in the magnificent rosettes found in cathedral windows.

The word *mandala* means "circle" in Sanskrit. A Mandala is configured as a circle with a centre – a universal form symbolizing unity. Mandalas are all around us: in flowers, fruit, trees, spiders and their webs, the human eye, the shape of the earth. Concentric circles can be seen everywhere, from the tiniest cell in our bodies to the largest galaxies.

The Swiss doctor and psychoanalyst **Carl Gustav Jung** (1875–1961) introduced, developed and popularized the Mandala in Western psychology. Jung painted his first Mandala in 1916, and then painted one every morning for the rest of his life. He used the Mandala to understand the workings of his own mind, and when working with his patients he used Mandala drawings for analysis.

Neuropedagogical research in France has shown that colouring Mandalas leads to a level of **relaxation and concentration** similar to that achieved through **breathing exercises or meditation.**

In order to ensure that colouring Mandalas is a relaxing experience for both you and your child, I would like to suggest some **advice and helpful tips.**

- ✦ **Children love colouring.** It's nice to colour Mandalas on your own, with friends, or with mum and dad. Set some time aside to sit with your child and **enjoy the feeling of calm.** Incidentally, colouring Mandalas is good for adults, too.
- ✦ There is only one Mandala on each sheet of thick, card-quality paper. Children and adults clearly feel the difference when handling a genuine Mandala colouring book, for the **quality** far exceeds usual standards.
- ✦ Don't tell your child which **colours** to use. Your child will choose the colours that seem right at the time.

- ✦ When your child has **homework that demands intense concentration**, it can be helpful to colour a simple Mandala first. Children often find it much easier to concentrate on doing their homework afterwards.
- ✦ It is a good idea to **start colouring at the edge of the Mandala and work your way inwards.** However, small children often choose to start at the centre and work their way out. Don't stop your child from doing this. The important thing is that they colour in a structured manner and keep working in one direction. **This systematic approach has a calming influence and improves the capacity to concentrate.**
- ✦ It is important to **create the right external conditions to promote this calming influence.** Make sure that there is **plenty of time** for colouring Mandalas and that the child has **peace and quiet to work.** Telephones and television will disturb a tranquil setting. Complete silence is best, but you can play some suitable, relaxing background music. Try the **Mandala Moods** CD. Also, make sure there is **plenty of light.**
- ✦ **Good tools are essential:** Soft crayons give a brilliant, shiny finish; felt-tipped pens of different thicknesses are good to work with; and the paper is also suitable for using watercolours. The simple, lovely patterns also serve well as outlines for window and glass paintings.
- ✦ Colouring Mandalas is only meaningful if the child chooses his or her own pattern, so you should never tell your child which Mandala to colour. Let your child decide from among the book's **wide range of choices.**
- ✦ The book is bound so that **each page can be removed individually.** This makes it easy to work with, and several children can share the same book. The finished Mandala can be hung on the wall or given away as a gift.
- ✦ If a child colours Mandalas at regular intervals, it may **help to improve their ability to concentrate.**
- ✦ The Mandala is a **recentering tool.** The circumference creates boundaries and clarity, while the centre strengthens the ability to focus.

I hope that these Mandalas will provide you and your child with many wonderful hours of colouring.

Very best wishes,

Kirsten Aarup Sørensen
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