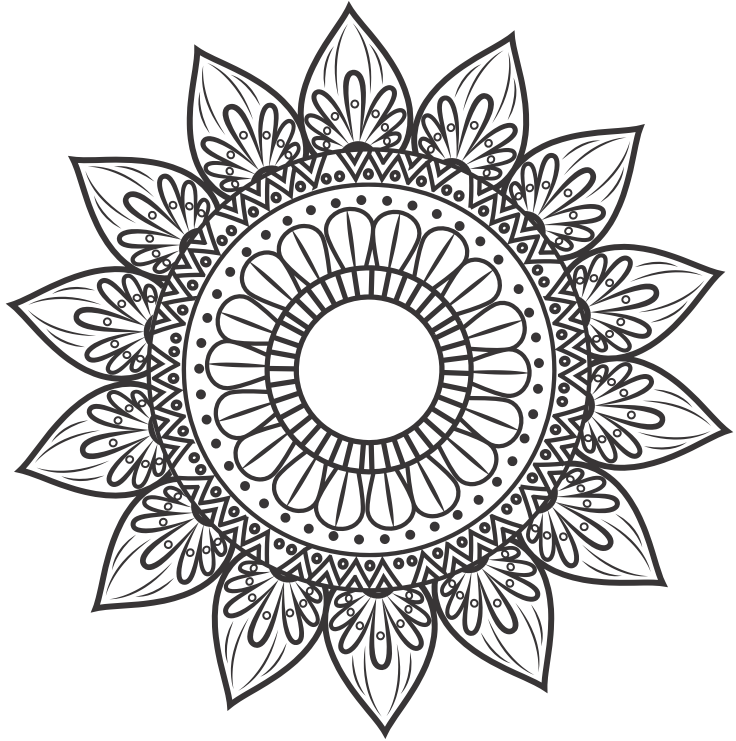


SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Mandala

The mandala (Sanskrit for “circle” or “completion”) has a long history and is recognized for its deep spiritual meaning and representation of wholeness. The “circle with a center” pattern is the basic structure of creation that is reflected from the micro to the macro in the world as we know it. It is a pattern found in nature and is seen in biology, geology, chemistry, physics and astronomy.

Many people and cultures have vouched for the mandala’s intrinsic meaning. Buddhists, Tibetans, and Hindus have all derived meaning from the mandala and its captivating beauty.



Psychoanalyst Carl Jung has called it “a representation of the unconscious self.” The mandala is widely recognized as a meaningful reflection of its creator. Praying with a mandala can be healing and a source of reflection of one’s soul.

After the death of a loved one, we are both called and challenged to stay connected, or in a spiritual relationship, with that person or persons. In Dr. Ira Byock’s book, *The Four Things That Matter Most: A Book About Living*, he shares the wisdom he learned from hundreds of conversations with persons he met through his medical practice, in hospice and palliative care.

These conversations taught him that the four things that matter most are to express these thoughts: [Please forgive me. I forgive you. Thank you. I love you.](#)

So, let’s work on a mandala exercise to incorporate these sentiments in relation to the loved one(s) you are grieving. Turn over to see the steps to praying with the mandala.

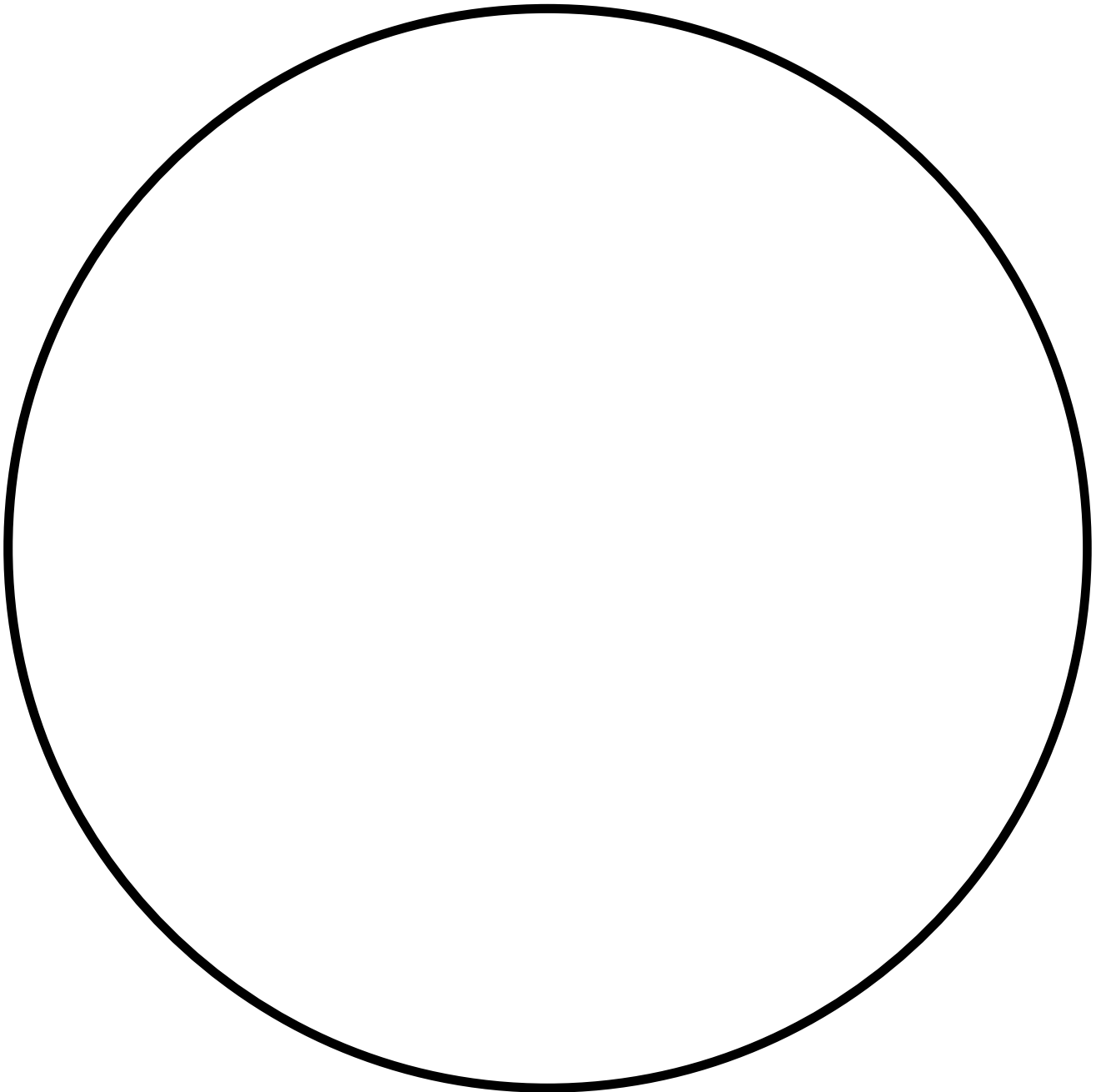
First, find quiet, settle your body, and engage in breath prayer:

Inhale: **Eternal center and circle of life**
Exhale: **lead me to a love stronger than death.**

Then, spend spiritual time thinking about your loved one by focusing on the four things that matter most, considering these phrases:

Please forgive me. I forgive you. Thank you. I love you.

Now, in each quadrant of your mandala circle draw, color, or write your response.



What feelings emerged as you worked? What questions/insights arose as you worked? Place yourself in your work - where are you drawn? What colors do you notice?