



## ***What is a Mandala?***

Mandalas are art forms that have been created throughout centuries as a means of self-expression leading to personal growth and spiritual transformation. Mandalas originated in the Tibetan and Native American traditions, from the sand mandalas created by Tibetan Buddhist monks to medicine wheels and sand paintings crafted by Native Americans. Carl Jung, the father of transpersonal psychology was responsible for bringing mandalas to our attention in the West.

The word Mandala means, "center" in Sanskrit. The Tibetan word for mandala means "*the center of the Universe in which a fully awakened being abides.*" In the Native American tradition, medicine wheels represent the universe and all it holds - change, life, death and learning. A familiar example of a mandala most of us are familiar with is the Taoist symbol of "yin/yang" which represents the universal themes of opposition and interdependence.

In the West, the mandala is also used as a means of understanding our personal worlds. In constructing a personal mandala, which Jung felt was a representation of the unconscious self, he believed we could better understand ourselves as human beings as well as what we valued. Jung felt that paying close attention to the symbols that emerge when we are asked provocative, meaningful questions, we could accelerate the journey towards reaching our potential.

In the **Power of Myth**, Joseph Campbell, a renowned world scholar on mythology writes, "*In working out a mandala ... you draw a circle and then think of the different impulse systems and value systems in your life.... Making a mandala is a discipline for pulling all those scattered aspects of your life together, finding a center.*"

Creating a mandala is a way of remembering what we most value as well as envisioning who we seek to become. It provides us with a means to tap into the multiple sources of intelligence available to us to make those things more explicit. Creating a mandala is an ancient art that has powerful applications for personal and professional growth in our modern, technologically driven world.

## Creating Your Leadership Mandala

