

CHAPTER FOUR

CREATING A WHEEL OF COLOR

COLOR IN YOUR LIFE

I was crazy about color at a very young age. I still remember in kindergarten painting with poster paints mixed in cut-off milk cartons. The color was rich and bright and smelled so wonderful. I could paint however I wanted, and it made me very happy. Wouldn't it have been great if painting like this would have been offered again in school?

This chapter is not only about watercolor in our mandalas, but also about color in our lives. I have found when I am painting with watercolor, my color awareness comes alive. In other words, I wake up. It seems to happen to most everyone. Color is all around us, but how often do we focus on just the color of things? Start painting in watercolor and that will change, everything will appear to become brighter and more alive. Color in our lives is such a great gift—especially when we think about what color really is—it's the sensa-

tion of light waves stimulating our eye. It's waves of light—it's energy!

As part of learning to paint mandalas, I suggest that everyone try a color wheel like the ones we used to do in art class. Color wheels provide a perfect structure in which to practice the watercolor washes from Chapter One, and they are essentially mandalas—circular, centered and symmetrical. I have painted lots of color wheels through the years, and still enjoy creating newer variations and watching them evolve.

In class the color wheels really began to change when we started meditating and chanting. It was then that I realized that our exercises were far more than color wheels. In fact, they were “wheels of color,” a way to focus on and become aware of light and color in our personal lives. Looking back, I see that the color wheels were evolving from flat, one-dimensional color wheel exercises, to moving, vibrating and alive wheels of light.

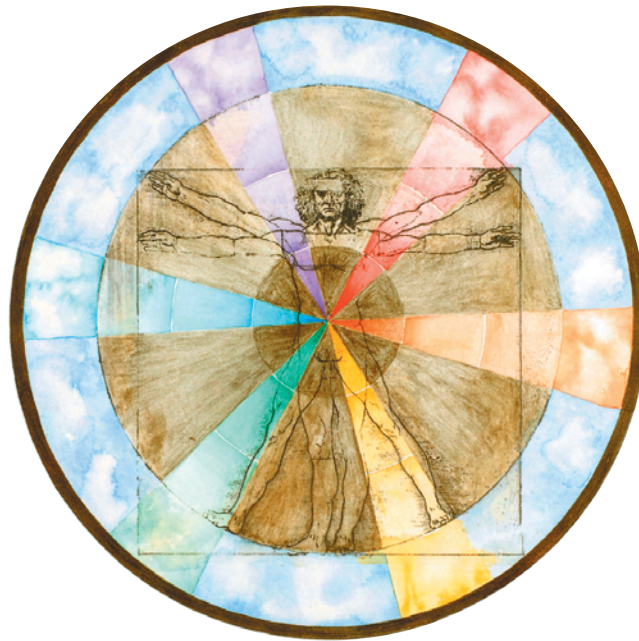
I have been a student of light for a long time, joining a light group in the early 1970's. That is where I started to meditate and also the class where we were all told we were "teachers in Light." I wasn't sure what "one of those" was, but we were given many lessons about light, and, even today, not a day goes by without me using the light in some way.

We also learned about color which came in lessons from St. Germaine. "Each being would be poor indeed if he were not a receptacle of color," he said. "Remove all color and then answer the question 'What is Color?'"¹

The color wheel mandala *Bringing in the Light* came to me in meditation and made me curious to know more about color. I decided to ask St. Germaine myself. To my surprise the following flowed as I wrote:

"You have been given the message, all things have color and radiate it. Watch for that in your life—and bring in that color for your own healing. It's a matter of noticing. And receiving. The

Wheels of Color are tools for the study of color in each individual's life. And, of course, all colors come to a point in the center of all creation, and in the center of Self. When that color comes to the center of your being notice what happens. It transforms. Use that as a daily meditation and a walking meditation. See the light in all things. It is for you—and it is you. You are light many times brighter than you know. Bring light in, and reflect it out. Life is about bringing all to the center and transforming it and sending it out again from the center. What do you think you are? But a transformer of energy, raising the vibration of energies that come to you and being energized and raised yourself. Being a connector between heaven and earth, you are much needed on your world. Open up to and enjoy your function that you have chosen by being here. GOD BLESS! Circles within circles, patterns within patterns, all connected, all moving, changing spheres of light and color. You are most beautiful. If you could but see yourself you would understand the beauty of it ALL."



Bringing In The Light, watercolor, ink transfer, gold ink

I saw this image in meditation. The rays of rainbow colored light came to a point in the "center of man," man representing all humankind. I believe it shows the potential of color and light within us all.

CREATE YOUR OWN DESIGN

Create your own color wheel and design it any way you'd like. The more fun you have, the more likely you'll do it—and we can all use the practice. Try forgetting the compass and drawing a color wheel free hand as in *Color Wheel Drawn Free Hand*. Or paint one without drawing first. The broader the definition of color wheel, the happier it makes us all. There are no limits here and no rules.

“Show your colors,” I heard one day in meditation. According to Webster’s, that means to “reveal one’s true self.”² I say the same to you now.

You are light, you are energy, you are color—show your colors! Go beyond the perimeters of this exercise and have fun experiencing yourself as light and color. What color are you today? What color do you need today? Experiment with it. Enjoy it. Color, as Einstein once said, is one of the last great mysteries.

*“Creativity is God energy
flowing through us,
shaped by us, like light,
flowing through a crystal prism.”*

—Julia Cameron



Color Wheel Drawn Free Hand, watercolor, gold ink,

This was so much fun to do and so very freeing
to work without the compass.

HOW TO CREATE A BASIC COLOR WHEEL



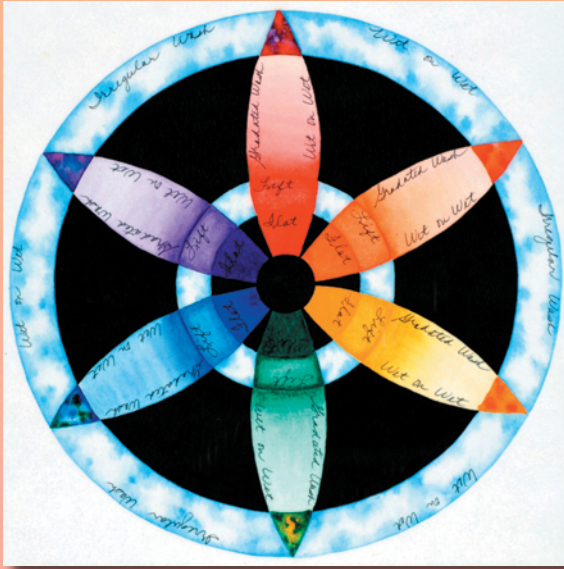
Diagram for Creating a Basic Color Wheel

LET'S START WITH THE BASICS: how to make a color wheel. It begins as a circle drawn with a compass and divided into six equal parts—which we all learned how to do in school, right? Just in case you need to refresh your memory, you may want to practice this on a piece of scratch paper before you draw it on your watercolor paper.

Get out your compass and adjust it to the size of circle you desire. Draw a circle with the compass in the middle of your paper. Do not change the compass adjustment, in other words, use the same radius. Place the point of the compass anywhere on the circumference, or edge of the circle, and where the pencil intersects the circle, draw a tick mark. See illustrations above. Now place the point of the compass exactly on the intersection of the first tick mark and the circumference of your circle. Make another tick mark where the pencil meets the circle's edge. Continue like this around the circle until you come to where you began, and you will see that you've divided the circle into 6 equal parts. Now, with a ruler, draw a line connecting the tick mark on one side of the circle to the tick mark exactly opposite it on the other side of the circle, or 3 lines connecting 6 points. You should have a circle that looks like a pie, divided into 6 equal wedges. Erase the tick marks.

This is the structure for the basic color wheel. When painting it, every other wedge or triangle is a primary color, or, red, yellow and blue. The mixture of each of those colors with each other creates secondary colors; orange is made from the mixture of equal parts of red and yellow; yellow and blue make green; blue and red make violet. On the color wheel the secondary colors go in-between the primaries. If you'd like, paint a color wheel like this just for the practice. A color wheel is painted with flat washes. Let each color dry before you paint the color right next to it, or they will bleed together. And, it's best to do light colors first and let them dry, as sometimes a darker color will bleed into a lighter color if you paint the darker color first, even if it's dry. Notice, also, that secondary colors which come directly out of the tubes are brighter than if you mix them. That's just their nature, but give mixing a try and see what fun, different colors you come up with. (When you mix a primary color with a secondary color you get what is called a tertiary color; red-violet, blue-green, etc.) Remember, these color wheels are simply for practicing your washes, not making them perfect. Get used to the feel of the brushes, the paint, the washes, mixing colors and working within the circle. Handling watercolor, by its nature, gets easier with practice. Be patient with yourself.

CREATING THE FLOWER OF LIFE COLOR WHEEL



Flower of Life Color Wheel Demo

AN INTERESTING VERSION of the color wheel is the “flower of life” design. I teach this as either a design on its own, or a springboard for other creations. Give it a try, use it as a starting point for a larger design, or invent your own.

I suggest trying this first on a piece of scratch paper. With your compass draw a circle on your paper as large as you wish. Using the same radius as the circle you’ve just circumscribed, make six tick marks to divide the circle six times. Now, again using the compass with the exact same radius, place the point of the compass on a tick mark where it’s intersected the circle. Connect the two tick marks on either side of this mark with the compass by drawing an arch between them with the pencil. Continue around the circle, placing the compass point on each tick mark and connecting the tick marks on either side of it by drawing an arch with the compass.

When all the tick marks have been connected with arcs erase the tick marks. You have created a six-petal flower within a circle, which is sometimes called the “flower of life” or even the “seed of life.” These designs are actually ancient and will go on infinitely if you keep drawing full circles. See illustrations below. You can change the radius of the compass and divide the petals up by circumscribing different sizes of circles over them as shown in the diagram. This gives you lots of divisions for practicing washes as in *Flower of Life Color Wheel Demo*.

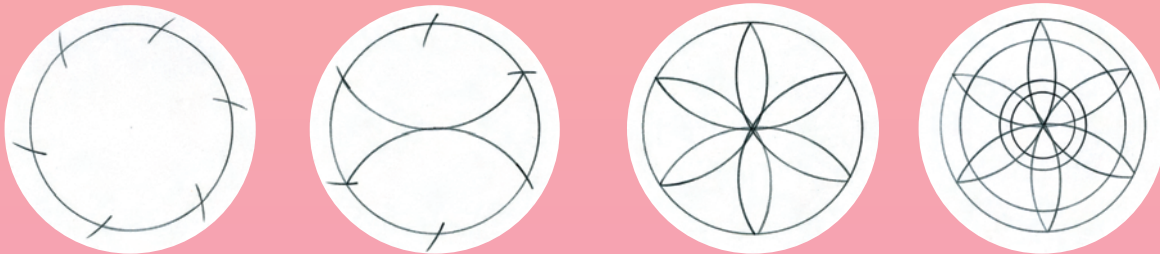


Diagram for Creating a Flower of Life Color Wheel