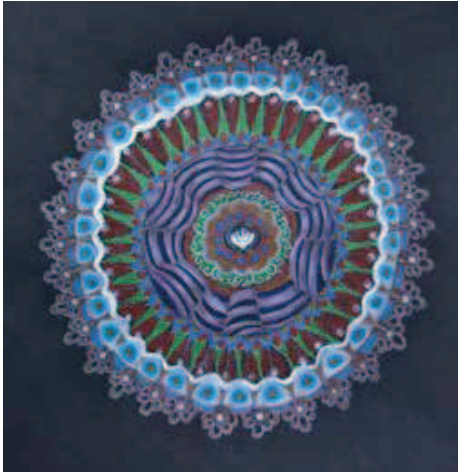


## Using Mandala Art to Exercise Mindfulness

by Michelle Karinne Suarez



With mindfulness becoming a prevalent theme in the legal community, it's not surprising that people are exploring new ways to ease stress and explore their creative sides. One of these forms that you may have noticed at your local bookstore is 'adult coloring books', which is based on what is known as 'Mandala Art.' Debbie Grossman is an award winning local artist who teaches adults how to create their own 'Mandala.' Mandala Art are circular drawings that promote positive energy, concentration, and mindfulness. By focusing on the middle of the Mandala and moving from the center to the outer edges, you become more mindful and relaxed.

Grossman began painting at five years old, but when her grandmother died in 1995, she turned to art as a therapeutic tool to grieve and manage stress. She painted fifty pieces in over two months. Her husband, an attorney, encouraged her to enter an art contest, where she placed 2nd out of 1,300 artists in the U.S. and Canada. This was the first of many contests, which ultimately gave Grossman the confidence to continue her art professionally.

Grossman is also an art teacher for elementary and middle school. One of the teachers participating in Grossman's art classes suggested that she use her unique method of combining art with meditation to teach this technique to adults. This



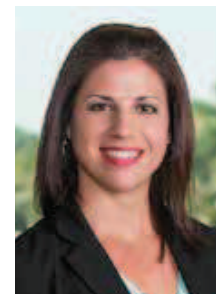
Debbie Grossman

lead to Grossman's Mandala workshop, where she guides participants through a meditation, explains the Mandala and its symbolism, and guides participants through the process of creating their own Mandala, and coloring it in. She had seen Mandala coloring books and researched their meditative qualities. However, Grossman wanted to create her own Mandala, because she found that it was much more relaxing and therapeutic to create her own source of art and then color it in.

Through the Mandala Art workshops, Grossman helps participants reach a meditative state by creating a soothing ambiance, and guiding participants through all of the chakras from the crown of the head to the bottom of the spine. The entire process takes three hours. When the meditation is finished, she teaches participants to create their own Mandala and then color it in. Grossman says that it is the unique mediation she guides participants through, as well as the creation of the art, that helps the participants learn how to develop and experience mindfulness. She has observed that participants immediately connect with other(s) in the class in a peaceful and positive way

through the creation of their own Mandalas. Grossman says, "The participants bond...they become open like children, less critical of themselves, and become open to the process and the art."

The nature of our profession is founded in a constant fight-or-flight mode. By learning to silence our thoughts and live in the present, we can achieve our highest potential as professionals and individuals. So, whether it is a Mandala art class like Grossman's, or a Reiki class, I challenge you to try developing mindfulness, and take a child-like leap of faith in exploring your artistic side. **E**



Michelle Karinne Suarez, Esq. is a business attorney practicing transactional and litigation work at Kelley Kronenberg, P.A. in Fort Lauderdale office. She is also a fitness competitor. She can be reached at (954) 370-9970 or via email at [msuarez@kelleykronenberg.com](mailto:msuarez@kelleykronenberg.com).