

Adult Coloring Book for Mindfulness and Relaxation

Lisa Callinan



Disclaimer:

Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health care practitioner with any concerns or questions you have regarding a medical condition and before undertaking any specific health or exercise program.

The information in the introduction section of this coloring book is for informational purposes only.

Introduction

While coloring may seem like a trivial adult activity, it is not something to be discounted for its tremendous relaxation and healing effects on the body.

I first began to color mandalas (circular, geometric designs) about 8 years ago. It was a time in my life when I was beginning to deeply consider how I could clean up the mess that I had created in my life. I was in a relationship and business that was not working and I felt trapped.

I was very drawn to coloring as a relaxation tool. The idea of adults using coloring as a relaxation activity had not yet gained popularity as it has recently begun to do, and even though I initially kept it to myself I could feel the calming and relaxing effects on my system. I was grateful a few years later when I was trying to recover from severe adrenal fatigue that I had developed the habit of regularly engaging in this activity. At that point I talked to many people about the coloring that I was doing and found many others eager to try it for themselves.

There has been a lot of research in recent years about the stress reduction benefits of engaging in activities that involve the fine motor movements of the hands such as coloring, drawing, painting or knitting. It is in fact the use of these fine, repetitive movements and the ability to stay focused on the activity at hand which results in positive physiological changes and a relaxation effect within the body.

Dr Herbert Benson, a Harvard doctor who wrote extensively about what he termed “the relaxation response” described two main components as being necessary in order to create this response:

1. The repetition of a sound, word, phrase or **movement**.
2. Putting aside any thoughts as they arise and **returning to the point of focus or repetition**.

He explained that invoking this “relaxation response” created health benefits such as a

- decrease in heart rate and blood pressure
- lower pulse rate
- decrease in breathing rate and oxygen consumption
- reduction of cortisol (one of the stress hormones)
- decreased sympathetic nervous system activity (resulting in fewer stress hormones being released)
- increased parasympathetic nervous system activity (more “feel-good” hormones released)

The act of coloring is an activity that invokes “the relaxation response” in your system. A very important part of getting relief from stress, healing from burnout and recovering from adrenal fatigue is to engage in practices every single day that do create this “relaxation response”.

While this practice won’t necessarily deal with the reasons why you are stressed or burned out (the other very essential area to attend to) it will allow you to relax and calm your nervous system because you are activating this “relaxation response”. This in turn will greatly support your body’s natural self repair mechanisms to do their job and help you to approach the underlying causes of the stress in your life from a much calmer place.

Please understand that the natural self repair mechanisms in the body only function when the body is in this “relaxation response” mode. The body does not do its natural repair work when it is in a state of stress, i.e. when you are activating what is known as the “fight-or-flight” response or “the stress response” as termed by Walter Cannon, another Harvard doctor.

There are many situations in our lives that activate this “stress response”. The initial response is activated in the amygdala part of the brain and follows on with a cascade of knock on effects throughout the body. If you are dealing with burnout or adrenal fatigue the chronic activation of the “stress response” is likely to be one of the major reasons why you are dealing with a long list of uncomfortable and/or debilitating symptoms.

The body is not designed to be constantly activating the “stress response” and if it does, many systems in the body can become affected. The more “stress” the more symptoms and the more systems in the body that can become affected. It is therefore vitally important that you hang out in a place of activating “the relaxation response” as much as possible.

This ebook is a collection of

- ***36 designs for you to color***
- ***A series of 8 bonus templates for you to use if you would like to draw your own designs***

The 36 designs have been inspired by mandalas (based on a circular design with geometric shapes) and the drawing of patterns from the Zentangle™ process. The Zentangle™ creators refer to the mandala combined with a mix of Zentangle™ patterns as a Zendala, and that is effectively what I have created for you.

I have created these designs with the Zentangle™ idea in mind of not having to do them “perfectly”. I could have labored over this for months and months and perhaps never completed it, but I realized that my biggest priority was to simply do it, to enjoy the natural creative process that I was engaged in and to then release it to the world.

Elizabeth Gilbert (who you may know from her book "Eat Pray Love") talked about this concept in her book "Big Magic" when she explained:

"The truth of the matter is, most people don't finish things. Look around you, the evidence is everywhere. People don't finish. They begin ambitious projects with the best of intentions, but then they get stuck in a mine of insecurity and doubt and hairsplitting... and they stop. You may want your work to be perfect, in other words; I just want mine to be finished."

So while I did use some measurements in my process to help to give me some perspective as I was creating, the designs have for the most part been done freehand. This is not a highly manufactured coloring book like those that you will see in your local retail store. You will notice many "imperfections" and inconsistencies in the geometry and perhaps even a few little smudges in the work.

My overriding intention was to create organic and original designs that were done in a way that supported the "relaxation response" occurring in my system (too much emphasis on perfection may produce the opposite effect of making you feel more stressed).

I encourage you to color (or design your own patterns with the bonus templates provided) with the same approach. Let go of having to do the coloring perfectly and stay focused on the process, so that you may relax and calm your system in the deepest way possible. I believe that by allowing yourself this freedom you will create even greater works of art and also allow for deeper levels of relaxation to occur within your body.

I encourage you to go to the designs that you resonate with the most and color those first. This is not something that needs to be done in the order that it has been presented to you. This is your creative process.

You can use crayons, pencils, colored pens or any other coloring implement that you desire. For drawing your own designs you will find that a very finely tipped pen that won't bleed through the page will give you the best result. I used the Micron™ Pens which you can find on Amazon. I have also found that when coloring, a better quality pen, pencil or crayon gives a more satisfying result 😊.

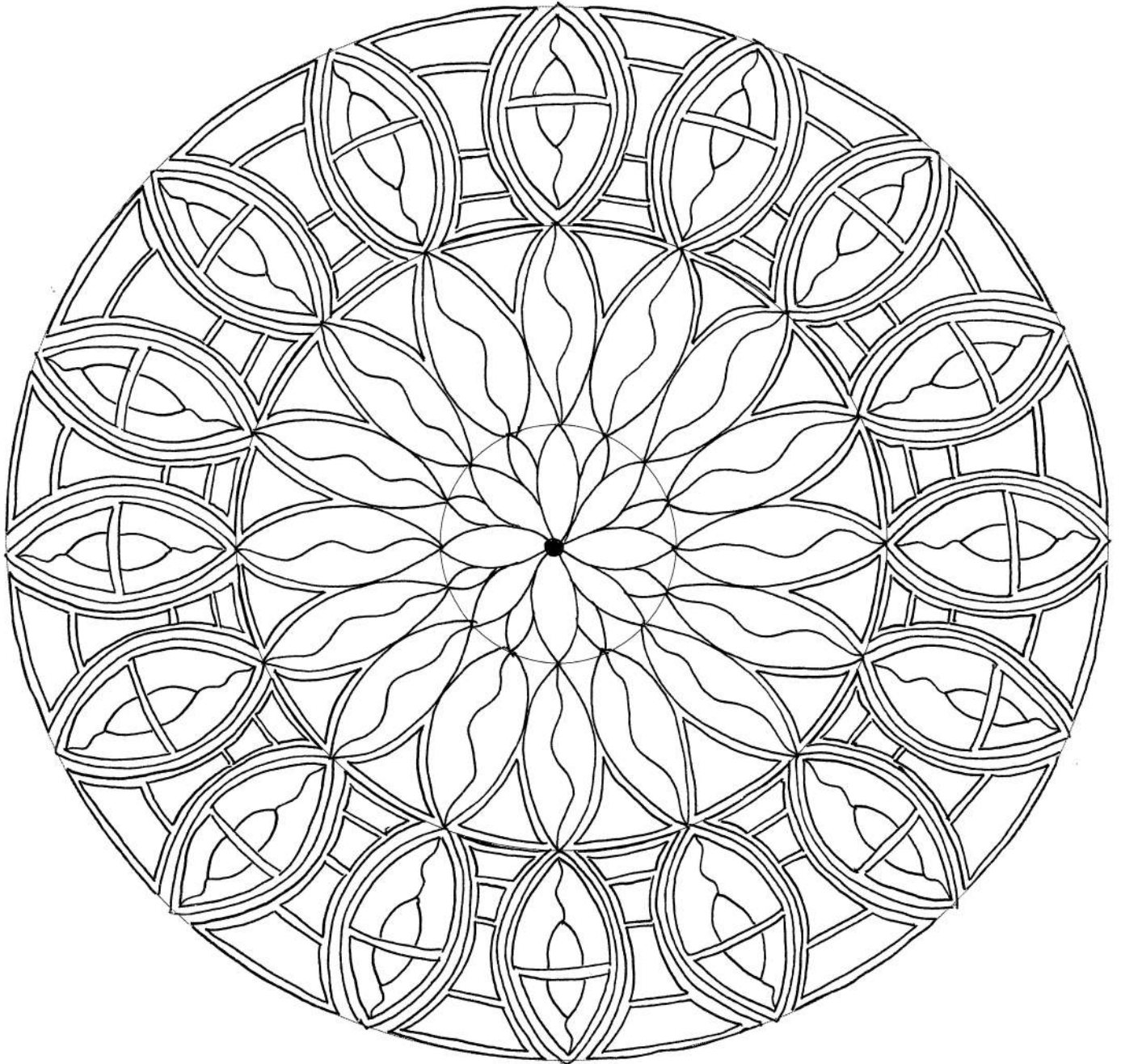
The more you engage in this process, the more familiar the repetition will become and the deeper your "relaxation response" is likely to be. Let your self play, experiment and have some fun with it all.

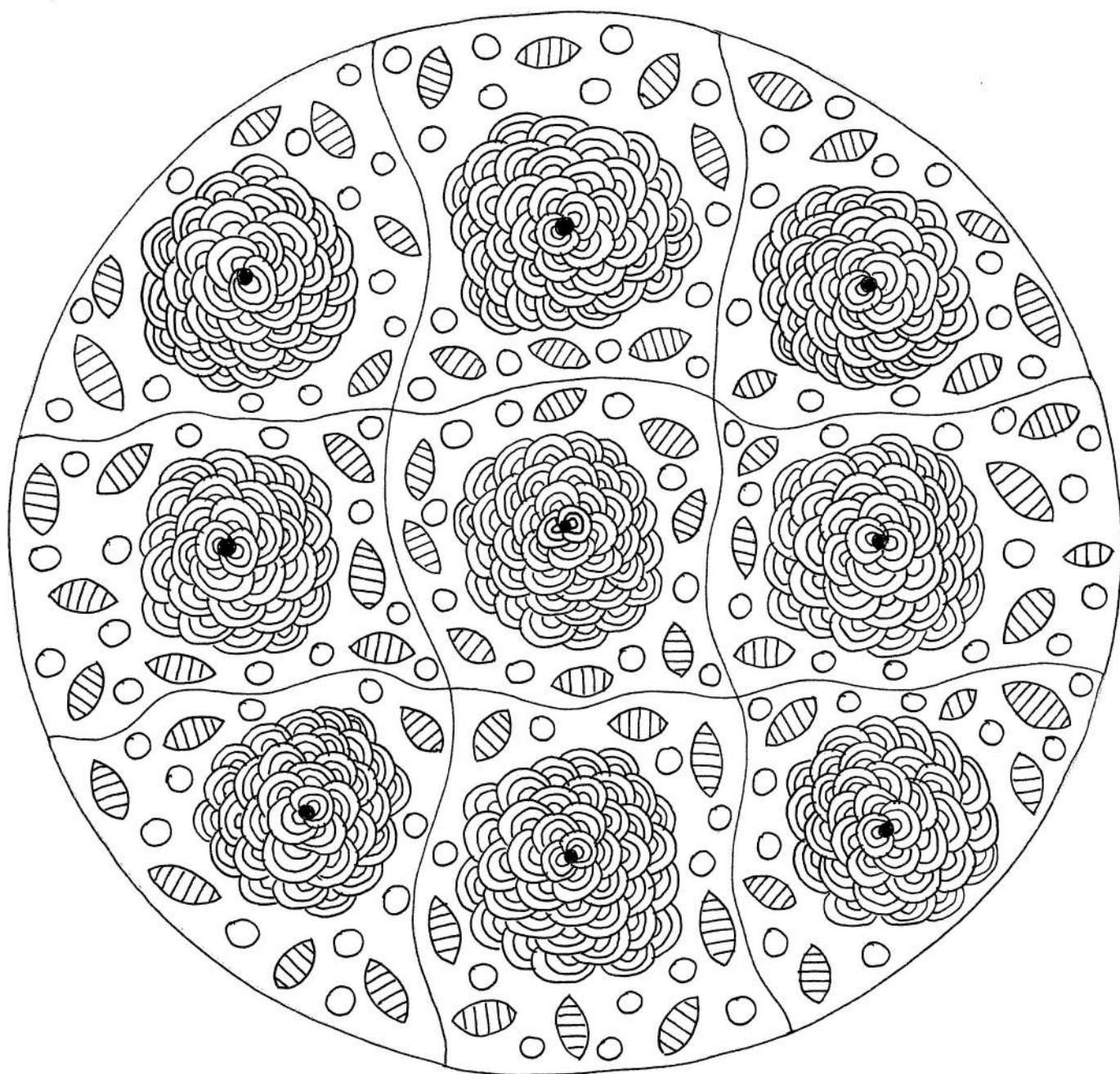
If you enjoy it, do more of it. If you don't, try your hand at a different type of activity that involves the fine motor movements of the hand. There are no rules on what creative pursuits are best for you.

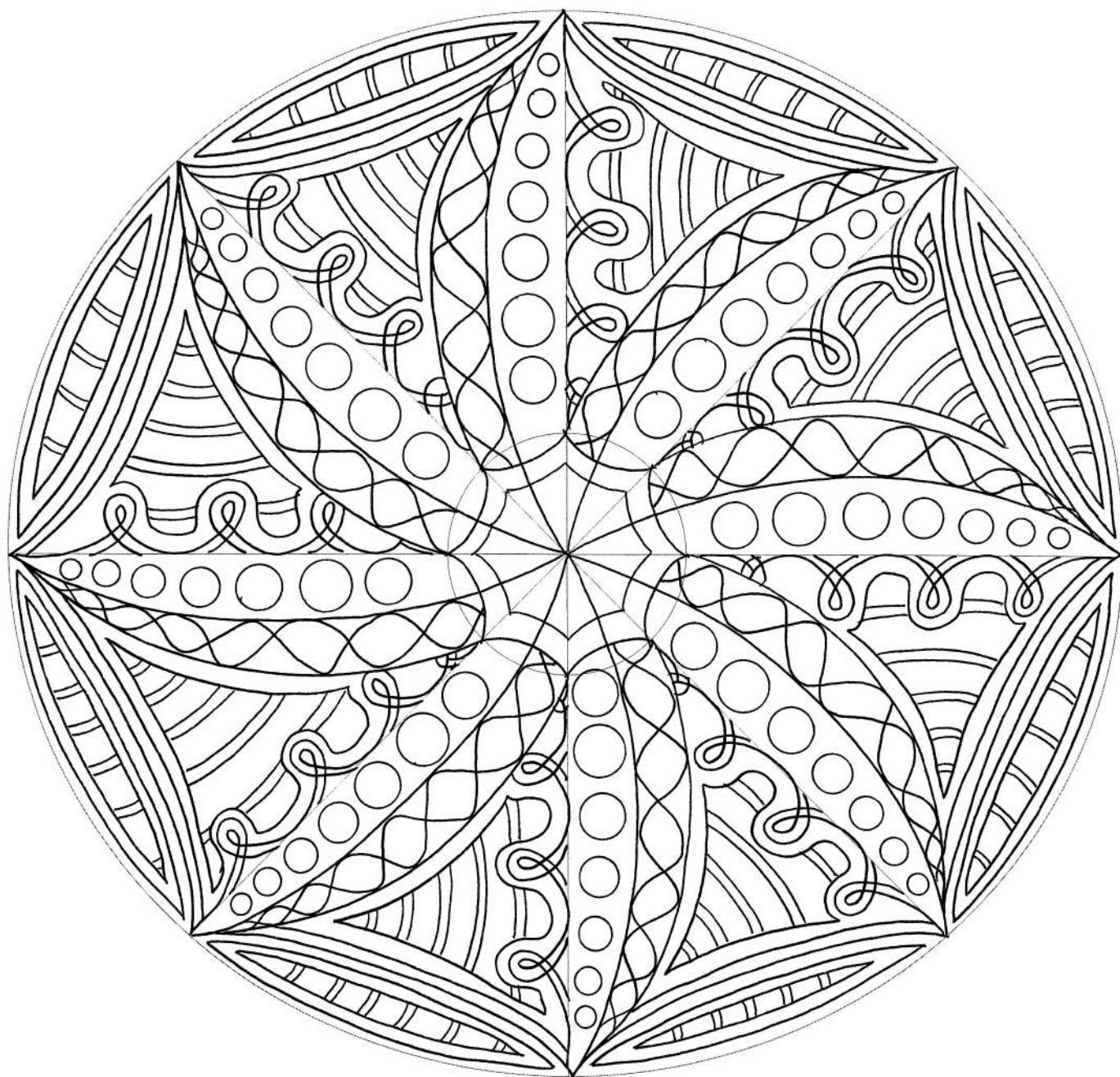
I wish you much pleasure and relaxation as you color these pages and please share your results with us over at www.facebook.com/healingfromburnout. That would make my day.
😊

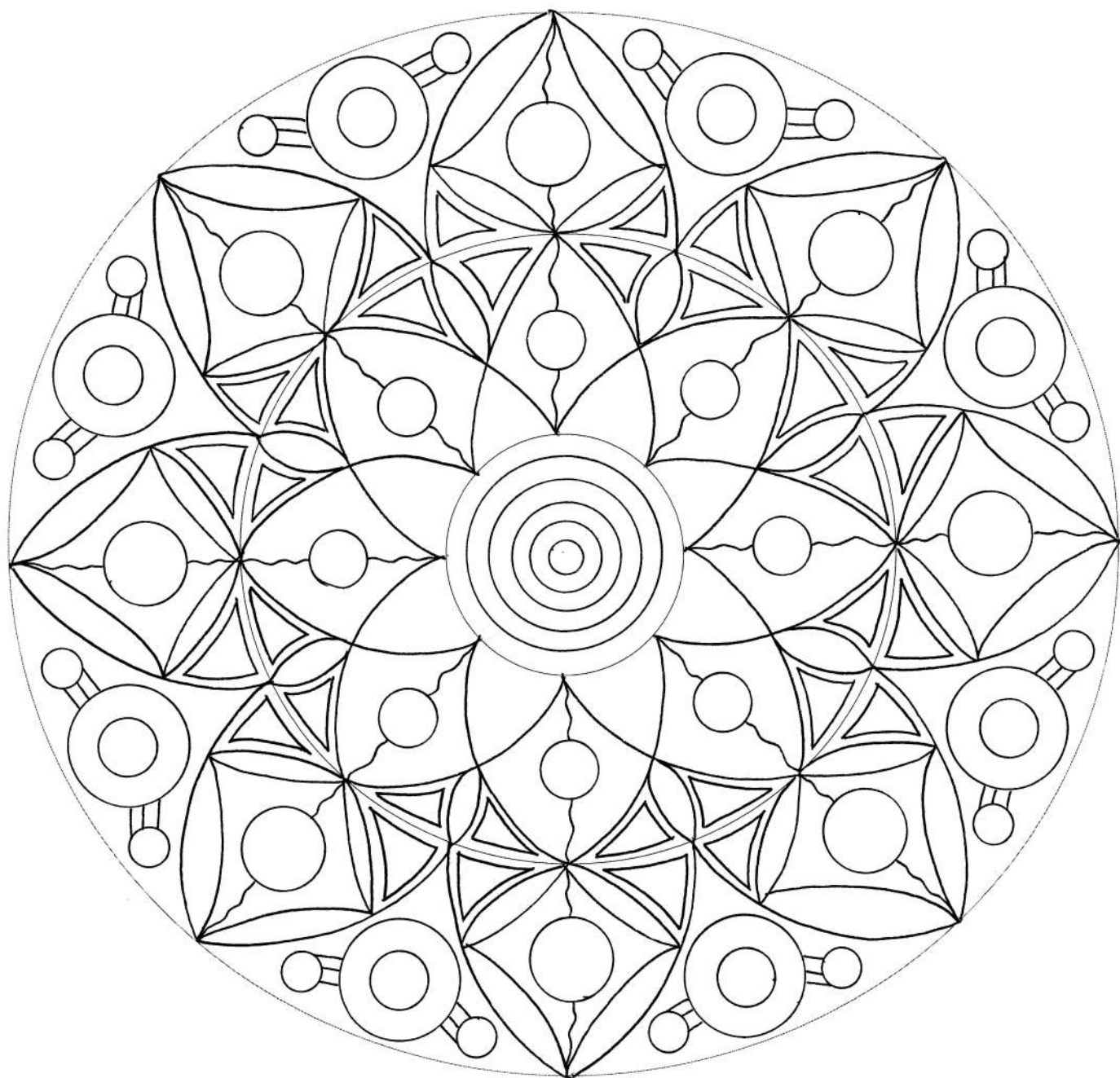
Happy Creating and Relaxing

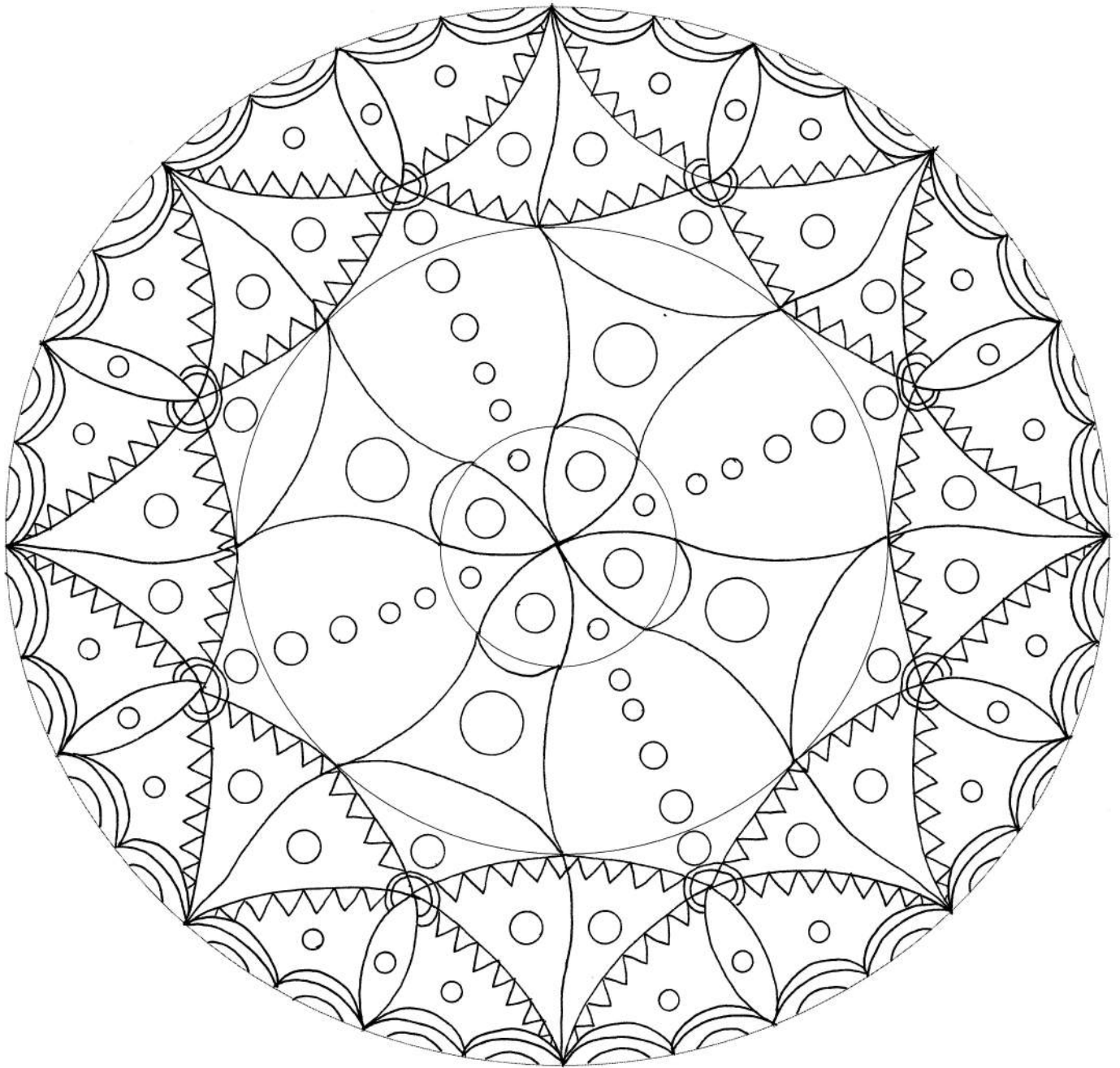
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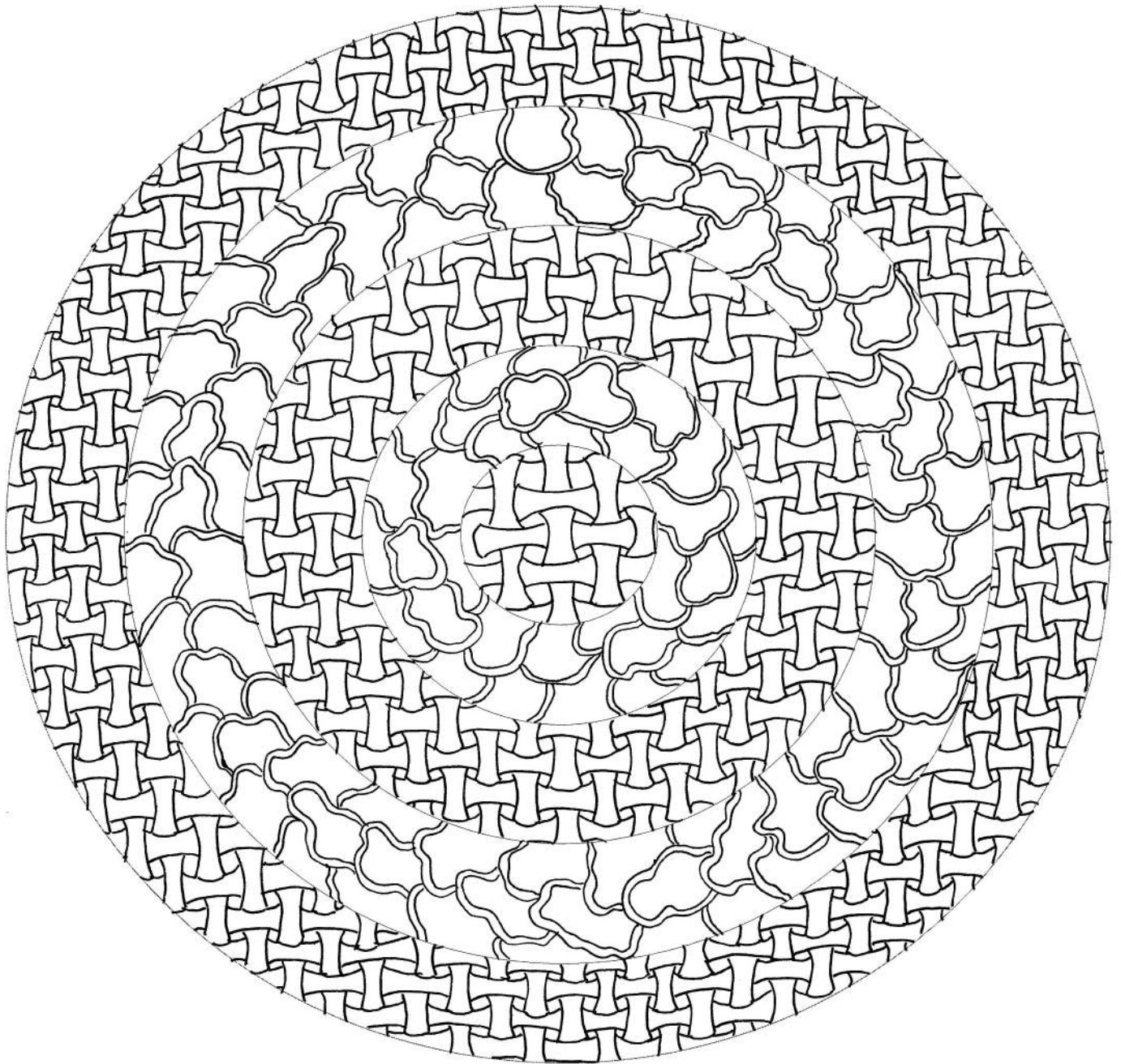


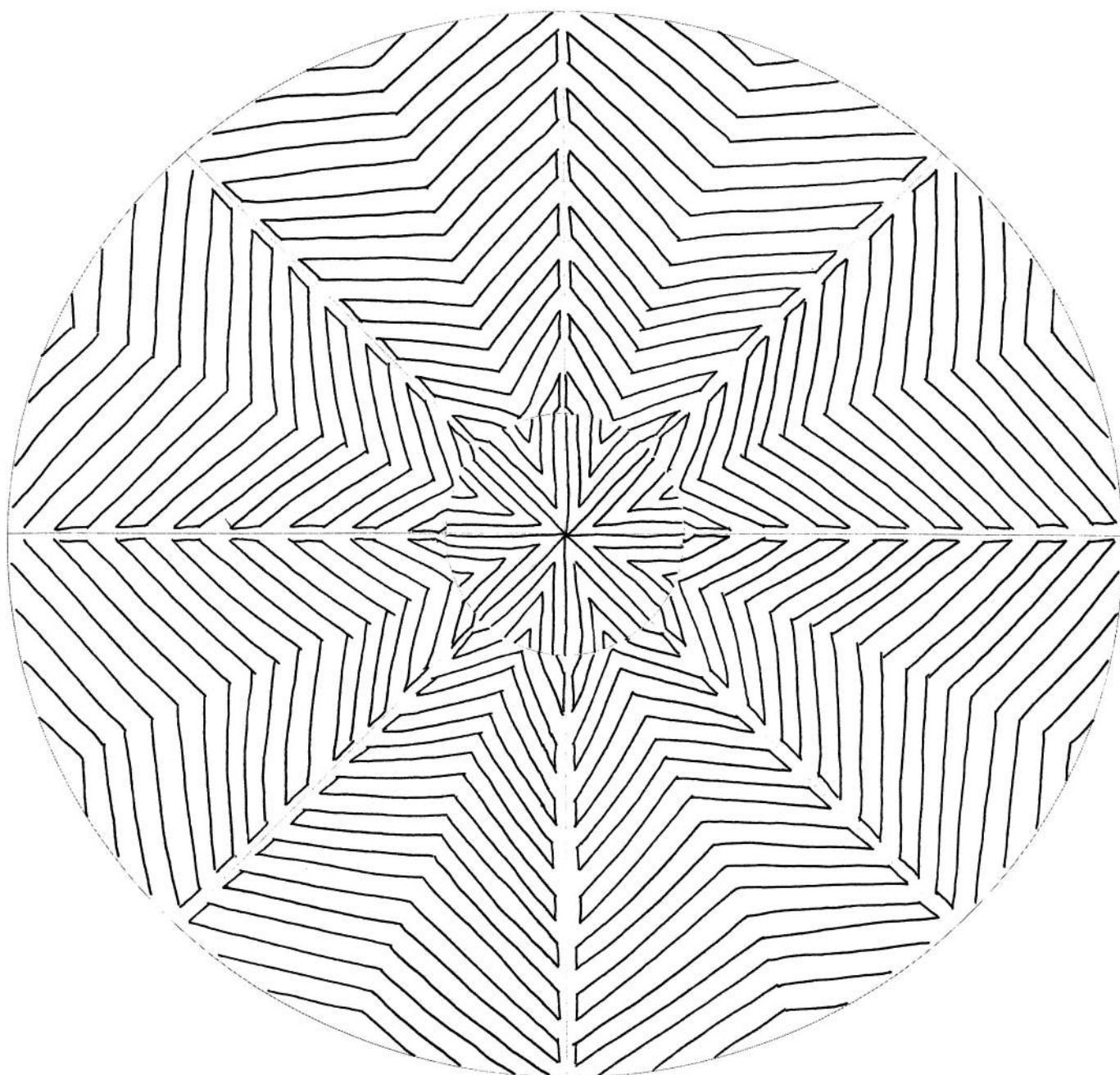


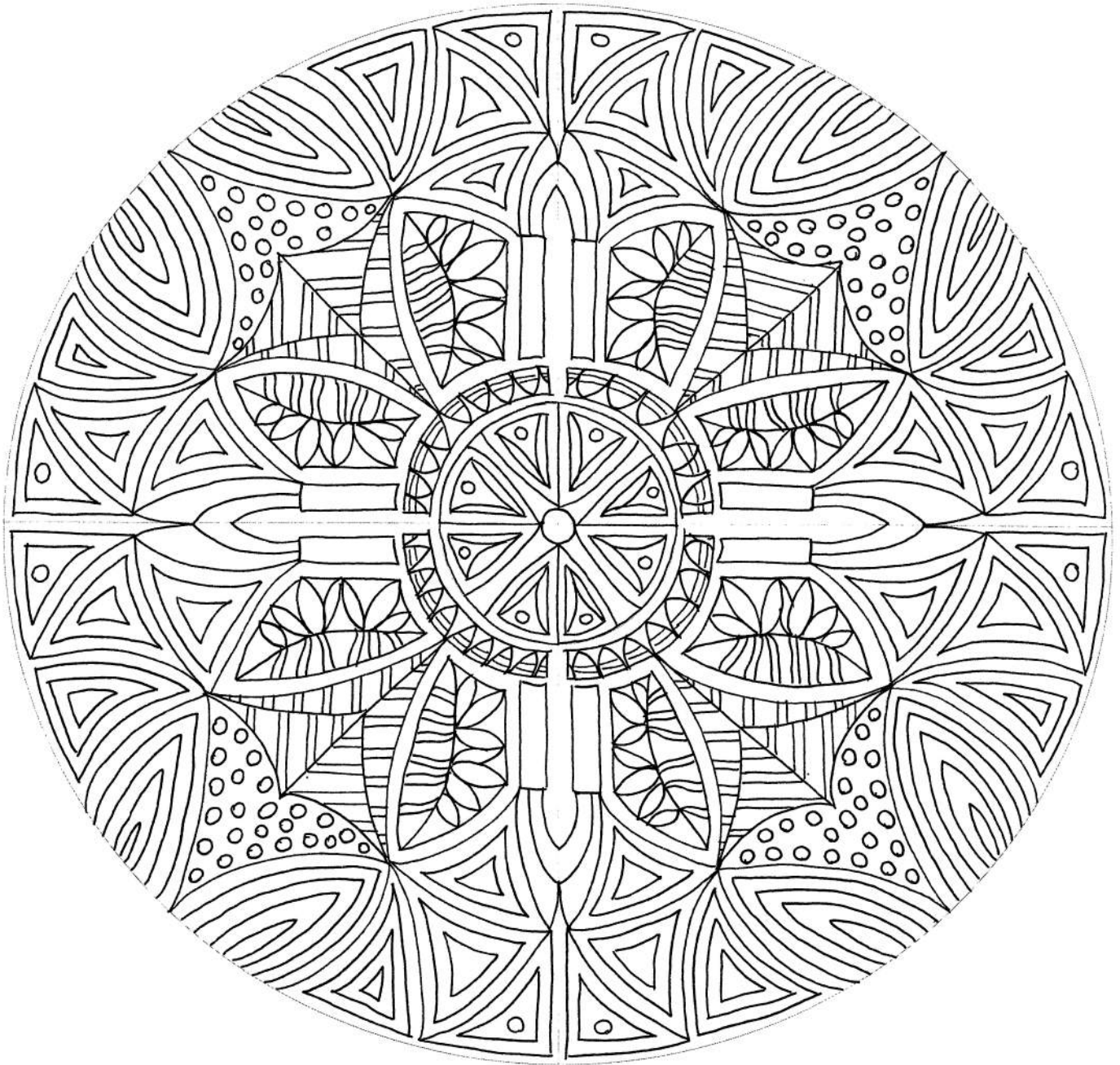


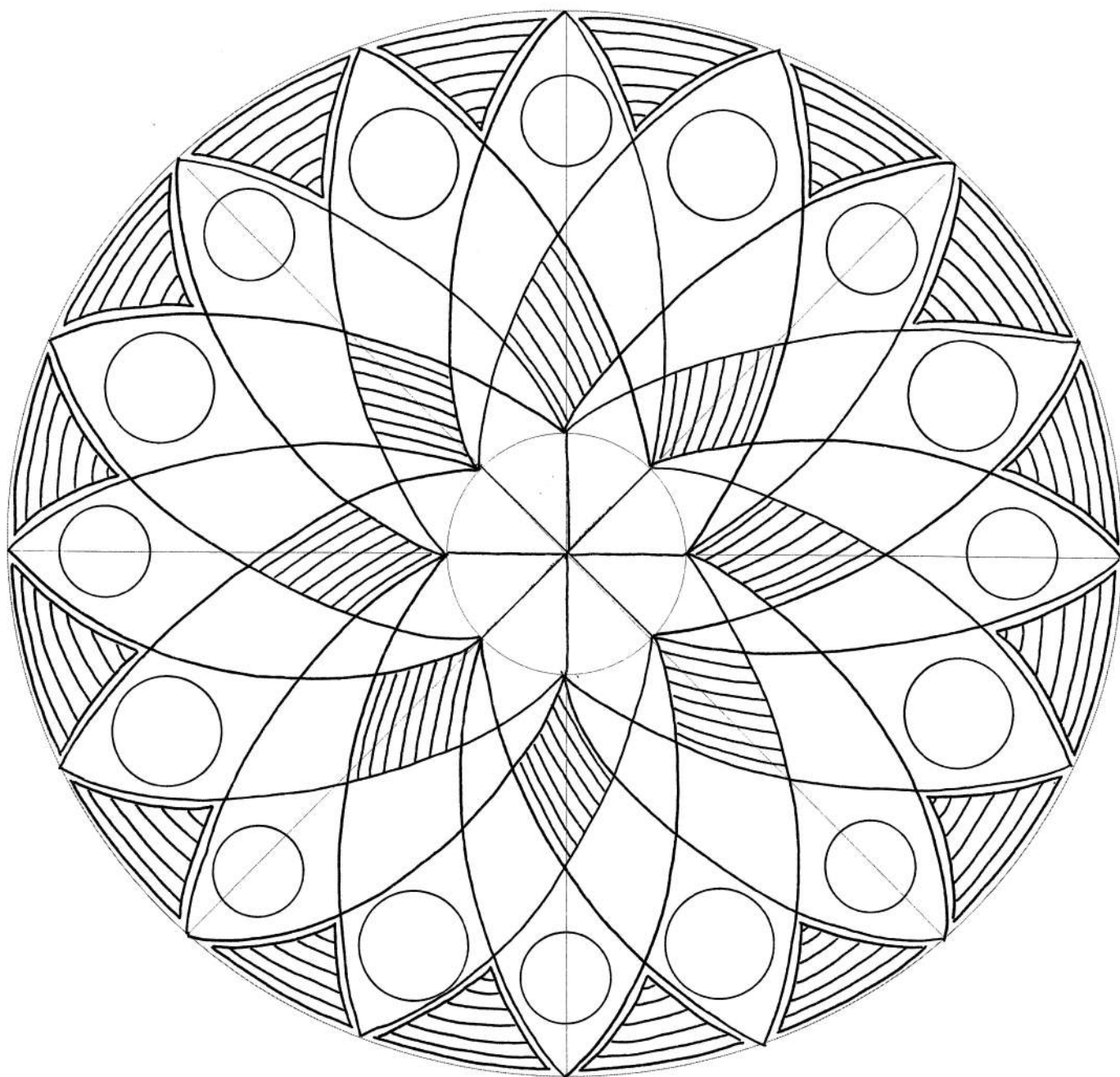


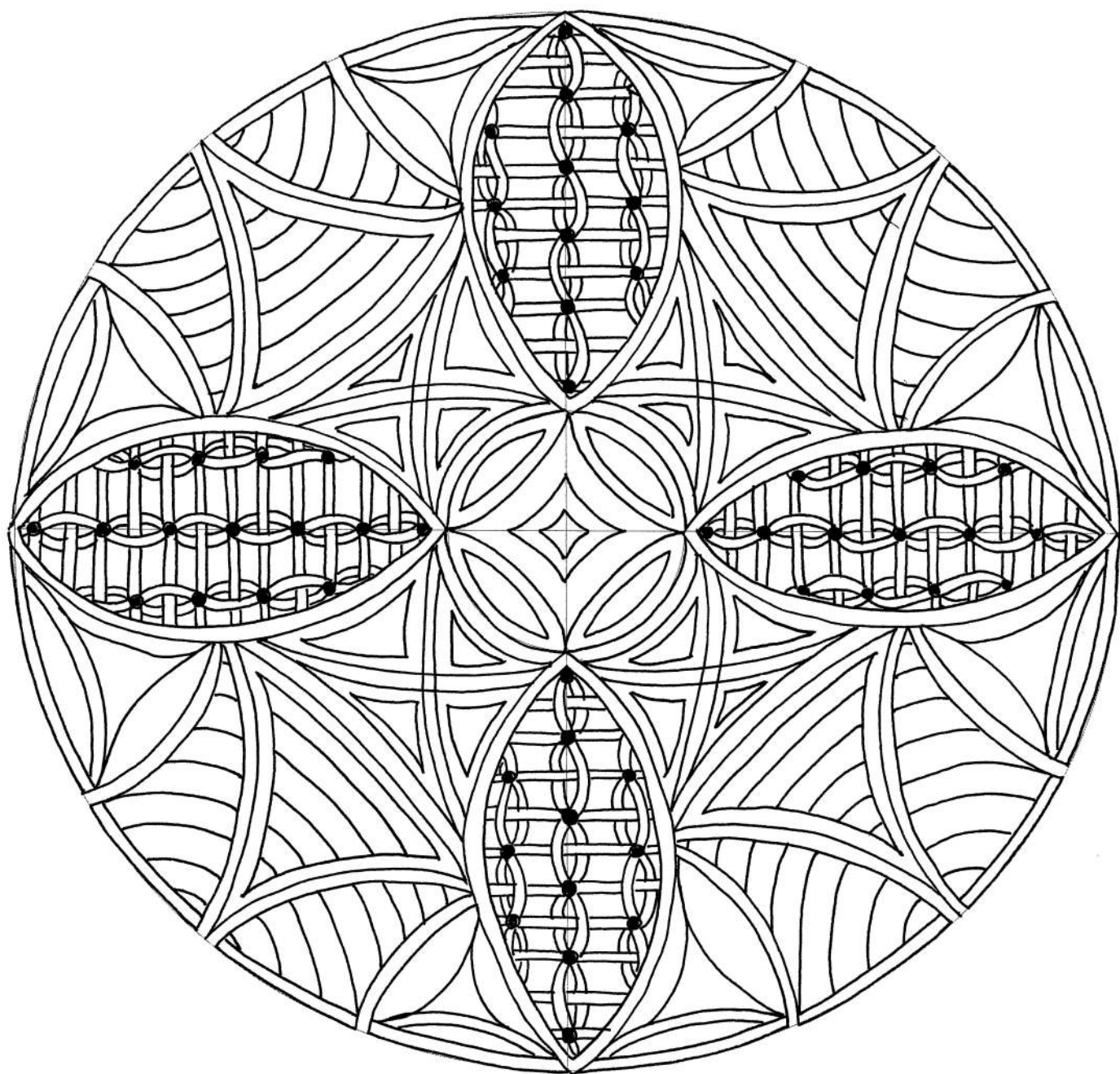


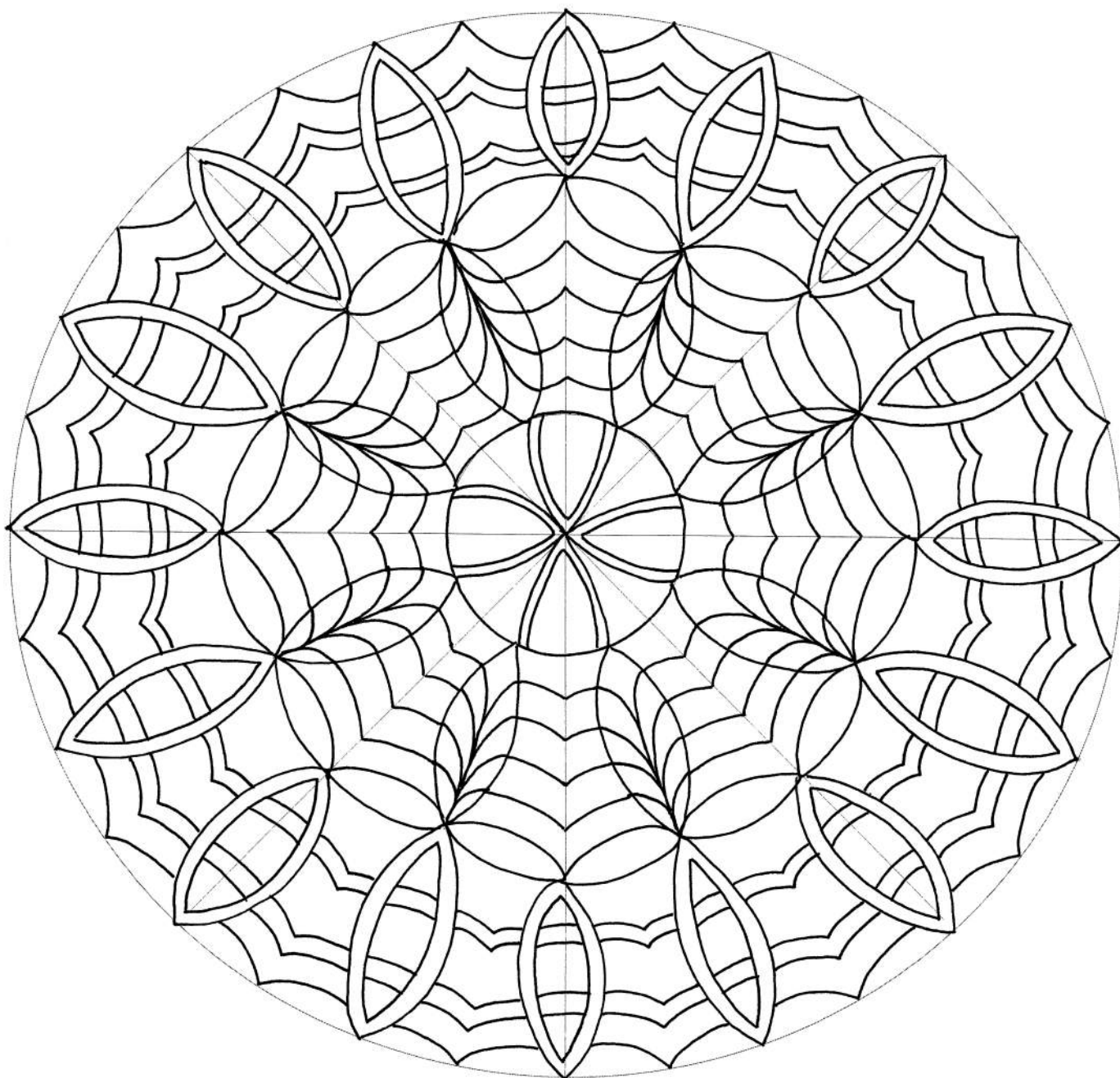


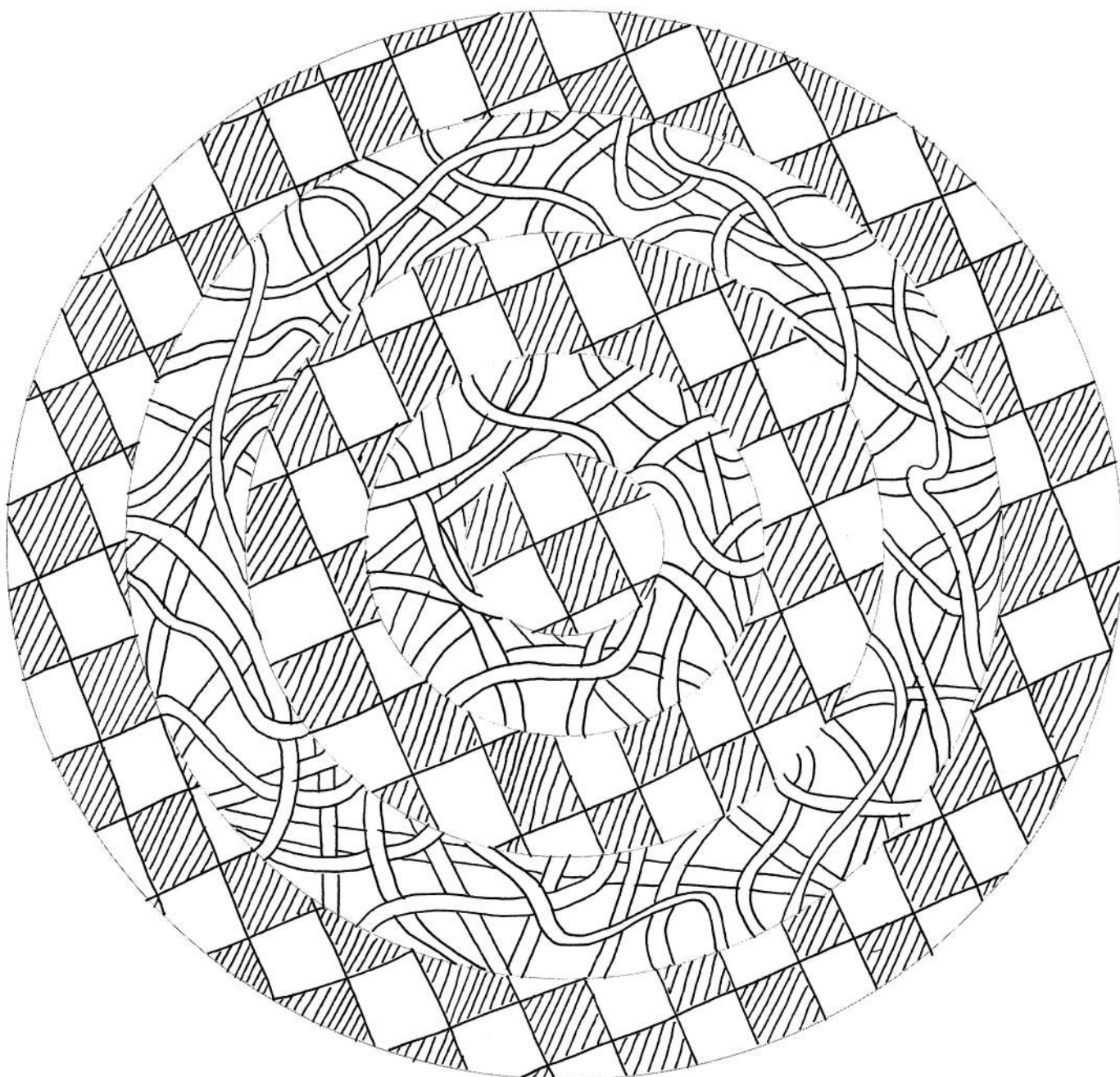


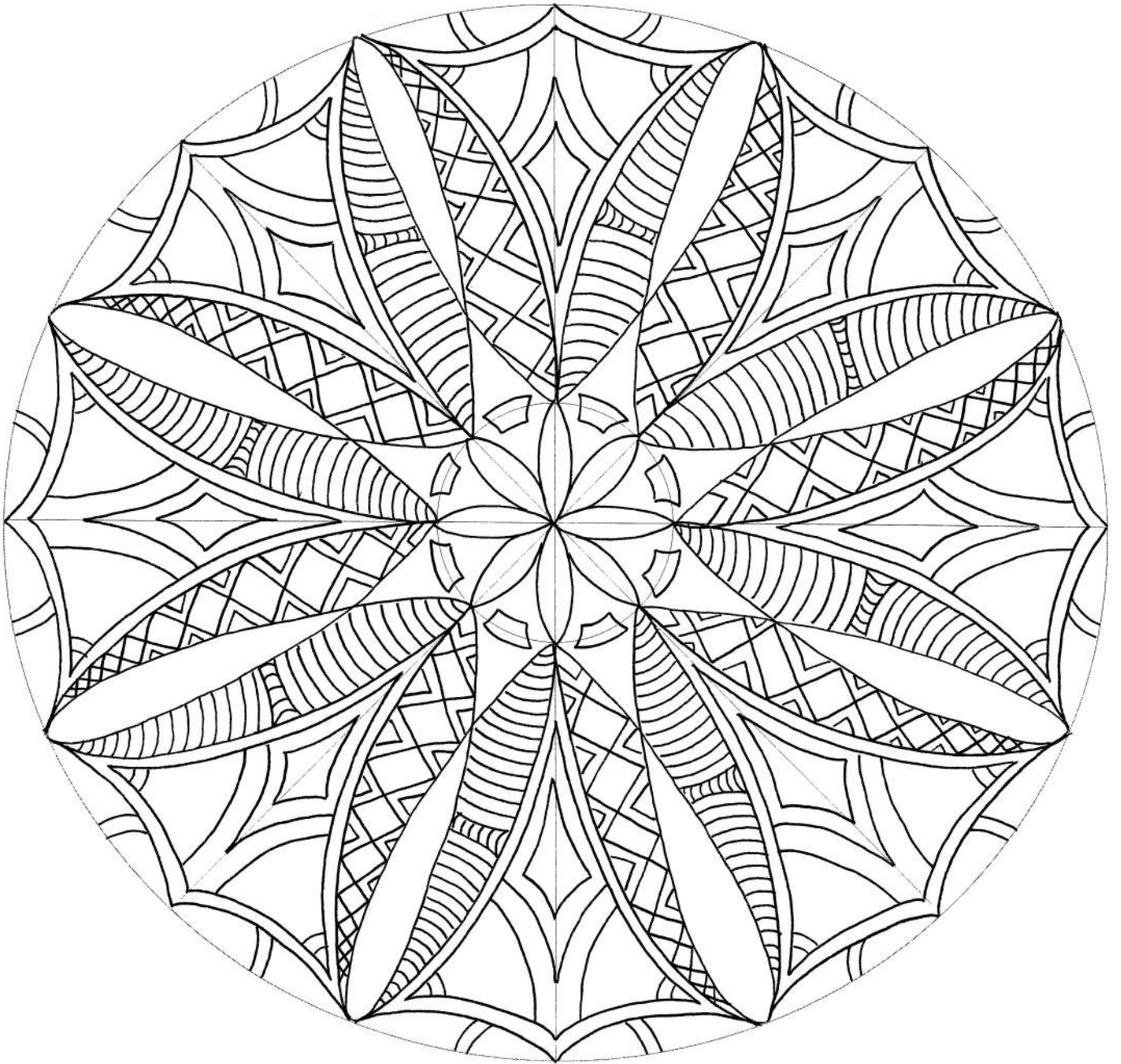


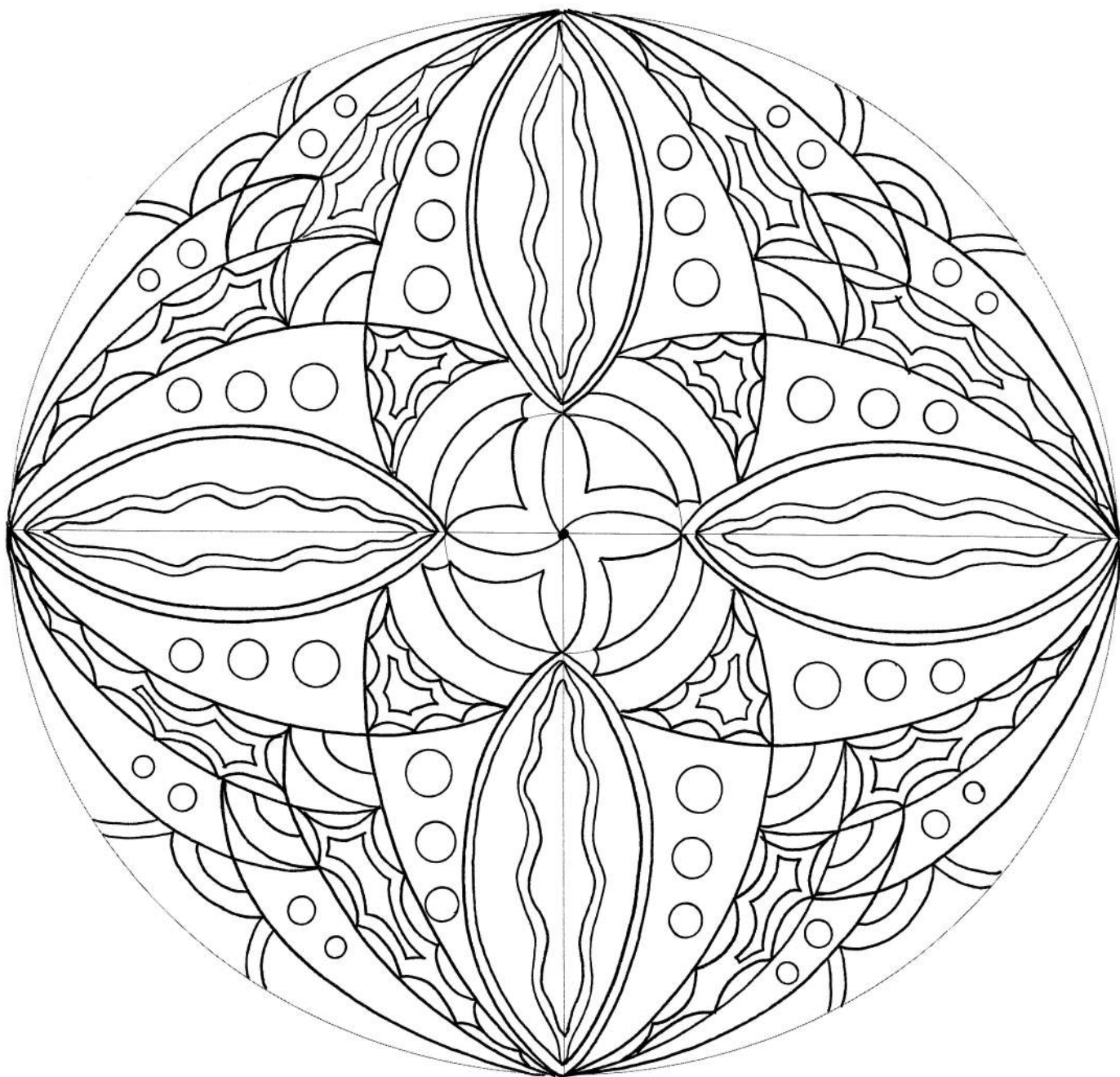


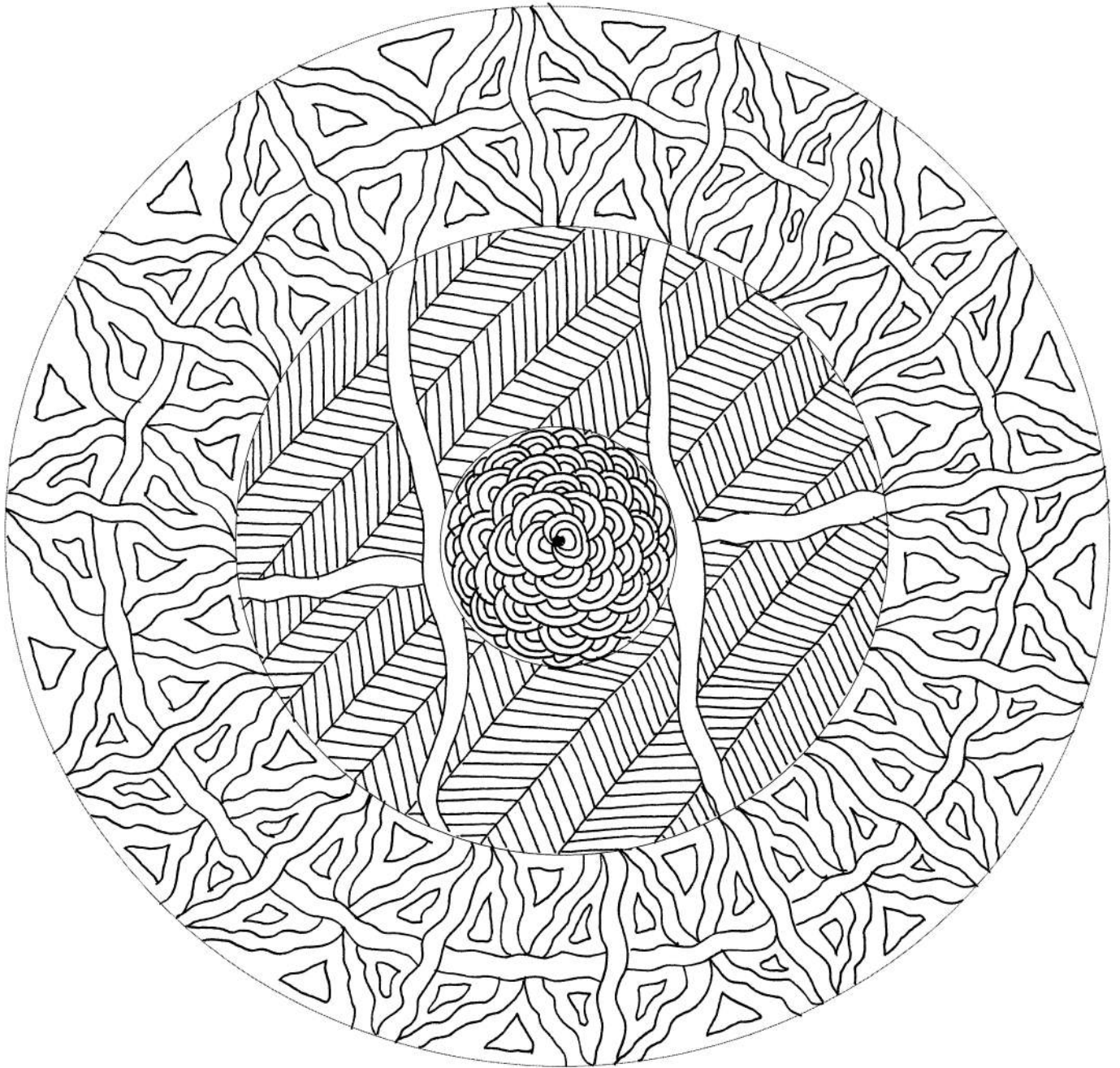


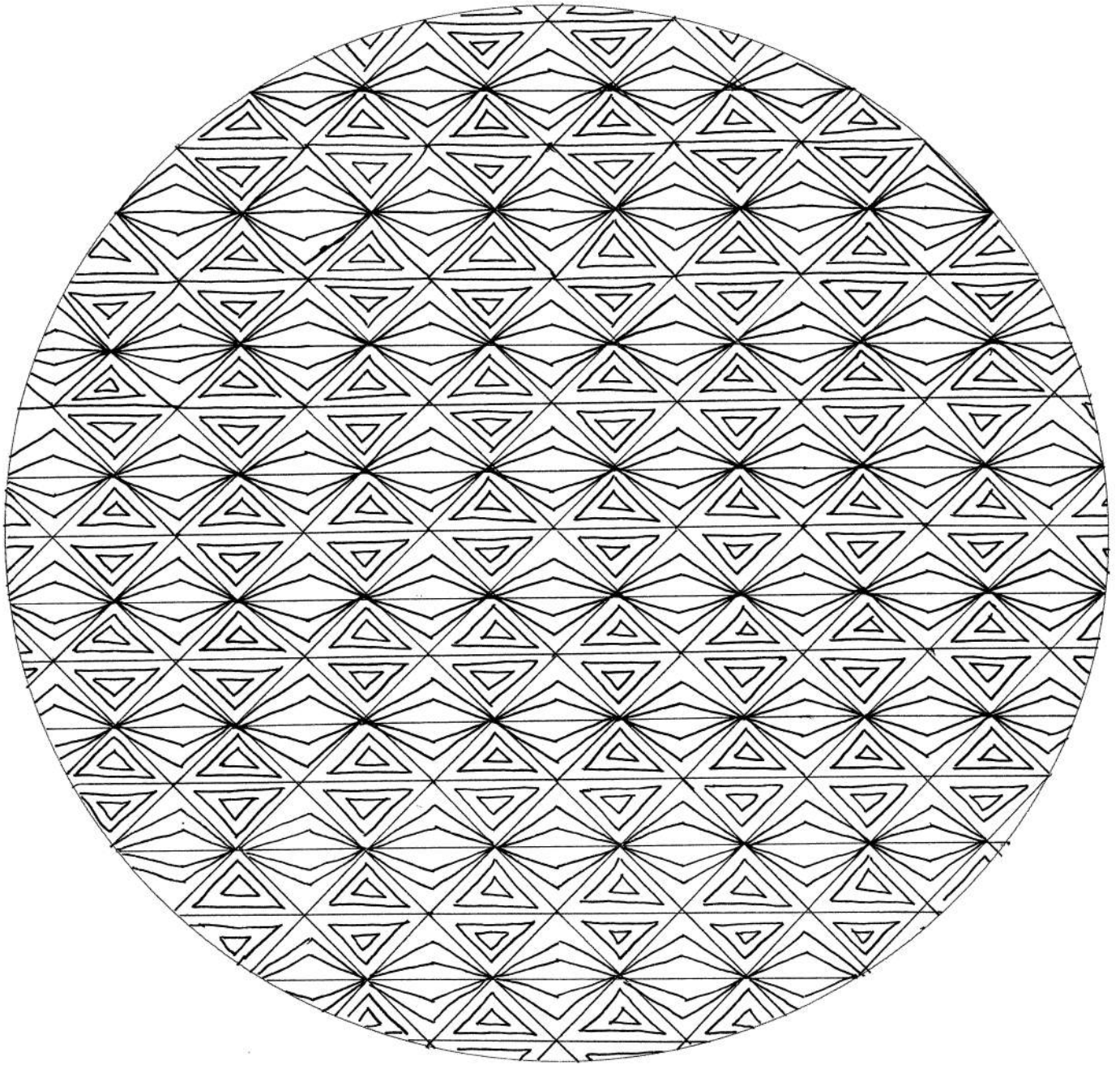


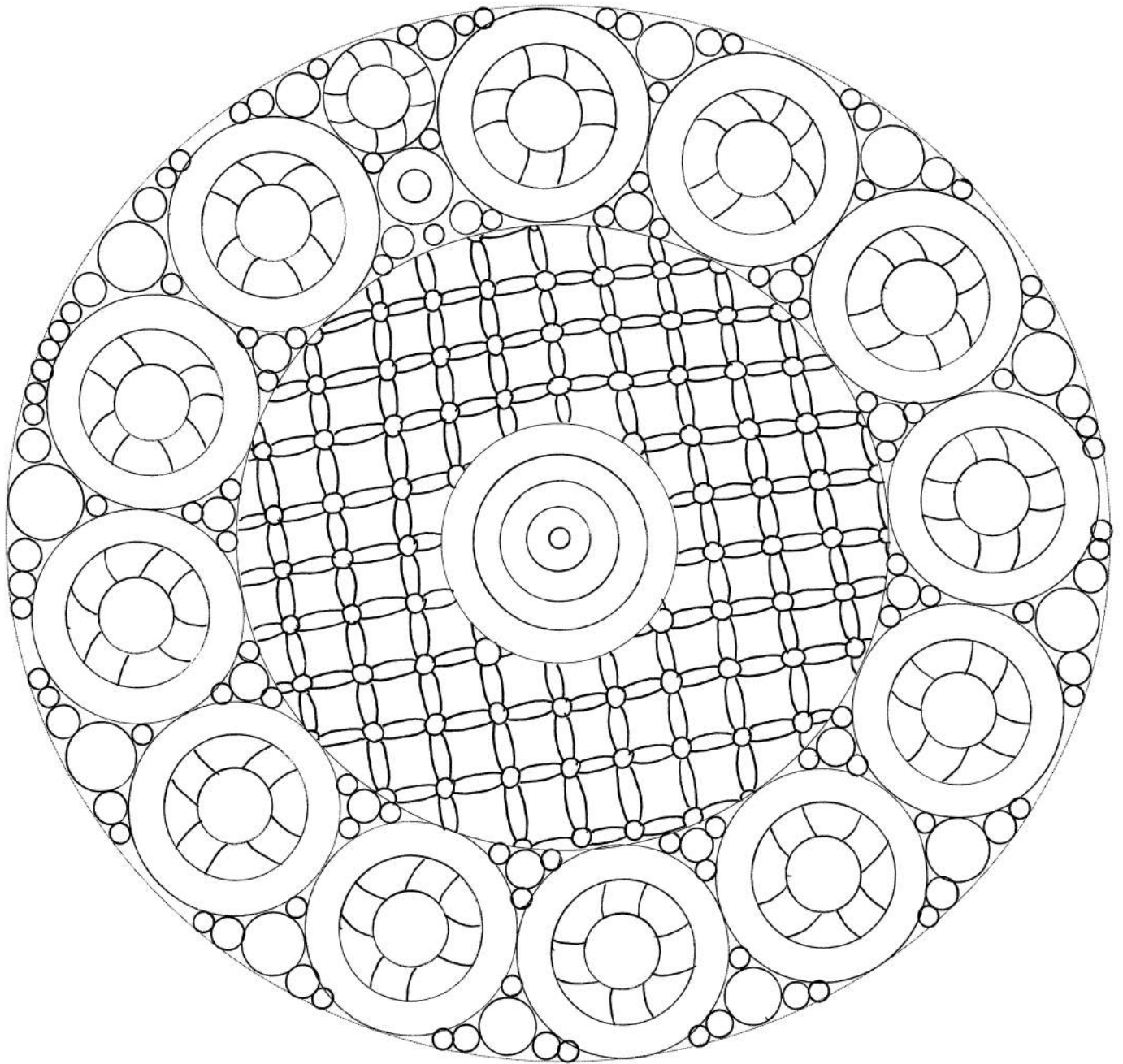


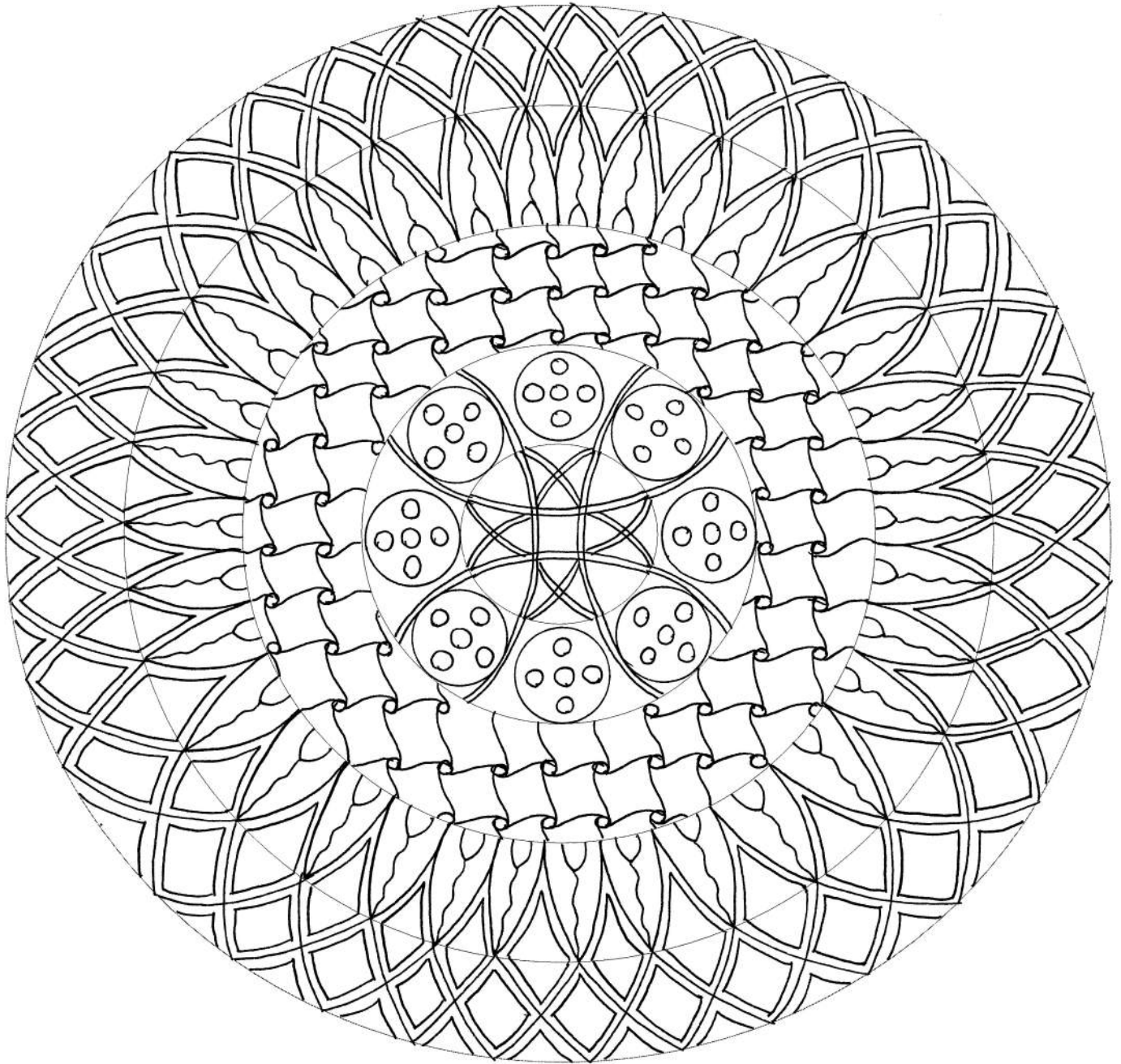




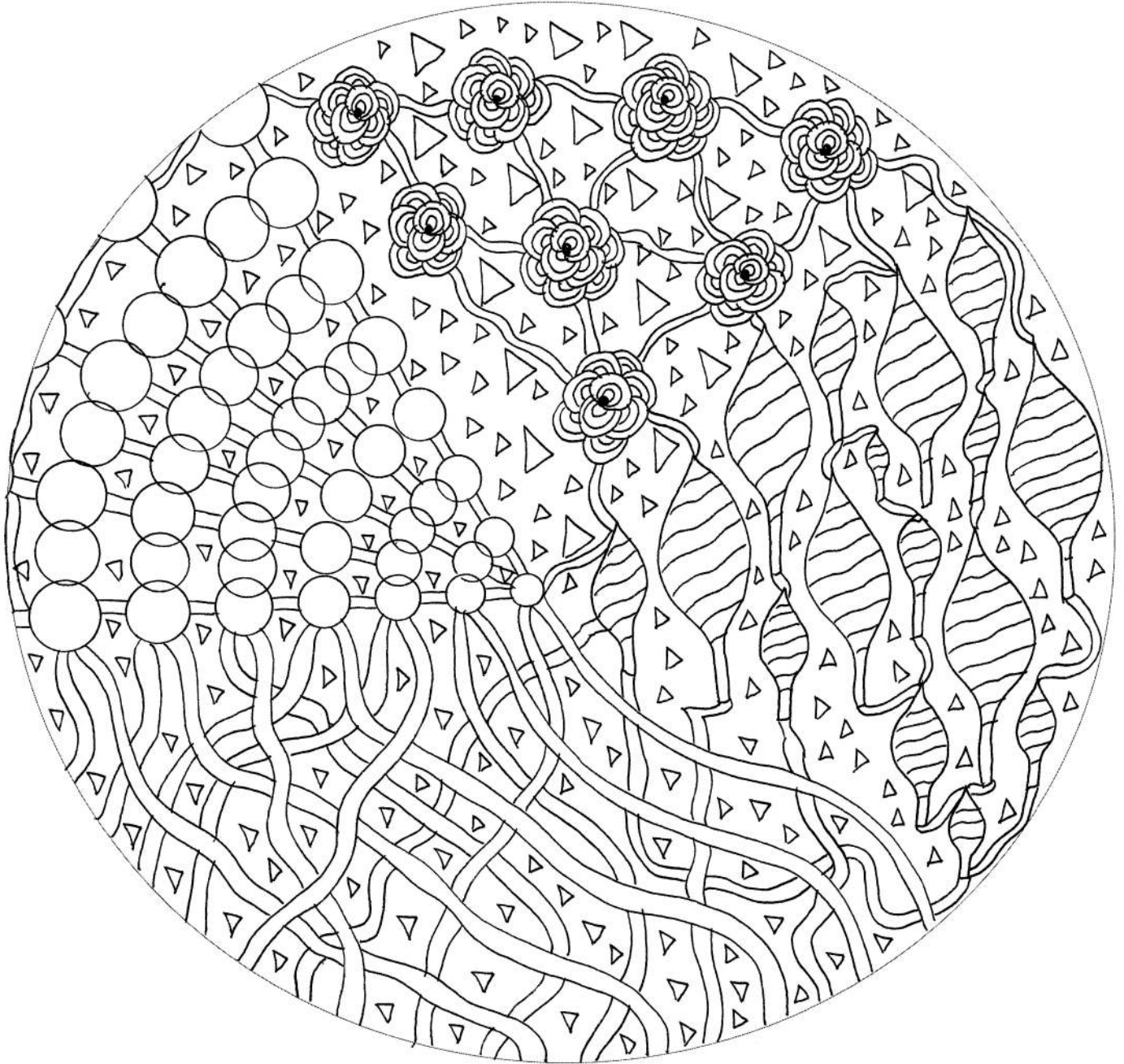


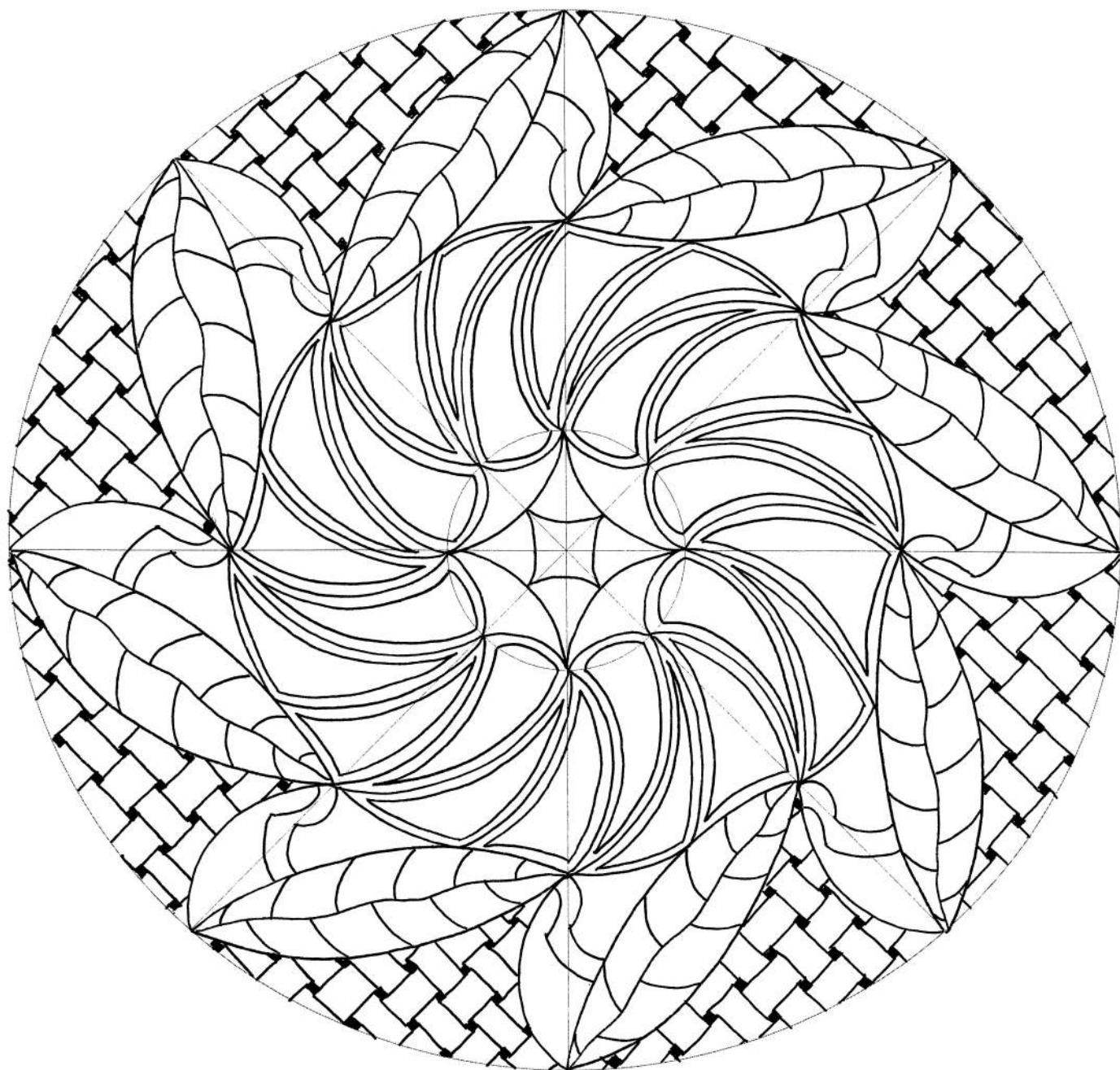


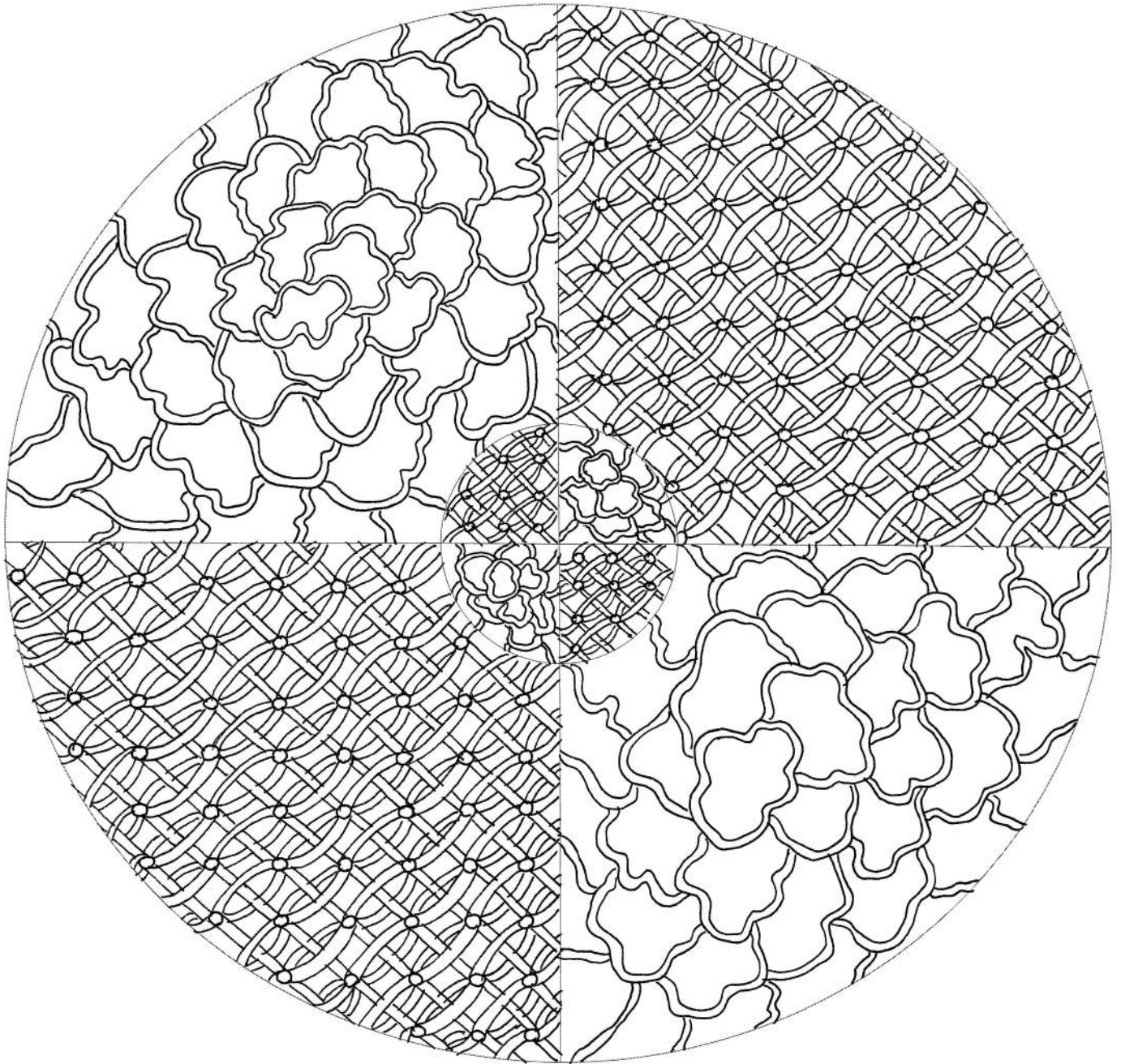


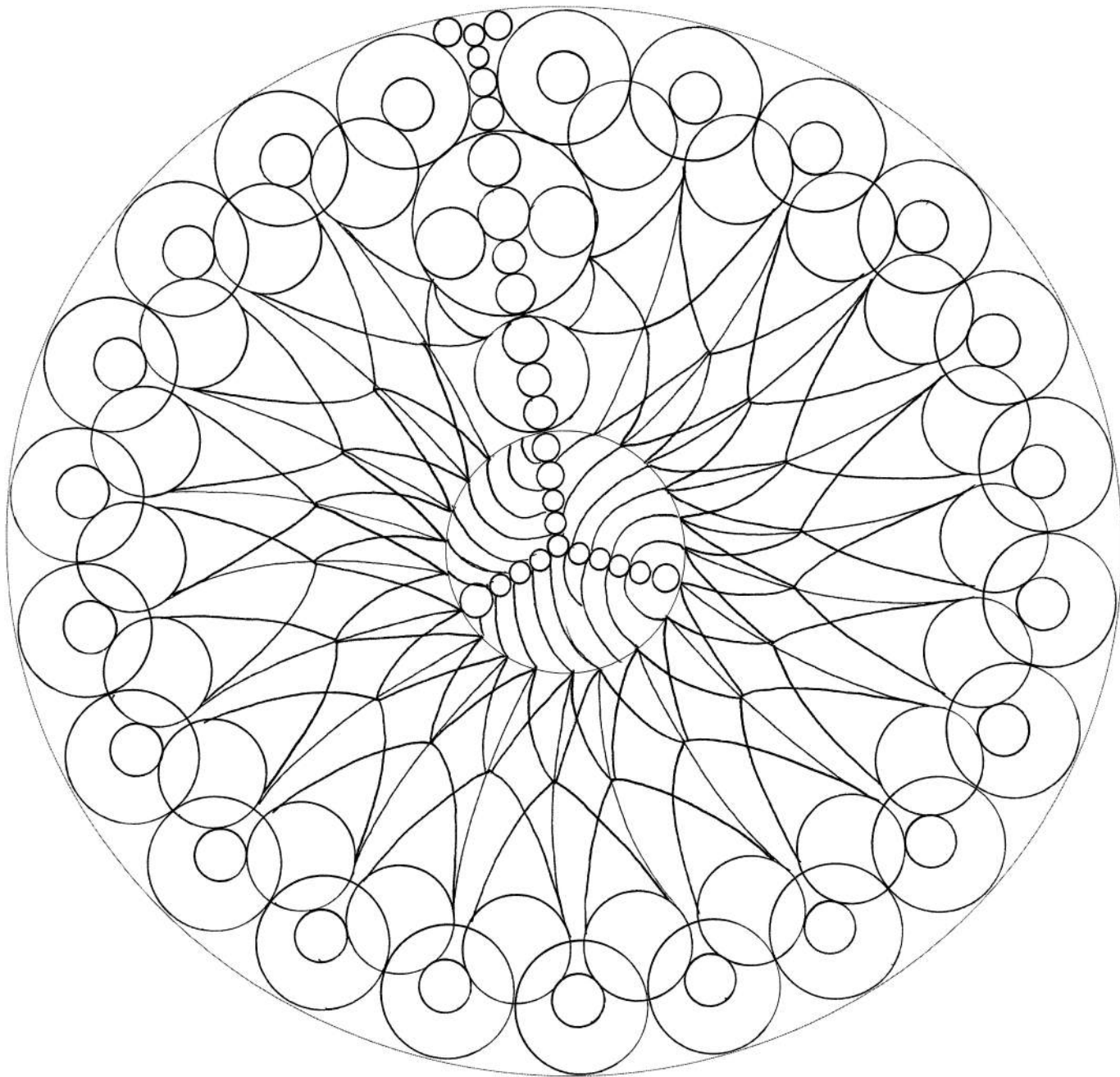


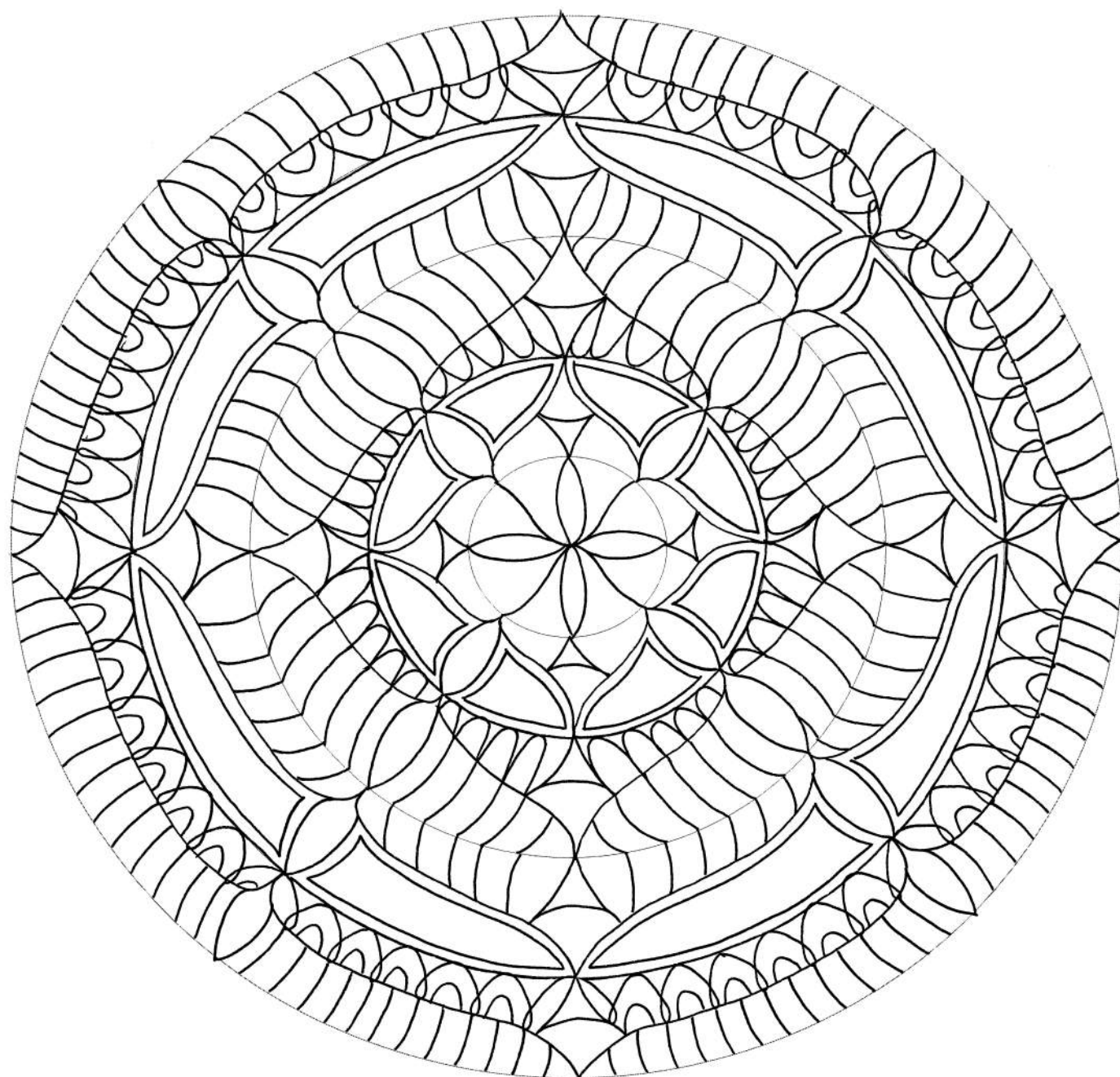


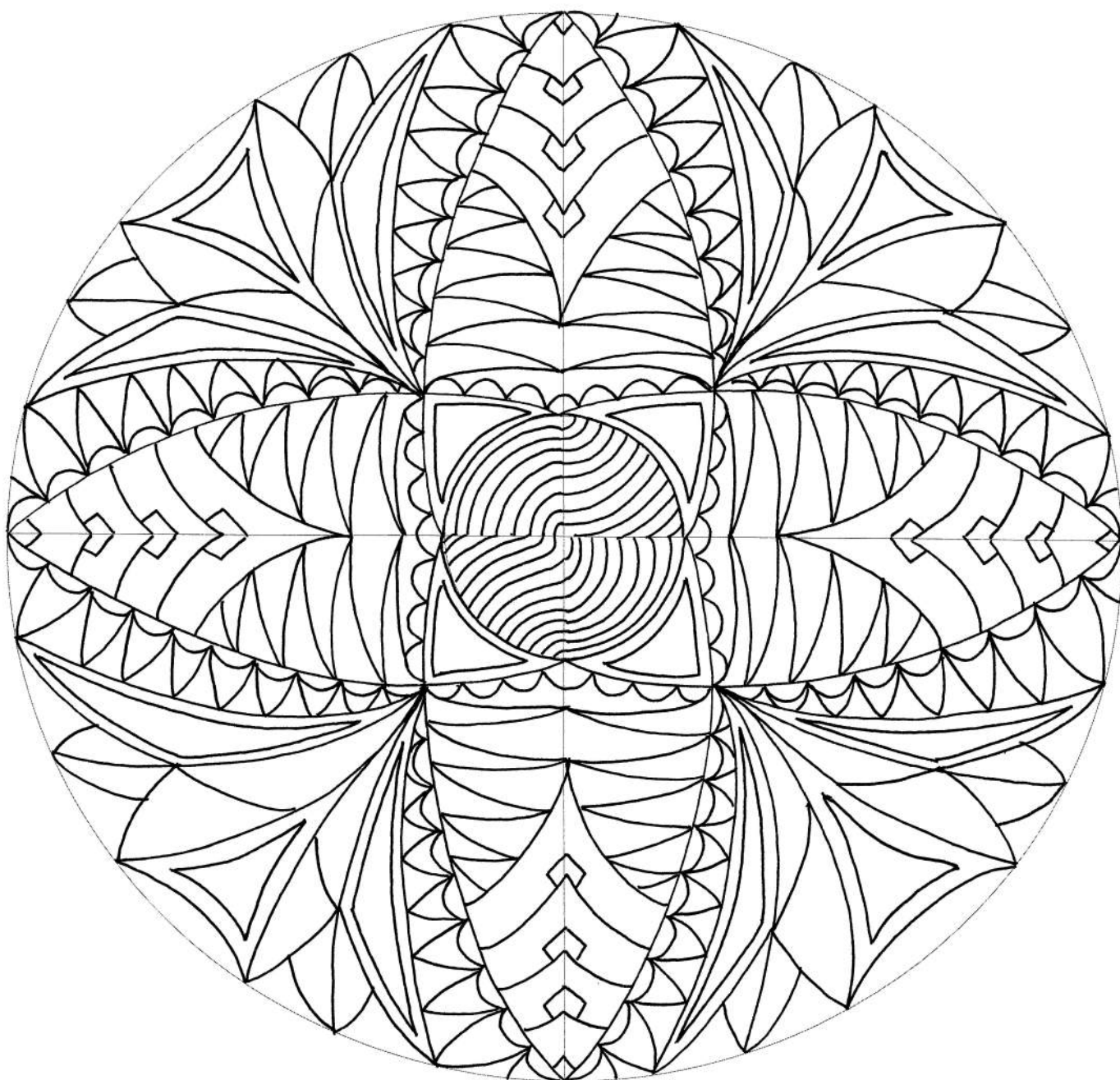


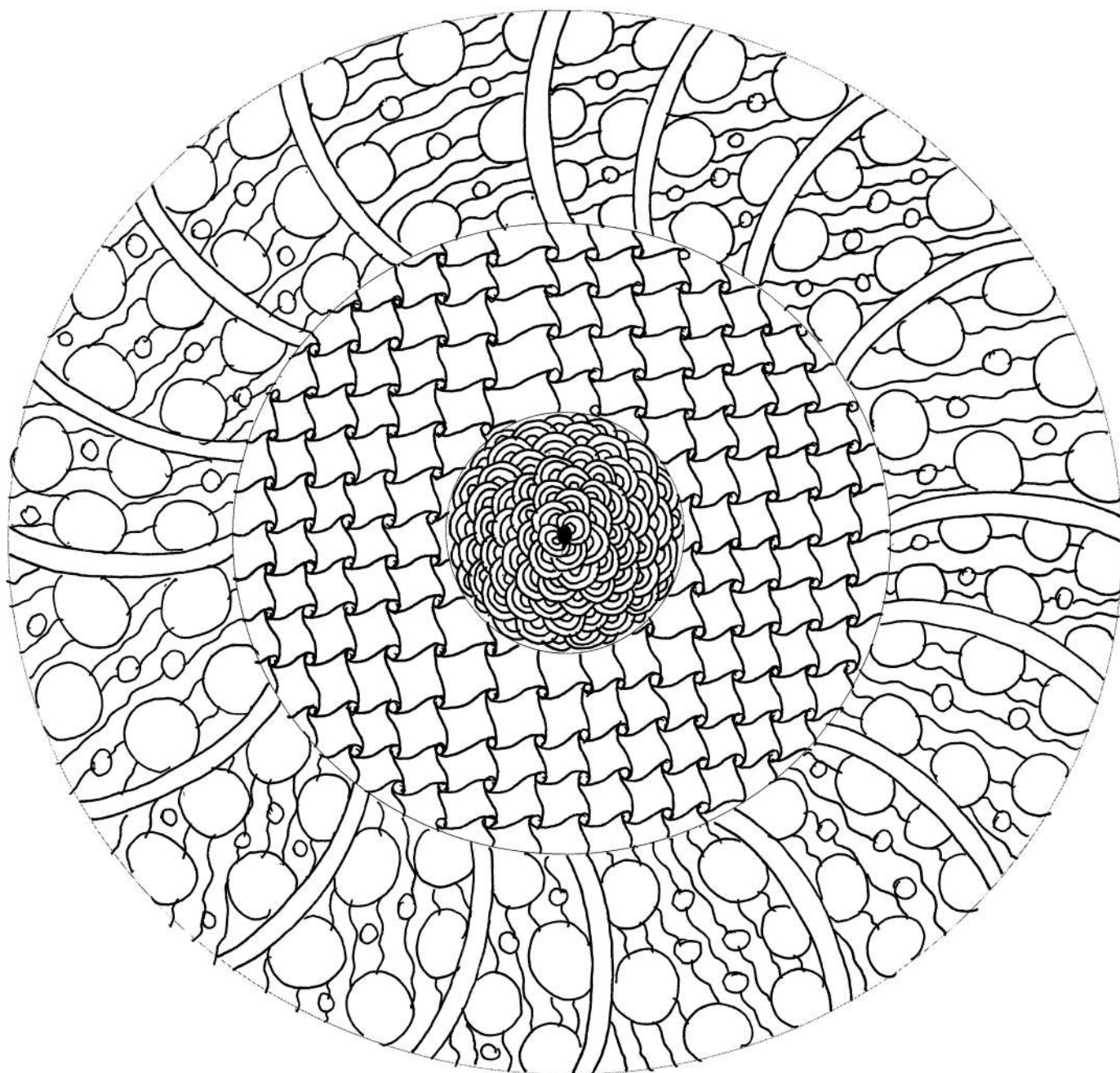


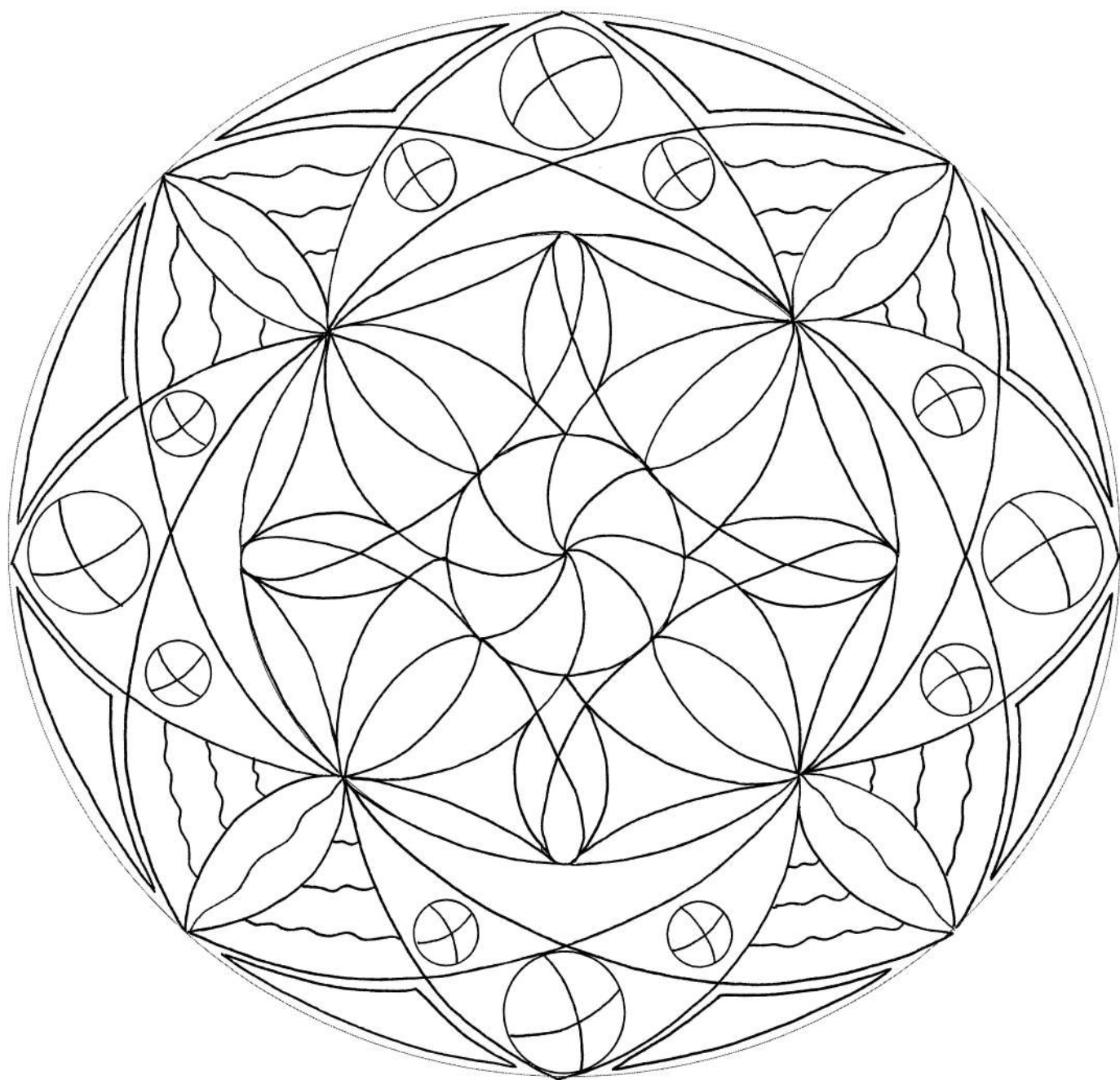


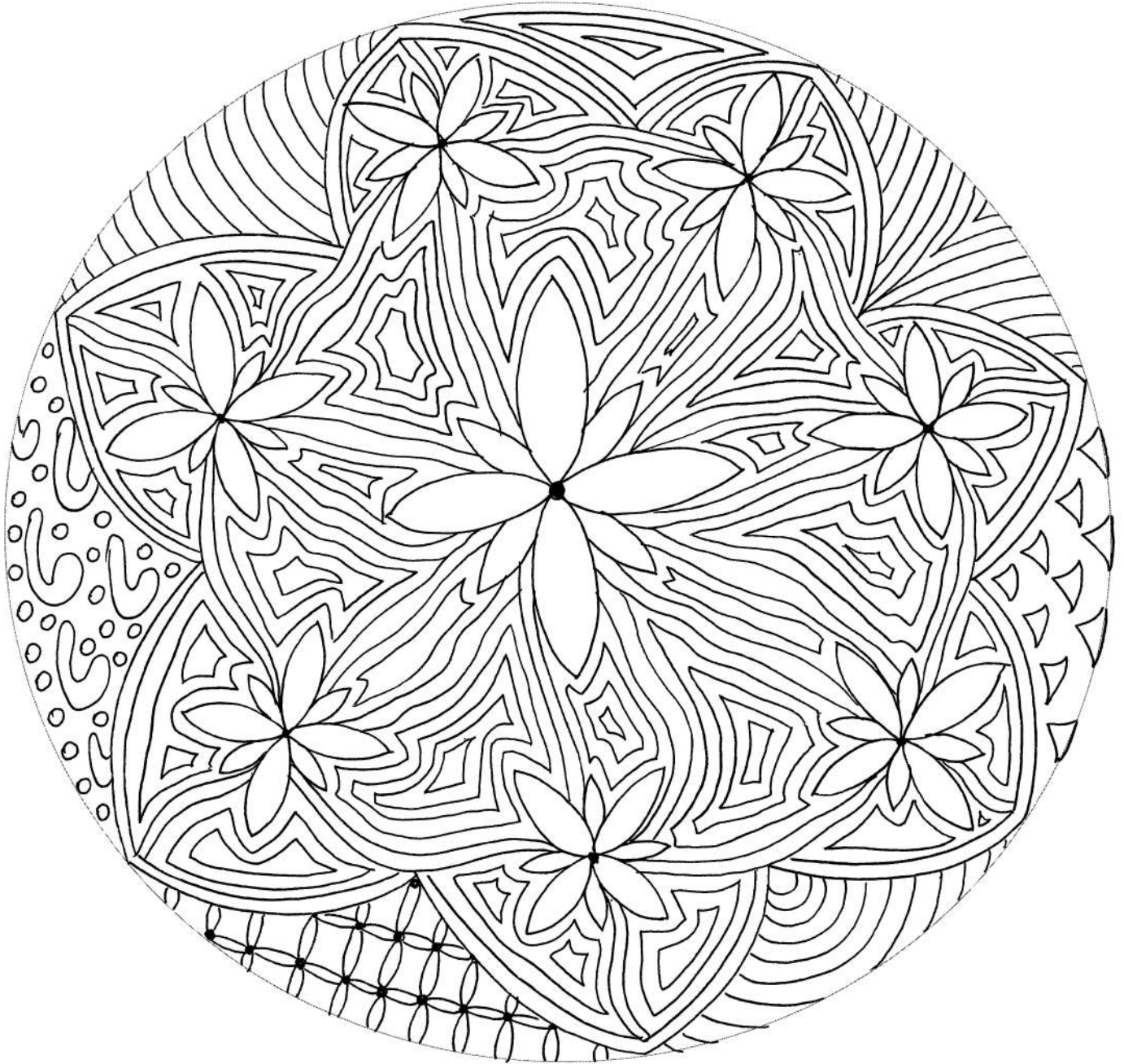


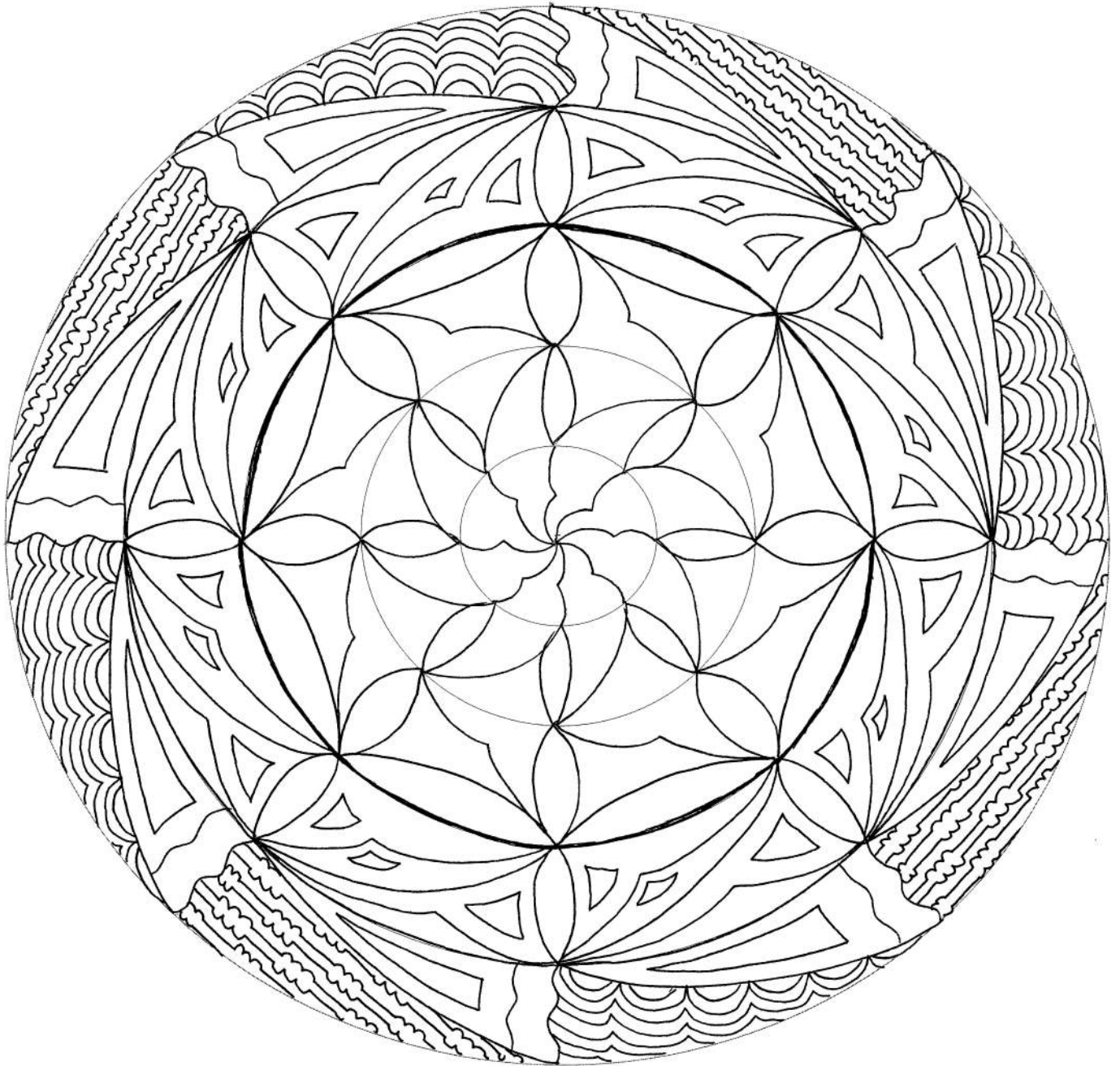


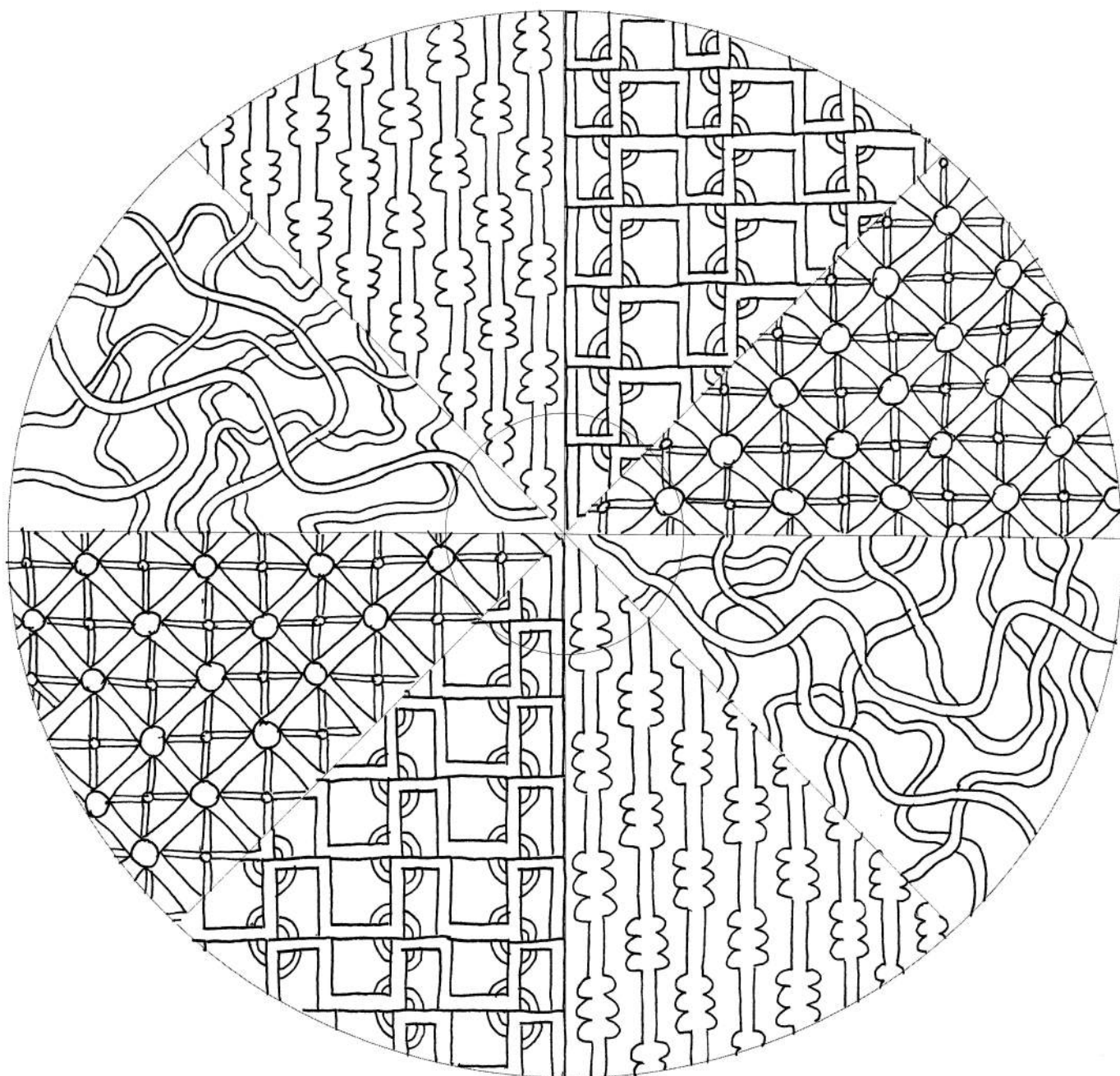


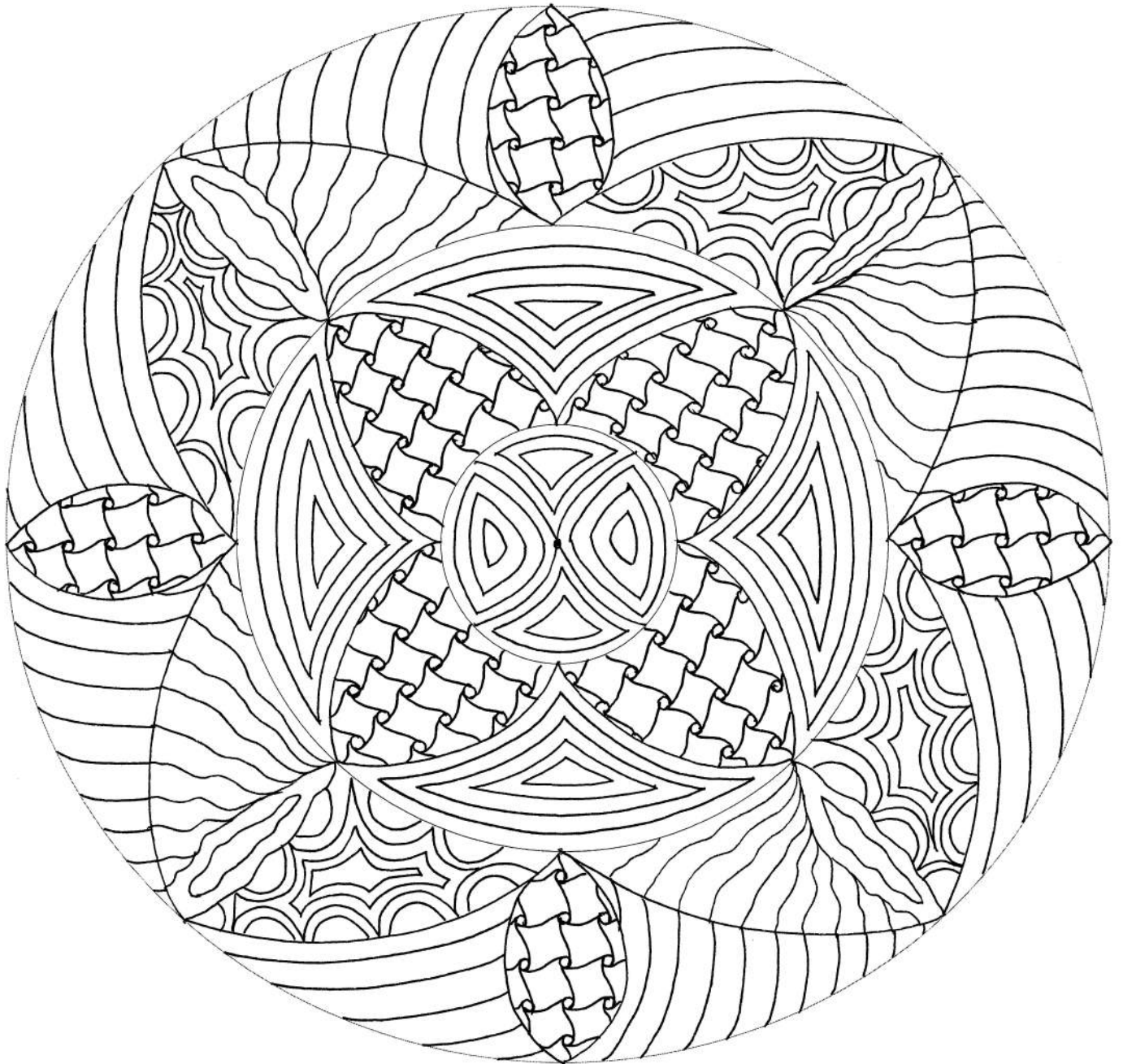


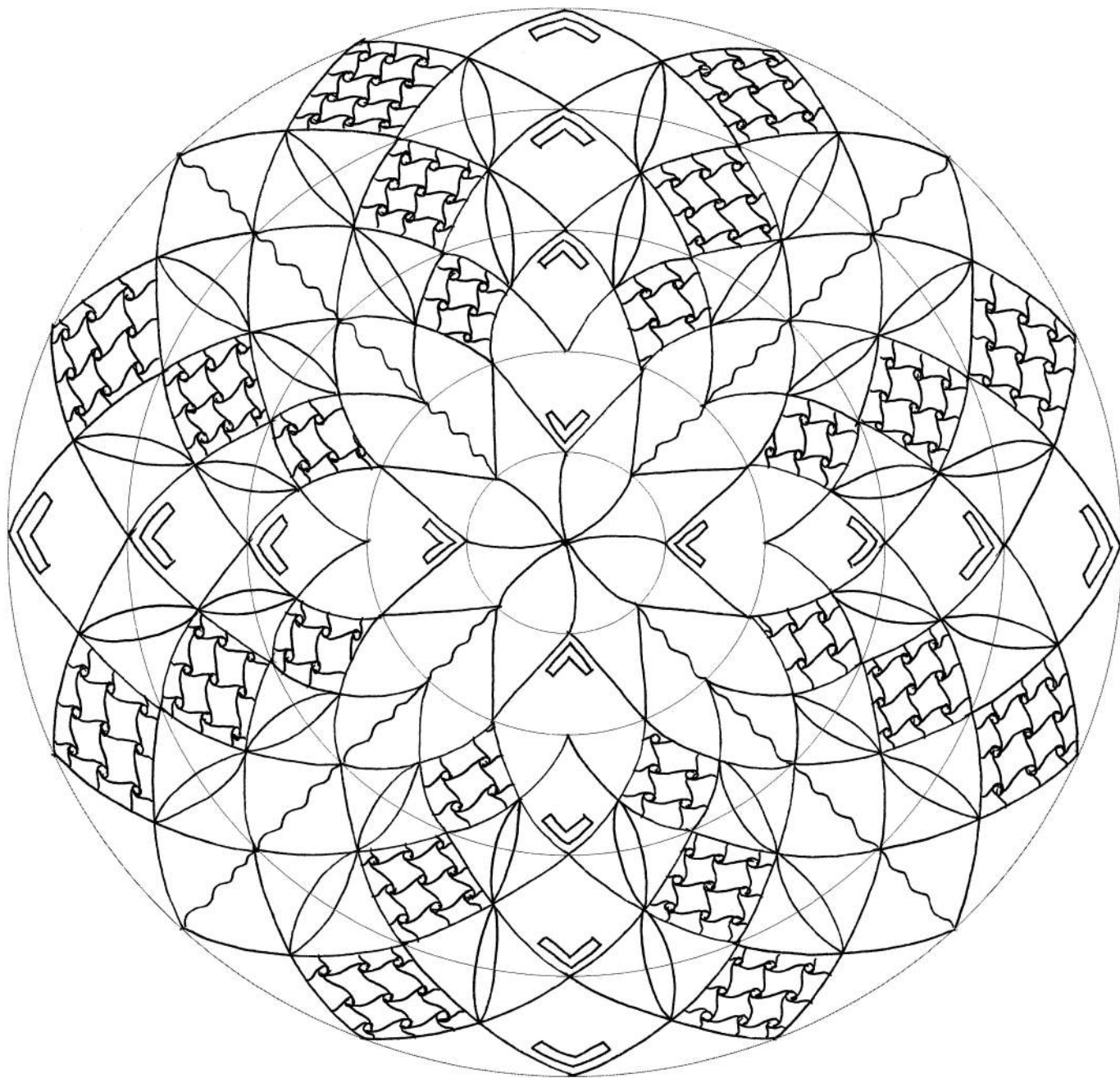


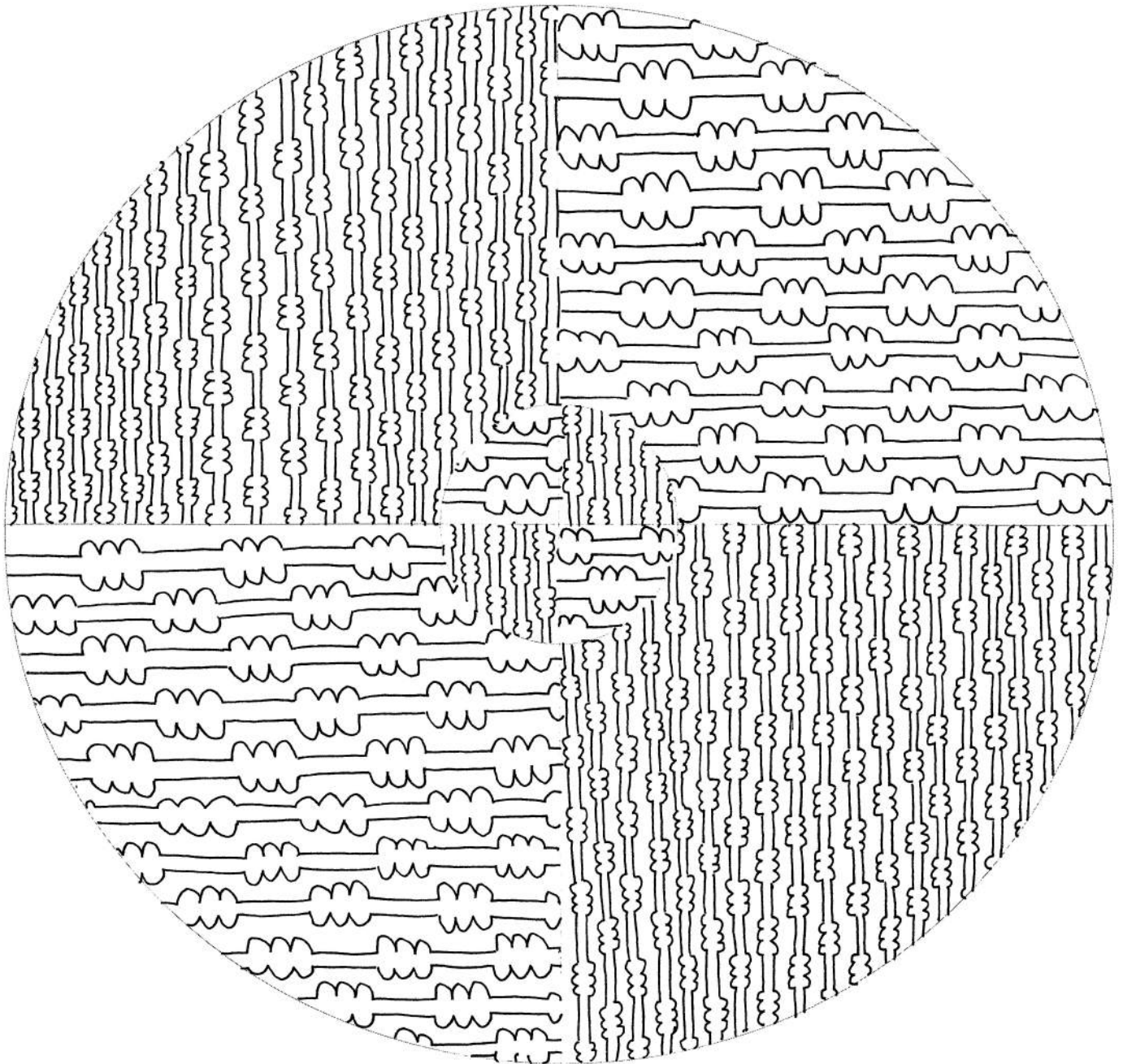


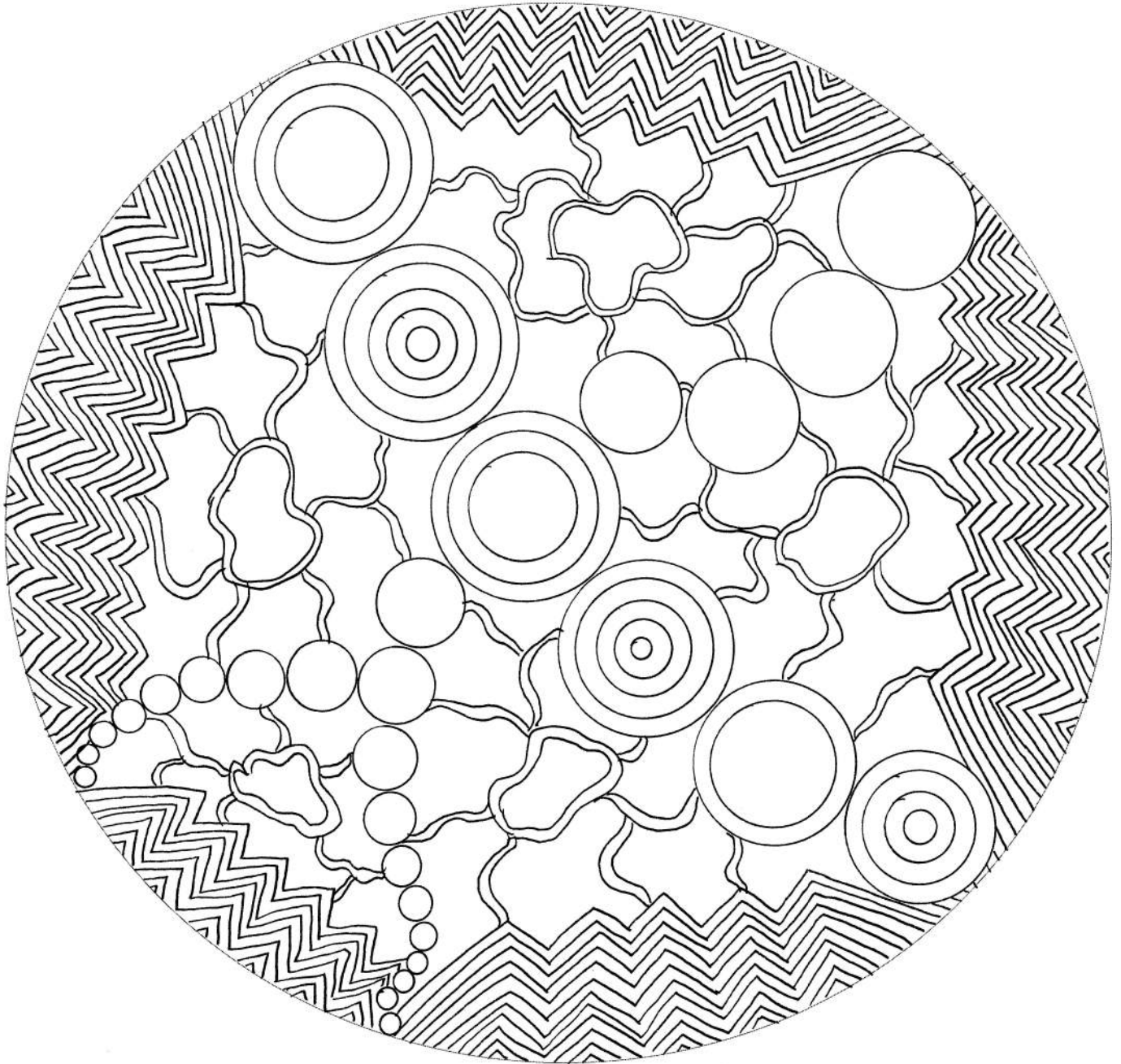


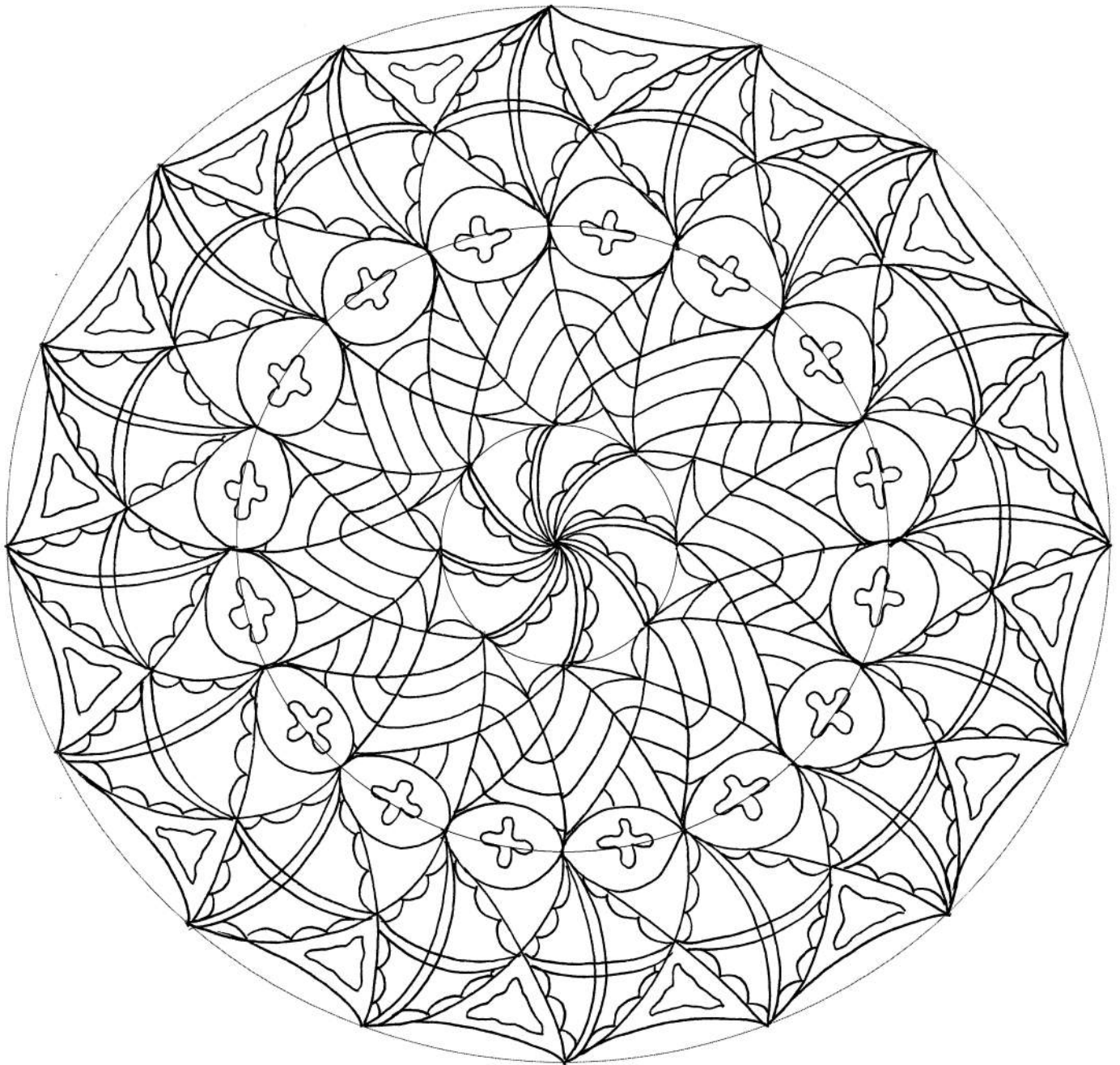


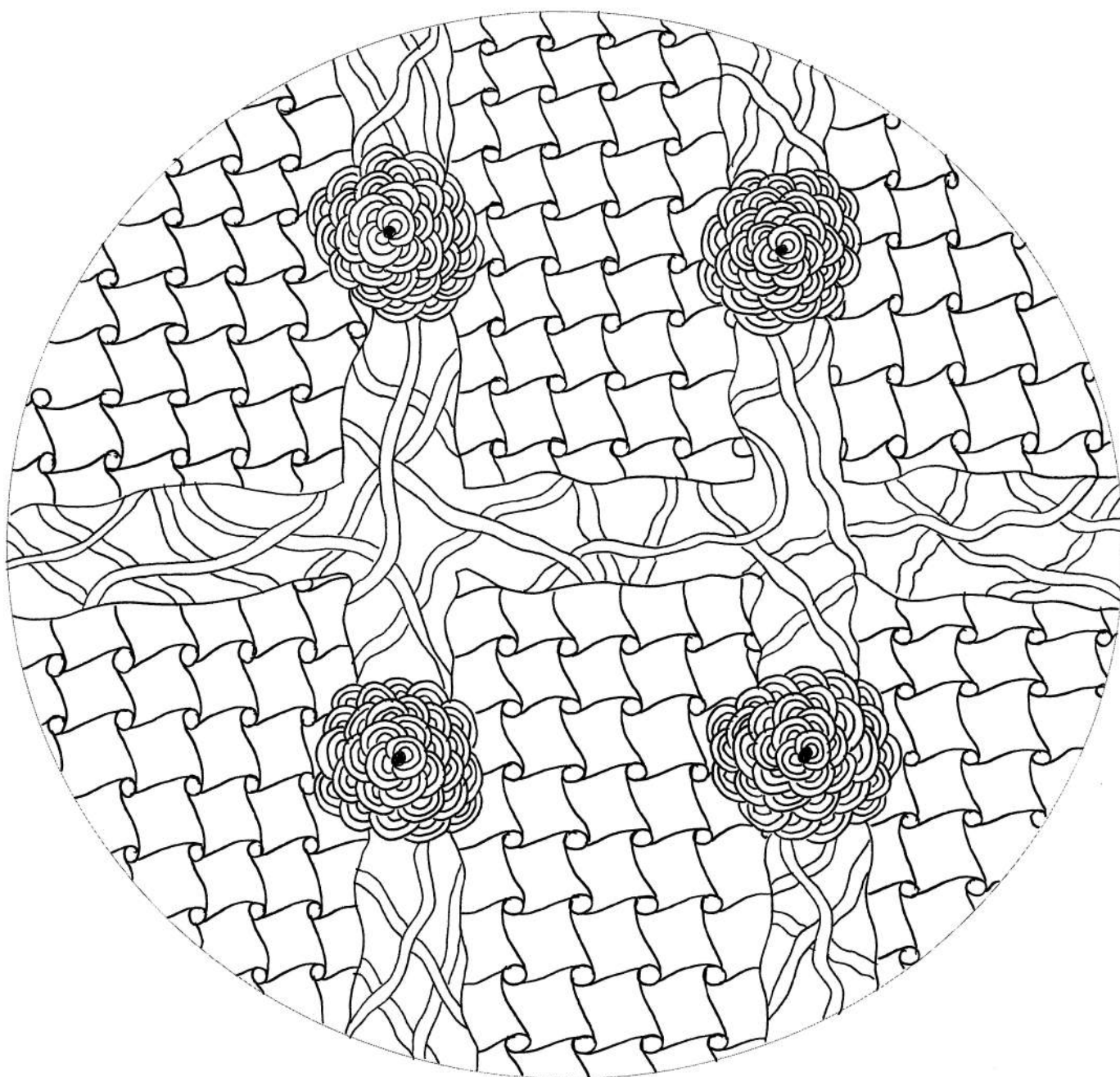


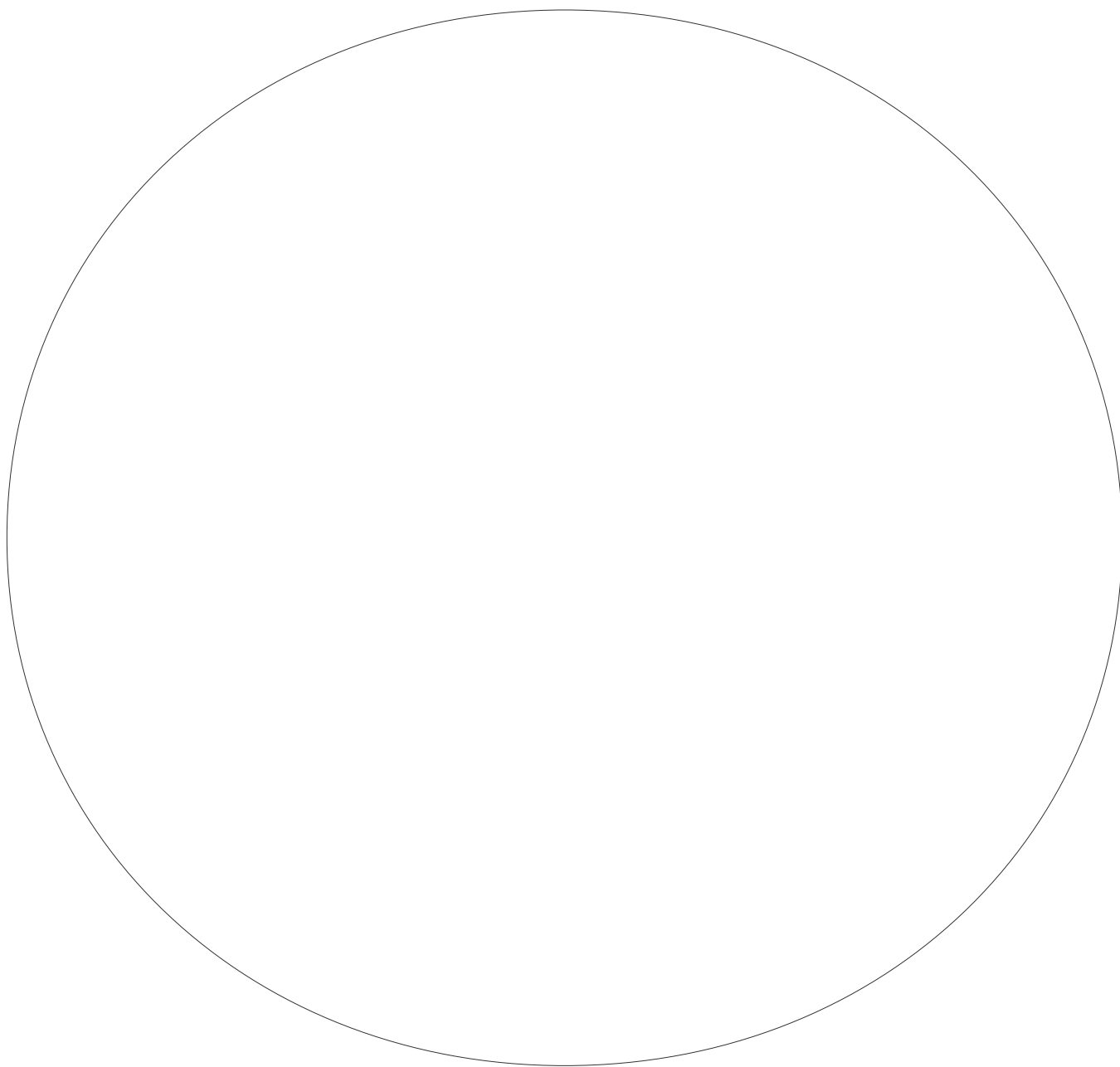




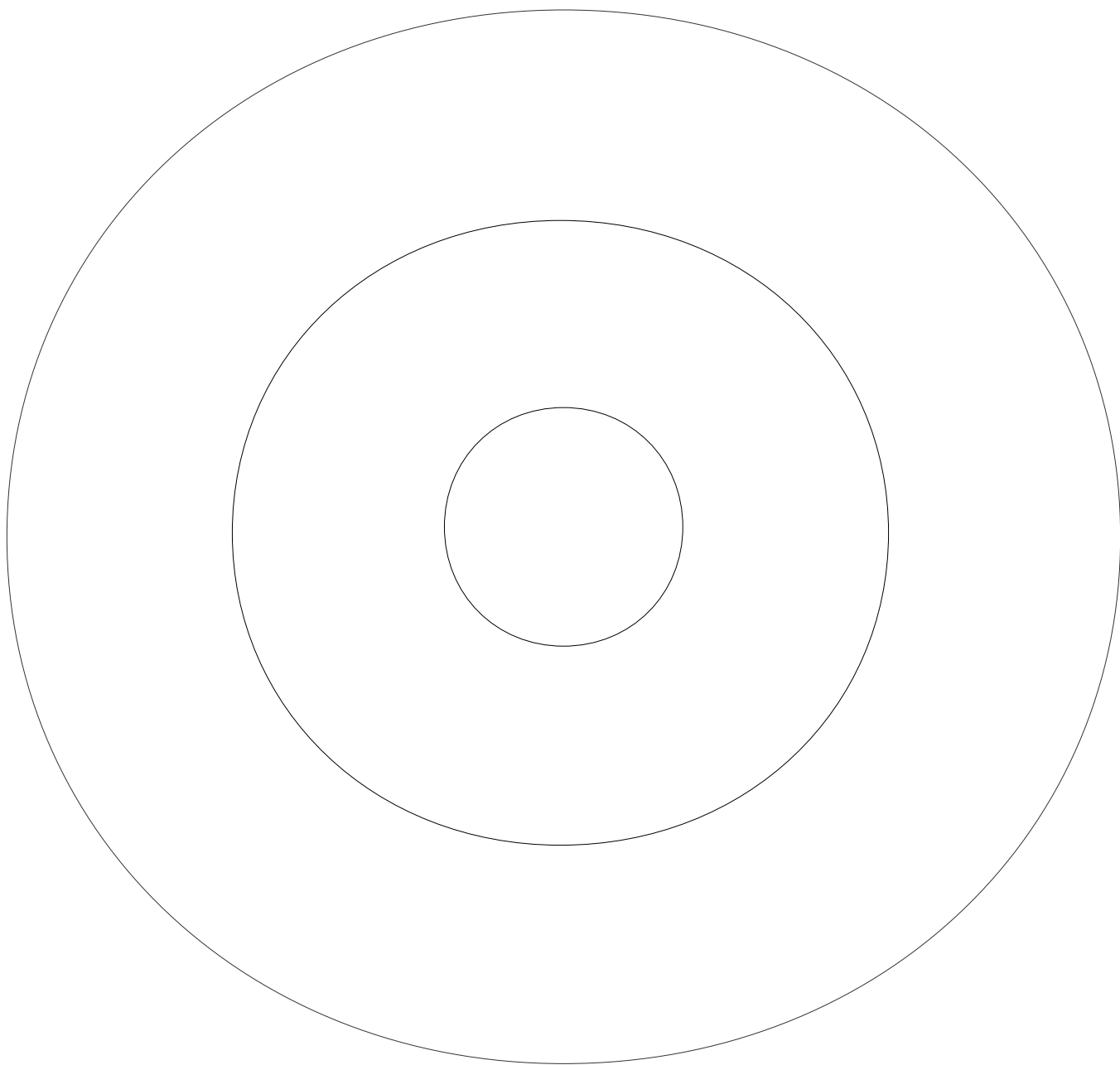


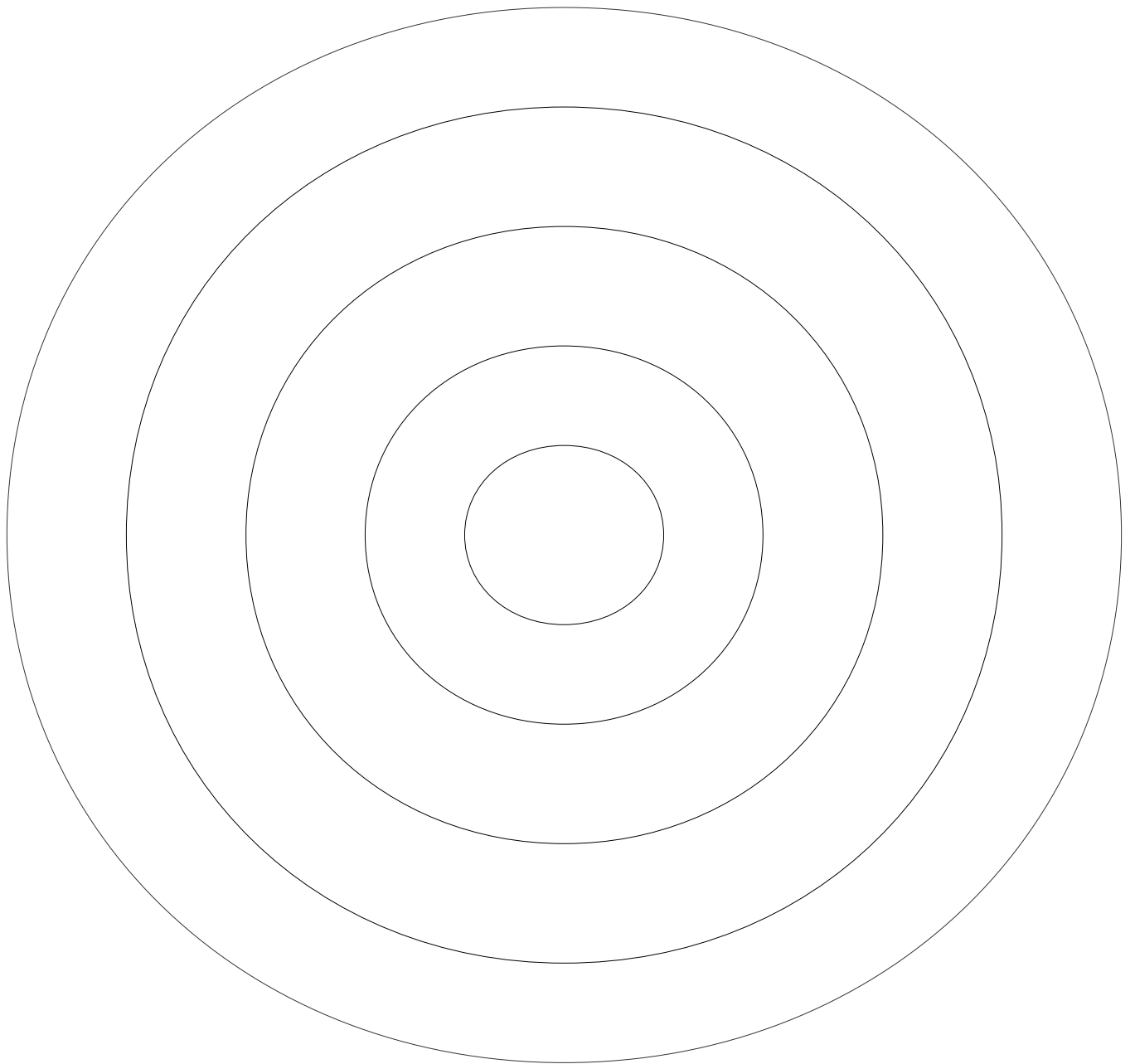


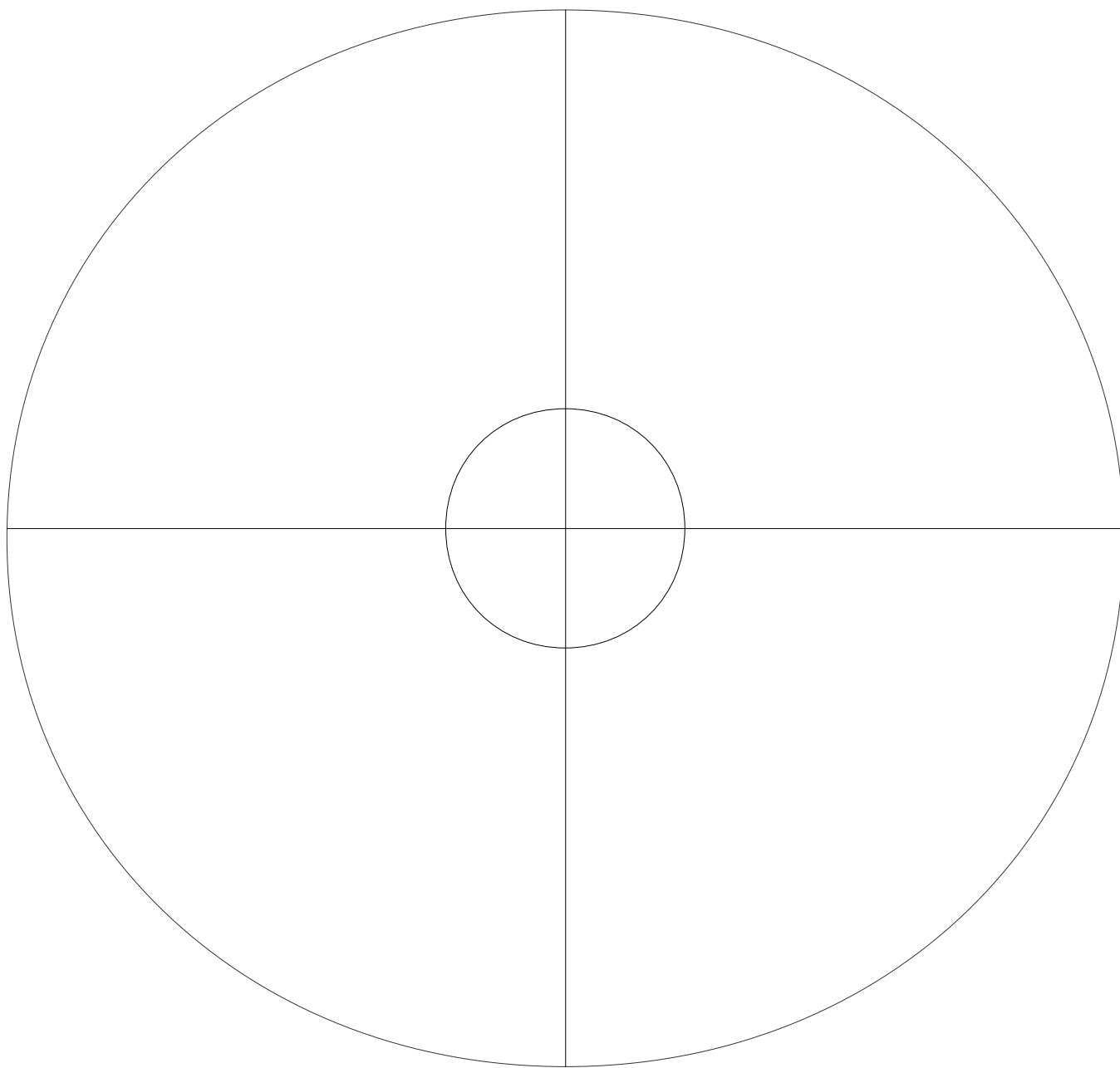


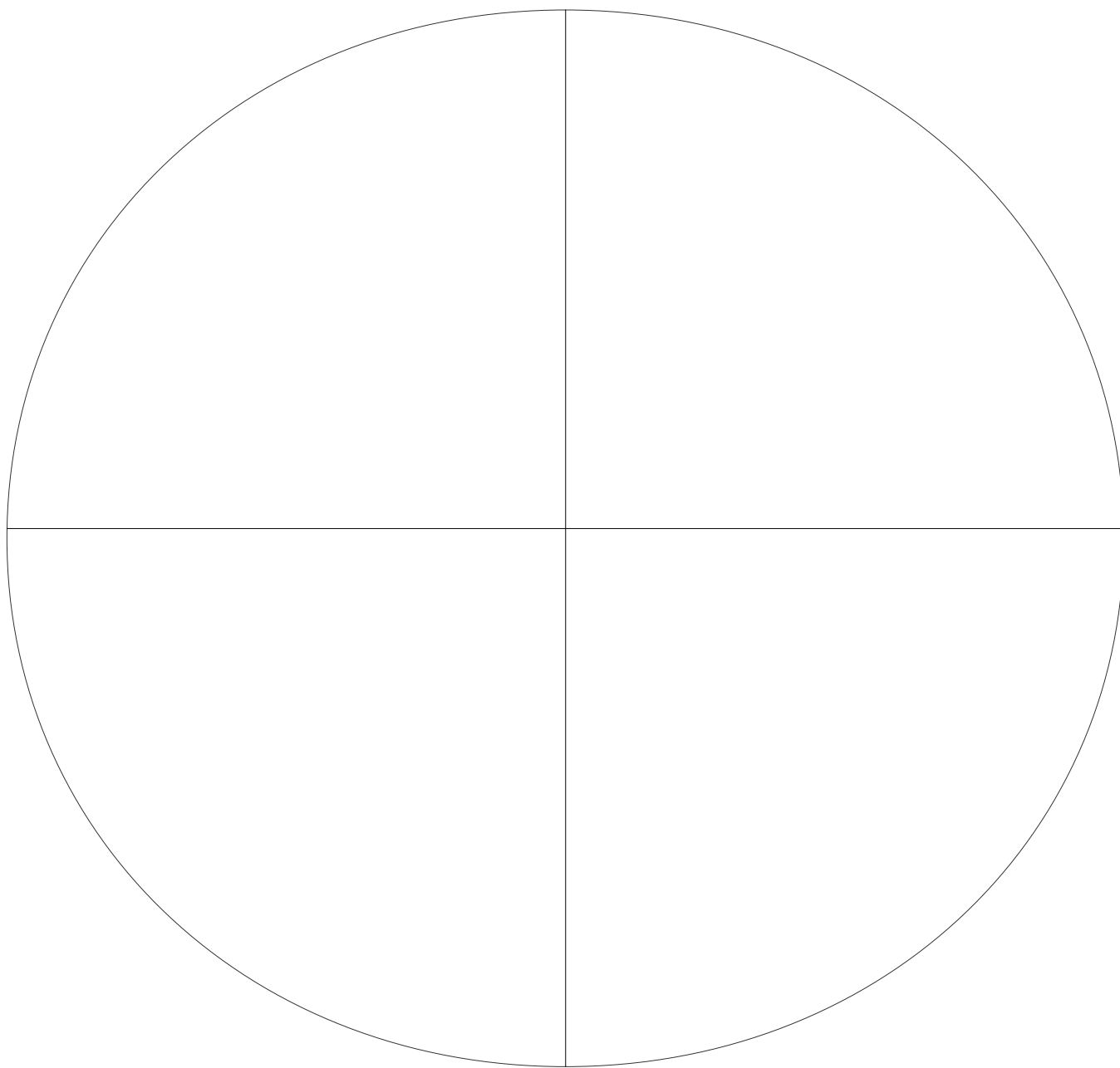


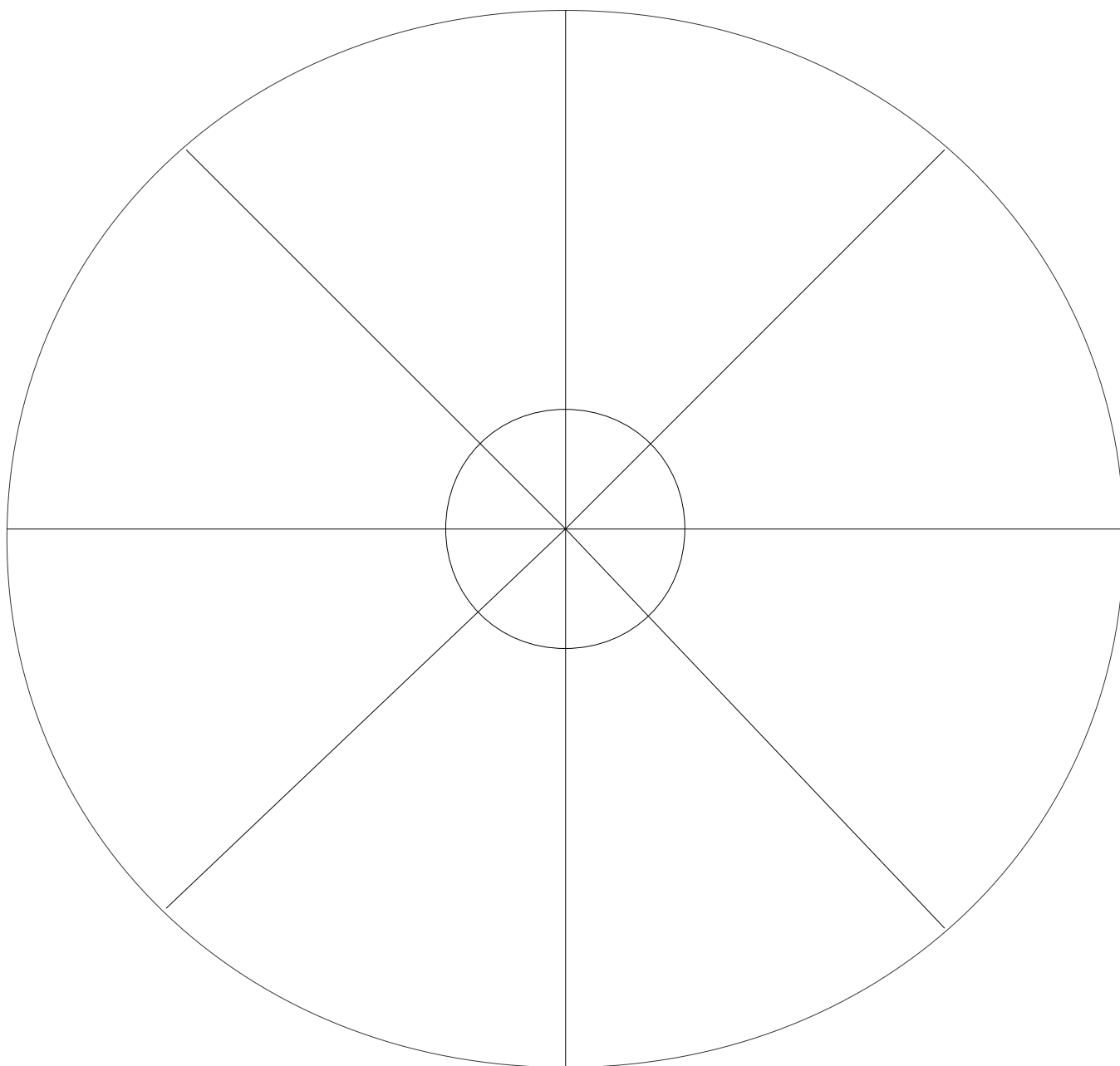


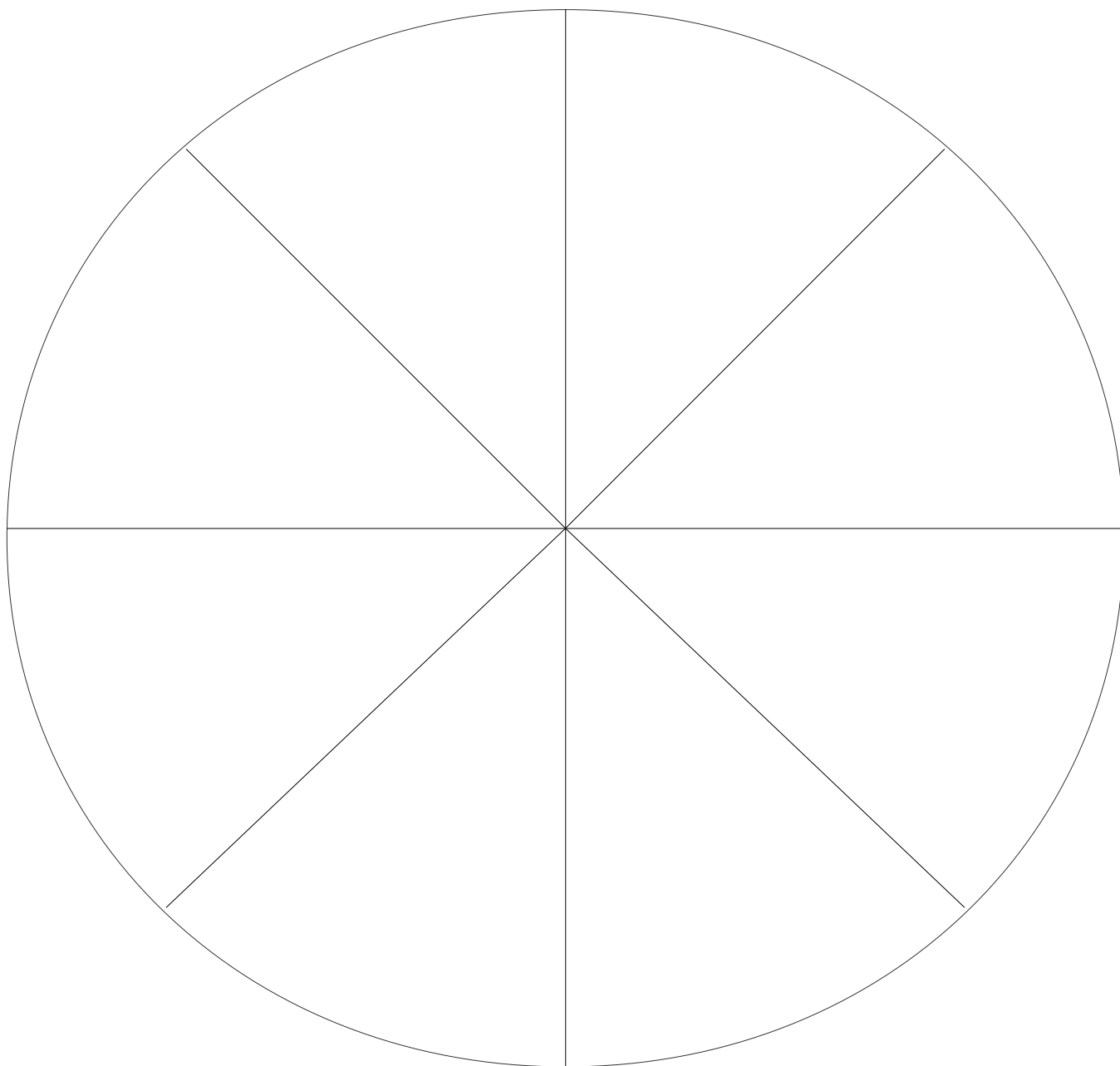












About the Author



Lisa Callinan healed from adrenal fatigue (emotional and physical burnout was the culprit) and is also a nearly recovered people pleaser. Her introvert nature could let her spend all day reading and browsing bookstores, but luckily she is also excited to write and speak about her experience with burnout and the gifts she found in the process and at the other end.

You can find her at www.healingfromburnout.com

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