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## Embracing Imperfections

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## Embracing Imperfections

### Abstract

A window into my meditation practice.

### Keywords

STEAM, Art-science, meditation, art making

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## Embracing Imperfection

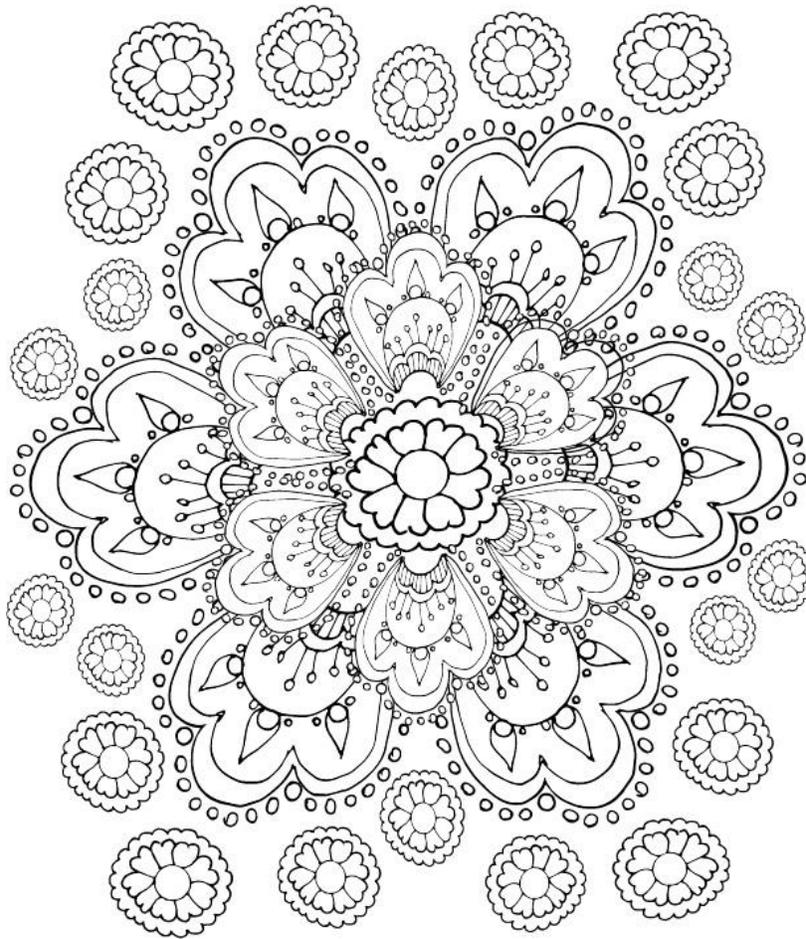
*Raja Gopal Bhattar*

Growing up I was taught in school that art and science are about perfection and precision -- which fed perfectly into my insecurities – leading me to pursue subjects far from art or traditional sciences. It was not until I was well into my twenties that I learned to embrace my own creativity by learning how to breathe. While I’ve been breathing on my own since birth, it was through the work of Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk and activist Thich Nhat Hanh who taught me the power of mindful breathing. I was complaining to a friend about my struggle with meditation; silent meditation being extremely difficult for my hyperactive mind. She suggested I read and watch videos of this monk making art and I was hooked. I remember



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reading about how he would spend time everyday meditating while making art, combining mindful breathing with calligraphy.



I took the nearest pen I could find and started doodling in similar fashion. The simple act of breathing became not just a science of bodily coordination but an opportunity to witness the possibility of this moment. Being aware of my breath with each stroke of the pen and allowing the pen to draw, rather than leading from my brain was a new experience. I

noticed the fear of making mistakes creeping in and my brain wanting to take over. Thankfully I kept breathing and meditating on one of my favorite quotes by Thich Nhat Hanh, “I have arrived, I am home. Being in this moment, I know this is a wonderful moment.”

Go ahead and take a moment to notice your own breath and repeat this statement. What do you notice around you when you slow down? What do you notice within you?

When I stopped to notice my breath, I realized that science and art spring from the same human desire for connection within and around us. As scientists, artists and educators, we embrace the world by making sense of what we perceive and creating the world we have yet to

envision. We are the  
seekers of the best kind.

Seeking connections  
and relationships with  
everything around and  
within us. Our world is  
not made of perfections,  
but by a series of  
beautiful mistakes and  
happenstances. And my  
art has become my  
conversation with what  
perceive and what I  
envision. Art has



become a new language of communicating feelings, ideas and experiences into a more universal language.

What began as a weekend doodling has become a series of coloring books grounded in mindful breathing and reflection helping others find the connection between science and art. In fact, I've discovered the best artists and scientists in my life are my nieces, nephews and niblings (gender inclusive term) ranging from 2-7 years old. Their ability to find beauty in this moment, making art, breathing and discovering the wonder of it all is truly inspiring. From watching these young children, I've learned to not worry so much about coloring within the lines or erasing

imperfections from my artwork, in fact now I'm learning to embrace them as connections that bridge my creativity and the world around me.

Science and art are not about perfection. The most impactful scientific discoveries and artistic expressions have come from unexpected imperfections. Being open to these imperfections allows us to find joy in this moment and witness all the connections between science, art and the world around us.

