

Walking the Labyrinth



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Based on the circle or spiral, the labyrinth is an ancient and powerful symbol of wholeness and transformation. There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth. One time honored way:

Journey In: Releasing

Walking toward the center you are invited to let go, release, relinquish, to become open and empty. Focusing on each step can help you quiet, let go of the details of life and open to the journey.

The Center: Receiving

The center is a place of receiving, prayer, meditation, illumination. At the center wait in silence. Listen to the sounds around and within you. Receive energy, new insight, serenity or whatever is there for you.

Journey Out: Returning

To leave the center, you retrace the path that brought you in. Carry with you whatever you received at the center. Join God by joining the inner and outer worlds. Walking out commits and strengthens you to carry the Divine presence into the world.

Ancient Way

In ancient times the labyrinth was a symbol of the divine womb. Entering it and returning from it were a ritual of rebirth. Initiates moved to the sacred center, where they surrendered to a symbolic death, and then returned through the same passage to symbolize their rebirth.

Moving In. As initiates moved into the labyrinth they were able to shed and let go of the old. They were able to go through a dismantling, through a “dying.” There was a letting go of values, attitudes, ideas, beliefs that no longer sustained.

The Center. The center of the labyrinth is the center of the divine womb. Here, initiates were able to connect again to the center of meaning in themselves, the Divine, Life-Giver, Source of all that is, Creator.

Moving Out. The movement back out symbolized the process of rebirth. Taking on new life, bringing a new consciousness back into the world, bringing more and more of the new person into being.

Dance of the Dissident Daughter, Sue Monk Kidd

Traditional Three-fold Process

Purgation. This implies letting go of what blocks us in life. It is a way of emptying or releasing. Pause at the entry to allow yourself to be fully conscious of the act of stepping into the labyrinth. Allow yourself to find a comfortable pace and to stop and rest for a bit.

Illumination. This is usually found at the center of the labyrinth. After quieting the mind during the first part of the walk, the center can present a new experience. It is a place for meditation and prayer. Here you may receive an insight into a situation or clarity about a certain problem.

Union. This begins as you leave the center and start back. In communion with God you go back to your ordinary life renewed and empowered to act. You bring your gifts to the service of the world.

The labyrinth is an ancient tool. Not only can we walk it in faith with others around the world today, but we are also accompanied in our desire for transformation and holiness by those who have gone before us. While walking the labyrinth may be a private or a personal experience, it is also a global venture and a walk across time