

Walking the Labyrinth

People walk the labyrinth for a wide variety of reasons, including quieting the mind, looking for clarity, seeking healing, and building community. Some consider walking to the center as a time for releasing, pausing in the center as a time for resting, and walking out as a time for integrating. People also come to the labyrinth for no reason other than to walk, being open to what the experience brings.

There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth—go at your own pace and feel free to gently pass other walkers. Typically, walkers start at the beginning of the path, follow the twists and turns to the center, stay in the center for as long as they'd like, and walk out using the same pathway. Unlike a maze, there are no choices to make about which way to turn, since there's only one circuitous path. Whether you'd like to move slowly or dance gleefully as you travel the path, simply trust your experience. Your journey on the labyrinth can be a metaphor for your life at this time.

Here's a small selection of the many different practices you can bring to the labyrinth:

A Mindful Walk: Give yourself permission to spend time being, a time when you're not trying to make anything happen or have a particular experience, a time when you're simply open to the moment. You could even gently rest your attention on the soles of your feet as you walk—and if any distractions arise, gently shift your attention back to your feet.

A Walk for Clarity: As you begin your walk, bring to mind a question or situation for which you'd like clarity. Release expectations of receiving answers, and simply open to any guidance that might arise.

A Walk for Releasing: Carry a stone to the center of the labyrinth to represent that which you'd like to release, whether it's a way of being, a difficult emotion, or any number of possibilities. As you arrive in the labyrinth's center, gently place your stone on the ground to leave in the labyrinth's care.

A Walk for Healing: As you enter the labyrinth, allow yourself to be open to the healing properties of the earth beneath you, imagining all the cells in your body aligning as you turn from left to right and right to left on the labyrinth's path.

A Walk for Connection: As you walk, imagine all those who have walked the labyrinth's path before you, whether it's the labyrinth you're currently walking or labyrinths around the world. You could also imagine labyrinths dating back through time, as your ancestors walked. If you're walking with others, consider that you're each on an individual journey, yet all part of humankind.

Threshold time: Your time on the labyrinth can represent a threshold time. A time between what came before and what's to come next. A liminal time. A time of allowing things to unfold. A time of listening to your deepest self. A time of letting go of thoughts and becoming aware of what arises.

