



Geneva Terrace Labyrinth

A GUIDE TO WALKING THE LABYRINTH

We are all on the path...exactly where we need to be.
The labyrinth is a model of that path.

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. The Labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools.

A labyrinth is an archetype with which we can have a direct experience. We can walk it. It is a metaphor for life's journey. It is a symbol that creates a sacred space and place and takes us out of our ego to "That Which Is Within."

(continued on next page)

"Your life is a sacred journey. And it is about change, growth, discovery, movement, transformation, continuously expanding your vision of what is possible, stretching your soul, learning to see clearly and deeply, listening to your intuition, taking courageous challenges at every step along the way. You are on the path... exactly where you are meant to be right now.... And from here, you can only go forward, shaping your life story into a magnificent tale of triumph, of healing, of courage, of beauty, of wisdom, of power, of dignity, and of love."

—Caroline Adams

There is No Right Way to Walk a Labyrinth

You only have to enter and follow the path. However, your walk can encompass a variety of attitudes. It may be joyous or somber. It might be thoughtful or prayerful. You may use it as a walking meditation. Adults are often serious in the labyrinth. Children most often run in and out as fast as they can in a playful manner.

When you walk a labyrinth choose your attitude. From time to time choose a different attitude. Make it serious, prayerful, or playful. Play music or sing. Pray out loud. Walk alone and with a crowd. Notice the sky. Listen to the sounds. Most of all pay attention to your experience.

Stages of Walking a Labyrinth

Focus. Pause and wait at the entrance. Become quiet and centered. The first stage of walking the labyrinth is showing up. Present yourself in front of the entrance and ready your mind to begin. In practice there are many ways this can look. You can give acknowledgment through a bow, nod, or other gesture. Some may choose to remove shoes as a sign of entering sacred space. Others may take a deep breath before taking the first step. Others still, may not intentionally do anything but the simple act of coming to the labyrinth, whether physically or virtually, is the first stage of walking the labyrinth.

Experience. Walk purposefully. Observe the process. Walking the labyrinth is the journey to the center. In this stage, one journeys inward, both literally towards the center of the circle and metaphorically towards an inner self. This is a chance to let go of anything you may have been holding on to that is no longer helping you. This is also a chance to open yourself towards the Divine in prayer. There are many ways that this stage can look so let yourself be led into whatever expression feels most helpful at the time.

When you reach the center, stay there and focus for several moments. In this stage, one embraces the stillness. This is when one might most directly encounter the Divine. This stage often looks like one sitting or standing in the center of the labyrinth with an open posture to the Divine. The hope in this stage is that, having let go of anything one needed to in the previous stage, one may now be more open to receiving whatever

(continued on next page)



What is a Labyrinth?

Labyrinths and mazes have often been confused. When most people hear of a labyrinth they think of a maze. A labyrinth is not a maze.

A maze is like a puzzle to be solved. It has twists, turns, and blind alleys. It is a left brain task that requires logical, sequential, analytical activity to find the correct path into the maze and out. Many choices must be made and an active mind is needed to solve the problem of finding the center.

Contrastingly, a labyrinth has only one path. It is unicursal. The way in is the way out. There are no blind alleys. The path leads you on a circuitous path to the center and out again. A labyrinth is a right brain task. It involves intuition, creativity, and imagery. With a labyrinth there is only one choice to be made. The choice is to enter or not. A more passive, receptive mindset is needed. The choice is whether or not to walk a spiritual path.

At its most basic level the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the center of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are.

it is that they most need. This might be a short amount of time or a long amount of time and can look different for each encounter with the labyrinth. Leave when it seems appropriate. Be attentive on the way out.

The journey back to edge occurs after one has encountered the Divine and now is preparing one's self to re-enter the world. This stage is similar to the beginning in that it is all about preparing one's self. The difference however is that now one is preparing to handle the onslaught of the world. Often in this stage one might ask the Divine for strength, courage, or whatever one might need to re-enter the world.

Exit. Turn and face the entrance. Give an acknowledgement of ending, such as "Amen." When you leave, you have completed a walk of the labyrinth and are re-entering the world. In this stage, take time to put your shoes back on or simply take a deep breath.

Reflect. After walking the labyrinth reflect back on your experience. Use journaling or drawing to capture your experience. The thing to note about this stage is that even as you leave the labyrinth you take with you the encounter and any wisdom you may have gained from it.

Note: There is no wrong way to encounter the labyrinth. If the language used here is not helpful to your practice, then please do not feel constrained by it. At its core, the labyrinth is simply a structure to help one encounter the Divine.

Spirit Walk Labyrinth



Ideas for Walking the Labyrinth

Mantra

Before entering the labyrinth choose a mantra for that encounter with the labyrinth. A mantra might be a prayer you find meaningful, a song lyric, or something of your own creation. The key is that a mantra is usually a short phrase that can be repeated. Then as you encounter the labyrinth repeat this mantra to yourself.

Try walking straight out or straight in and then follow path

You do not have to follow the path strictly during every encounter. Give yourself the freedom to try something different and see how it changes your experience.

Try dancing the labyrinth

There is no requirement that you must walk the labyrinth. You could try dancing along the path or even through the path depending on how you feel your spirit led.

Try encountering the labyrinth at different times of day

Does walking the labyrinth in the evening or at sunrise change how you experience the encounter? The labyrinth is always open to you so feel free to come and have an encounter whenever you feel called.

Walk virtually

If you are unable to walk the labyrinth in person you have two options to engage with the labyrinth from your home.

Go to [YouVisit](#) to visually walk one of the labyrinths on campus. To visually walk the labyrinth, trace the pattern of the labyrinth with your eyes. You might also take time to look around at your virtual surroundings. Enjoy the view of Mount Tamalpais and the hills more generally.

Alternatively, use one of the two pictures included at the end of this document to finger walk one of the labyrinths on campus. To finger walk the labyrinth, use one or more of your fingers to trace the pattern of the labyrinth as if you were walking it.

GENEVA TERRACE LABYRINTH



SPIRIT WALK LABYRINTH

