



LABYRINTH WALK GUIDELINES

The eleven circuit labyrinth, a replica of the Chartres Cathedral in France, is not to be confused with a maze. While mazes are designed to trick you with dead-ends and false paths, the labyrinth has only one path leading to the center and the same path leads back out.

The labyrinth is an ancient path of pilgrimage, rich with meaning. Early in the 13th century, when the Crusades made journeying to sacred destinations to dangerous, (if not impossible and not too dissimilar from today.) Would-be pilgrims got creative and used this beautiful path of prayer within the safety of the church. Within the labyrinth they could take a metaphorical pilgrimage. Since that time, the uses have expanded to include the path of self-discovery, healing, contemplation, and revelation.

Just like a pilgrimage, a labyrinth offers a three-fold path:

- **The Walk Into the Labyrinth** is a time for contemplating your life and letting go of any inner obstacles you may encounter – stress, grief, thoughts, feelings in preparation for reaching the center. Notice what you are experiencing as this will be the very thing the labyrinth is teaching you.
- **The Center** - the sacred destination is a time for silent meditation, contemplation and renewal. Stay in the center as long as you like until you feel complete.
- **The Return Journey Back Out** offers a time for integration in which we take the insights that we gained on the labyrinth into our lives for implementation.

Walk the Labyrinth to Learn About Yourself. Everything is a Metaphor. Be Self-Observant.

The language of the labyrinth is a Metaphor. Be self-observant as you walk. The labyrinth will mirror to you what you need to see. Whatever you experience on the labyrinth will offer you insights as to what you need to pay attention to, and perhaps amend, in your life.

Guidelines for Walking the Labyrinth:

- 1) **Let go of expectations.** The message of the labyrinth is often subtle. Just relax and enjoy the peaceful path of prayer.
- 2) **Find your own pace.** Some people will want to walk swiftly, others will walk slowly. Some will run. Others will dance.
- 3) **It's okay to pass.** Utilize the 180 degree turns to step off the path to let someone pass, or to maneuver around someone who is walking more slowly ahead of you.
- 4) **The labyrinth is a two-way street.** Those that have already reached the center will be coming out as you go in. Simply pay attention to where you are on the labyrinth, step aside, resume your position and continue on your way.
- 5) **Emotions may be evoked.** Simply breathe and observe. Remember that everything is a metaphor and the labyrinth will mirror for you anything you need to see.

Eve Eschner Hogan, MA author of *Way of the Winding Path: A Map for the Labyrinth of Life* and owner of The Sacred Garden on Maui.