

Walking a Labyrinth

People walk from the outer edge (the periphery) to the center, and then back to the outer edge. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has no blind alleys or dead ends. It will not frustrate, because it is not a puzzle to be solved. You cannot get "lost" or make a mistake because there are no choices to be made once you have made the decision to start walking. The decision is a metaphor for the choice of whether or not to walk a spiritual path. By following the path you always end up either in the center of the labyrinth or back at the entrance - it is the journey to the center of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are.

"Let the beauty you love be what you do. There are a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the earth." -Rumi

Adults pass through the labyrinth with their spiritual walk in mind. Children run through it expressing their mastery over the gift of their body and mind.

Either way is a sacred path.



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The Lavender Wind Farm Labyrinth

The labyrinth is a symbol found in ancient cultures around the world, dating back at least 4000 years. A classic labyrinth composed of seven circles appeared on every continent. During the Middle Ages, an eleven-circuit labyrinth pattern emerged and was designed into the floor stones of many cathedrals in Europe. This pattern was in place in Chartres Cathedral no later than 1220.

There are many traditional designs for the labyrinth. The one at Lavender Wind Farm is from one of several Hopi designs from the American Southwest called The Man in the Maze. This design symbolizes the female womb, only penetrable if one is pure and perfect. The male figure outside, representing the human seed, can



penetrate the womb, fertilize the ovum, produce new life, which then emerges as a new birth or a reincarnated existence. Entry into the labyrinth gives new life thus achieving reincarnation and eternal life. Here, the lavender serves as the marker of the pathway, and gives the journey a sweet, fresh air.

Psychologist Carl Jung called the labyrinth an "archetype of transformation." Walkers along its sinuous path find they are often deeply affected. People in transition periods find a calmer perspective. Those with untapped gifts to offer have their creative fires rekindled. Walkers dealing with grief experience the depth of the loss and peace. For millennia, the circling path that evolved from the simple spiral brought centeredness and healing to untold numbers of walkers. After lying dormant for several centuries, this ancient design is making a comeback, as a variety of institutions and individuals re-create it on floors, lawns, and canvas.

Sometimes the words "labyrinth" and "maze" are confused. While both refer to circling patterns, the two are actually totally different. A maze is a puzzle and thus designed to confuse; walkers must use their reasoning and cunning to escape. A labyrinth is a single path which leads the walker to the center and back out. The point is not to use reasoning powers, but rather to turn these off and to go into a "right brain" or imaginative mode. In an open, receptive frame of mind, the walker simply follows the path and experiences a deep, refreshing form of meditation. The average meditative walk takes about half an hour, though walkers move at their own individual pace.

Notes to Myself from My Lavender Labyrinth Walk

