

## "WALKING THE LABYRINTH - A MEDITATIVE PROCESS"

Labyrinths - ancient myths and modern uses - walk the labyrinth and explore the potential of the labyrinth as a tool for grief work, enabling healing and transformation.

Walking a labyrinth immediately takes us into a process world where we can see between the lines of linear thought through to our imagination and intuition.

The word "labyrinth" is etymologically at least several thousand years older than the word "maze". Labyrinth comes to us from Caunia, an area in southwestern Turkey. This makes "Labyrinth" a non Indo-European word. Caunia is where the Meander River is, and it is where the word "Labrys", the Minoan and Trojan Double-headed ax comes from. "Maze" comes from Middle English "mazen" which has the confusion element present - referring to the confusion of choices one has in a maze.

A MAZE - implies a state of confusion, a puzzle or a hazardous mantrap. False turnings and blind endings obstruct passage. It is something one can get lost in, never escaping and, therefore, suffering eternal frustration.

A LABYRINTH is a magical/spiritual single path maze. The only choice is whether you go in or not. The unicursal path of the labyrinth is what differentiates it and sets it apart as a spiritual tool. The labyrinth does not engage our thinking minds. It invites our right-brain intuitive, pattern-seeking, symbolic mind to come forth. It presents us with only one, but profound choice. To enter a labyrinth is to choose to walk a spiritual path.

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Over the millennia, labyrinths have been used for many different purposes from meditation and children's games to being spiritual pilgrimage to guides and holistic problem-solving devices. The oldest positively dated labyrinth is 1230 BC. It comes from King Nestor's Palace in Phyllos Greece. Nestor was a Troy with King Priam. There are many Trojan connections with the labyrinth. In northern Europe, many labyrinths are called "Walls of Troy, or in Sweden, "Trojeborg, or in Welsh "Caerdroia." - the turns of Troy. And while many labyrinth myths speak of a male energy in the labyrinth (Theseus and the Minotaur in Crete, and the Man in the Maze in the South Western USA), there is evidence that the labyrinth's connection with the Earth Mother goes much further back in to prehistory. These single-path magical mazes are found around the globe from China to Arizona, USA, from Peru to Sweden.

Church Labyrinths - The earliest Christian Labyrinth is most likely the one found in the fourth-century basilica of Reoperates, Orleansville, in Algeria. The words Sancta Ecclesia at the centre confirm its use as a Christian treasure. Labyrinths were laid in pavement, tile, marble inlaid on the floor of great cathedrals in Europe. St. Lucia Cathedral in Italy has a labyrinth appearing on a wall and dates from the ninth century. It was approximately eighteen by eighteen inches, was designed for people to trace with their fingers before they entered the cathedral. This was understood to be a way of quieting the mind before entering sacred space.

Ways to walk the Labyrinth  
Gracious attention or spiritual intention  
Asking a question  
Repetition - mantra - verbal or physical  
Reading poetry or scripture  
Adoration and Thanksgiving  
Surrender to the path for wisdom  
Problem solving  
Reflection on specific emotions/dreams

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