

path of faith and doubt, the complexity of the brain, the turns of the intestine and the birth canal, and the Celestial City...

The walk, and all that happens on it, can be grasped through the intuitive, pattern-discerning faculty of the person walking it...

This is the gift of being able to see the infinite in the context of the finite. And somehow we are surrounded by a gentle love at the same time.

### Experiencing our Experience

Experiencing our feelings and inner thoughts without judgement is part of developing spiritual mastery. In order to reflect, we need a quiet place inside ourselves.

The time on the labyrinth is meant to be a reflective and meditative act when you

stay in the moment with your experience.

### Receptivity

Just as in other forms of meditation, it is possible to have an uneventful experience on the labyrinth. There are times when nothing significant happens, when the timing may not simply be right for anything to emerge. There are benefits to walking it anyway...there seems to be a cumulative benefit.

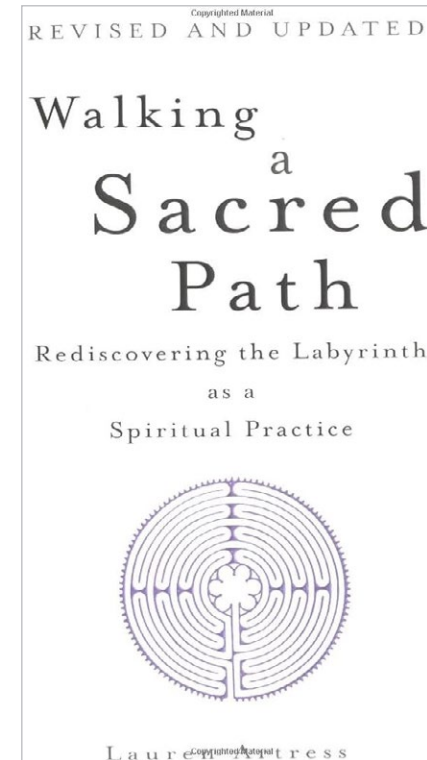
### Finding your Pace

Each experience in the labyrinth is different... The labyrinth's winding path helps us to find our pace, allows us a spaciousness within, encourages our receptivity ... and develops our awareness of the habitual thoughts and issues we put in the way of our spiritual development. It is a road to self-knowledge.

# Walking a Sacred Path:

## Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice

Lauren Artress



Book summary by Rose Isbell  
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**Lauren Artress reintroduces the ancient labyrinth, a walking meditation that transcends the limits of still meditation, and shows us the possibilities it brings for renewal and change.**

The labyrinth is a walking meditation, a path of prayer and an archetypal blueprint where psyche meets Spirit. It has only one path that leads from the ends. Unlike a maze where you lose your way, the labyrinth is a spiritual tool that can help you find your way.

Labyrinths are usually in the form of a circle with a meandering but purposeful path, from the edge to the centre and back out again. Each has only one path, and once we make the choice to enter it the path becomes a metaphor for our path through life, sending us to the centre of the labyrinth, and then back out to the edge on the same path.

The labyrinth is spiritual tool meant to awaken is to the deep rhythm that unites us to ourselves and to the Light that calls from within. In surrendering to the winding path, the soul finds healing and wholeness.

Walking the Labyrinth quiets the mind, opens the heart and grounds the body ... Some find answers to questions long asked, some find healing, creativity, or a sense of wholeness.

## Seeking a Sacred Path

To walk a sacred path is to discover our inner sacred space: that core of feeling that is waiting to have life breathed back into it through symbols, archetypal forms like to labyrinth, rituals, stories and myths. Understanding the invisible world, the world of pattern and process, opens us to the movement of the Spirit.

## Pilgrimage

The tradition of pilgrimage is being revitalised during our own times to seek answers to our longings... The pilgrim seeks to follow the spirit's compass, which guides us to find an inner openness to the outer world of people, places, and events

that become the fabric of our lives.

## Co-Creation

Much of our spiritual seeking is driven by the desire to manifest our unique and individual gifts on the world... Something within us carries a deep, sometimes buried, sense that we have a special task...Many people find their way to the labyrinth in the process of searching for their own special talents.

## Walking the Labyrinth

Walking the labyrinth does not demand a great amount of concentration in order to benefit from the experience. The sheer act of walking a complicated path...begins to focus the mind.

The labyrinth is especially helpful to those of us in transition who are chilled by the winds of change. It also gives solace to those struggling with painful life experiences.

There are no easy solutions to life's many difficult problems, yet walking the labyrinth imparts peace. The walk can also begin a process of insight so a "new opportunity" can come into our awareness...

Small miracles can happen in the labyrinth. We can strengthen ourselves by shedding tears, feeling the anger and hurt that keeps us from experiencing our soul level. We can decide that we have held on to revenge too long, and take action to heal our hateful feelings.

## A Process Meditation

There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth.... This can be a valuable lesson about control and surrendering to the process...

There is a creative tension between allowing images, memories and feelings to emerge and guiding them through a gentle, gracious, open and

expanded thought process...

The walk out of the labyrinth is realistically and symbolically the act of taking when we have received out into the world.

## Basic Approaches

What seems to work best when preparing to walk the labyrinth it to take a moment to reflect on where you are in your life...

One approach is simply to quiet the mind, choosing to let all thoughts go when they present themselves in your awareness. The task is to allow a gracious sense of attention to flow through you...

Another approach is to focus on a question that we have been asking ourselves...

Questions that we take into the labyrinth should be outside the realm of yes or no. There is nothing magical about the labyrinth. [But] it allows our conscious to open so that deeper, and perhaps new, parts of ourselves can speak to us more directly.

## The Use of Repetition

Many of us meditate by repeating a word, a mantra, or a phrase over and over to ourselves. ...[People are] advised to use a word or phrase that does not stir up either positive or negative feelings or thoughts... [Or] the other approach is to use a meaningful phrase.

## Asking for Help through Prayer

Another method is simply to pray throughout the labyrinth walk...One of the things we forget most readily is to ask for help from the divine...

The labyrinth is a place where you can pour your heart out, express your anger, experience joy, express gratitude – and perhaps above all, ask for what you need.

## Honoring a Benchmark in Time

Many people walk the labyrinth to honor a

benchmark in time. It may be a birthday or the anniversary of a close friend's death.

We can walk the labyrinth to pray for a person who is undergoing surgery or to support and sustain a board of members making an important decision...

## A Body Prayer

Many of us are shy when it comes to movement. But in the container of the labyrinth there is support for moving spontaneously as our body wishes.

It is important to follow the impulses as they arise within us. Some people may chant, others may dance, cry, or laugh out loud. ...

During workshops [with music] some people dance, and others skip or crawl.. And, [some people] use scarves, and dance with them, or place them over their heads so that they can "hide" as they go deeply within.

## Allowing the Ego to let Go

Stepping into the labyrinth, we see our thoughts for what they are. We may meet the impatient, judgemental thoughts that are so much a part of us that we no longer notice them...

When we are able to see though or step being the ego, the ... people and events in our lives become part of our path, part of the invisible thread that leads onward.

We feel surrounded by the Holy. And all the pain and joy that we experience tempers us, allows us clearly to see our struggling, suffering world...

We simply present ourselves as ready to release whatever come up in us, and to receive what awaits us in the center.

## The Labyrinth as Metaphor

The labyrinth captures the mystical union between heaven and earth, an understanding of death and rebirth. It is a