



GUIDE TO WALKING A LABYRINTH

MICHELLE ECKLES
MEDITATION SUNSHINE COAST



What is a Labyrinth?



The labyrinth is an archetype, a divine imprint, found in many religious traditions in various forms worldwide.

Dating back to around 2,000 BC, not a lot is known about their history, use, various designs or who designed and made them, other than manuscripts that included drawings copied and passed on. Some cathedral labyrinths were used to “find a path” to God; others appear purely decorative.

In recent years they have seen a resurgence. Rapid changes such as industrial revolutions can lead to human displacement. As a result, people tend to shift to a greater level of consciousness and connect with their inner selves for guidance and peace.

Labyrinths are a circuitous pathway with usually the same entrance and exit. Circles signify unity, harmony, symmetry, connection and wholeness. They differ from a maze in that they have one way into the centre and one way out, with no tricks or traps, just twists and turns. Walking a labyrinth is about finding your way, whereas walking a maze is about losing your way.

Labyrinths are a meditation tool, a walking meditation and an opportunity to practice mindfulness of the breath, body and senses.

They can also help integrate both sides of the brain. Whilst the left brain is thinking about where you need to walk or trace, the right brain is free to be creative and come up with new ideas or solutions to problems.



Benefits of Walking a Labyrinth



Walking a Labyrinth can help with:

- Allowing a state of stillness and receptivity to receive creative thoughts, answers to questions or insight on challenges.
- Settling restless energy and preparing for sleep.
- Feeling connected to nature and the earth.
- Developing a greater level of self-awareness, self-reflection and self-acceptance.
- Focus, concentration and clarity
- Thoughtfully responding instead of reacting and constructively channelling emotions.
- Connecting to your body and integrating the mind, body and spirit.
- Creating a sense of connection not only with your inner self but with those around you “on the same path”.



How to Walk a Labyrinth



Three Stages to Walking a Labyrinth

n.b. this is my adaption I use in my labyrinth workshops

1. Entrance to the centre – set your intention, e.g. a mantra; a question or problem you want a solution for; releasing something (see some options below).
2. Centre – pause and let go of the intention.
3. Centre to exit – connect to your intuition and allow any guidance, thoughts, images, words, ideas or solutions to come through.

Options for Labyrinth Meditations

- Mindful walking exercise - tuning into your body and the sensations of each movement.
- Use a favourite word, phrase or affirmation - repeat the mantra slowly as you "walk."
- Recite a prayer or pray to your deity as you walk.
- Walk with a question, e.g. "what do I need to know right now?"
- Ask for insight or guidance on a problem you may be struggling with.
- Release something, e.g., emotion, negative thought, inner critic, and grief.
- Reconnect with your body - explore sensations, emphasise movement, listen to messages of pain.
- Celebrate a milestone or benchmark, e.g. birthday, retirement, anniversary of something.
- Interpret a dream that you have had recently.
- Creative thought - develop an idea or project you would like to work on or need help with.
- Break the cycle of repeated patterns of behaviour, e.g. perfectionism, job losses, toxic relationships, financial losses, bursts of anger.
- Seek your soul or life purpose - ask for images or symbols.
- Journal writing or drawing before or/and after.

Tips for Walking a Labyrinth



There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth, but here are some tips to help you prepare:

- Set an intention for your walk (see some suggestions on the previous page).
- Remove your shoes (if it is culturally appropriate to do so).
- Allow one minute between walkers.
- Review the route before you enter so you know which way it goes.
- Walk at a natural pace.
- Let go of expectations.
- Open heart = open mind (allow any feelings to flow).
- Use whatever happens in the labyrinth as a metaphor for whatever is happening in your life.
- Write down any guidance, insights and thoughts you receive after your walk.



Finger Labyrinth Meditation



1. Print out which labyrinth you want to try from the following pages (print on cardboard/thick paper if you have it) and have a pen and paper ready in case you want to write down anything afterwards.
2. Sit cross-legged on the floor or a pillow or sit on a chair with your feet flat on the floor.
3. Hold your labyrinth in your dominant hand, e.g. right hand if you are right-handed with the index finger of your other hand ready at the entrance to the labyrinth (n.b. you can use any finger).
4. Keep your eyes open and take a slow deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth, feeling that connection with your body to the earth beneath you.
5. Begin to breathe in and out through your nose, letting your breath flow at its own pace, noticing the feel of the air as it flows in and out through your nostrils.
6. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your chest and expanding and contracting of your belly with each breath.
7. When you are ready, begin tracing the circuit's path from the entrance to the centre. Focus on your intention (see the previous page) or be open to whatever comes up.
8. At the centre of the labyrinth, take a few breaths and let go of your intention.
9. When you are ready, trace your way back to the entrance, staying open to whatever solution, ideas, or thoughts come to you.
10. When your "walk" is done, place both hands on the labyrinth (or hold it with both hands) and give thanks for any guidance you received.
11. Journal or draw or write down some notes if you feel drawn to.



Finger Labyrinth – Classic Design









Designed by Nance Aurand-Humpf



Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions to help you get the most out of your labyrinth walk.

Set your intention for your labyrinth walk (refer to page 4):

Post labyrinth walk - thoughts, ideas, guidance (you may also like to draw):



- [Labyrinth History & Walking](#) – YouTube video from the Labyrinth Society
- [Walking into Stillness – Encountering the Labyrinth](#) (Youtube video)
- [Veriditas](#) – worldwide organisation dedicated to inspiring personal and planetary change and renewal through the labyrinth experience.
- [The Labyrinth Society](#) – an international group of labyrinth enthusiasts whose mission is to support all those who create, maintain, and use labyrinths. They also have a worldwide [labyrinth locater](#).
- [The Australian Labyrinth Network](#)
- [Labyrinth Journey app](#) – on apple or google play



About ME (Michelle Eckles)



Like most people, I began learning meditation during a challenging period in my life. I was utterly overwhelmed with running a business, being a single parent and selling my home. I was taking pain killers for chronic back pain and drinking myself to sleep most nights. I knew I needed something to not just help reduce the feelings of anxiety and overwhelm (without antidepressants), but to also prevent me from getting to that state in the first place.

When I tried to meditate, I couldn't sit still for more than 5 minutes or count to 10 breaths! I struggled to learn through an app or on my own, so I began researching teachers and studying mindfulness and meditation.

As a result, I have completed training and qualifications in Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training, Guiding & Teaching Meditation, Mindfulness for Wellbeing & Peak Performance, and Corporate Mindfulness. Realising how beneficial these tools would be for kids, I also completed Connected Kids, Meditation Capsules, Inspired Kids Yoga, Calm Kids Coaching, and Youth Psychology and Counselling.

I have been teaching mindfulness and meditation to adults, teens, and kids since 2016. During that time, I moved home again, shut down my party business, opened and closed a meditation studio, managed events for high-profile speakers (including the Obamas), and lost that events job due to Covid.

I may not have done all these things with complete grace, but I credit my ability to transition through all of it without falling apart or contemplating drowning in a bottle, to my meditation practice.

It has not only made me feel calmer, more peaceful, and resilient, but it has also increased my clarity, creativity, productivity, and focus. It's also given me the patience and compassion needed to look after two teens and a grandmother with dementia.

I enjoy bringing the practical applications of mindfulness and meditation to the home and the workplace, by educating others, and demonstrating the profound mental, emotional and physical benefits it can have in your day-to-day life.

As well as offering workshops, programs, and online courses, I facilitate mindfulness meditation programs for Mindfulness Works Australia and run community classes as part of the council's Healthy Sunshine Coast Program.

I am a member of the Australian Meditation Association and mindful.org and a Veriditas trained and certificated labyrinth facilitator.

Contact Me



Contact me on 0438 915 830 or michelle@meditationsunshinecoast.com.au if you have any questions or would like to know more about establishing a mindfulness meditation practice. Services I offer include:

- Community classes and programs
- Workplace workshops and programs
- 1:1 Coaching
- Online courses
- Retreats



For more tips, tools, resources, and meditations:

- Website - www.meditationsunshinecoast.com.au
- Facebook - www.facebook.com/meditationsunshinecoast
- Instagram - www.instagram.com/meditationsunshinecoast
- Linked in - www.linkedin.com/company/meditationsunshinecoast
- YouTube channel - www.youtube.com/channel/UC5PVdrRkeS-ZKold2Om0PRA
- Insight timer app - <https://insighttimer.com/m3d1t8>
- Online courses - <https://meditation-courses.teachable.com>

[Subscribe to my newsletter](#) to receive my Quick Guide to Mindfulness Meditation.