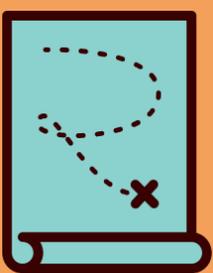


7

UNIQUE WAYS TO EXPERIENCE A

LABYRINTH



JOURNEY OF LIFE

Walk the labyrinth while mindful of your life. Envision your life's goal. Do you feel lost at any time? If so, where in the labyrinth did it occur? What does that mean? If you like one part of the labyrinth more than another, why? What do the turns represent in your life? Do you resist some turns and like others? Notice subtle changes in the terrain - the ups and downs. Notice any synchronicities such as an overheard word or a bird's song. Consider all of your experiences in the labyrinth in relation to your life's journey. Walk alone and then journal your experience. Walk with a group and then share your experiences. What does the labyrinth teach you about your life?



RITUAL OF GOODBYE/HELLO

To say farewell to a co-worker or group member, gather at the entrance to the labyrinth. Ask the departing person to walk in first. Others should follow about a minute apart after s/he reaches the center. One by one others enter the center to have a few moments to say a private goodbye. They then turn and slowly walk out. After the last goodbye, the person leaving walks back out of the labyrinth to a group hug. Such a ritual would work as well for saying, "Hello." It would be a warm welcome into any group.



JOY WALK

The labyrinth can be used solemnly, but also needs to be used in a joyous manner. Play a rhythmic music CD such as Mickey Hart's Planet Drum. Give some of the participants children's musical instruments such as bells, rattles, tambourines, and drums. Give some of the participants colorful scarves. Give some of the participants small bottles filled with a bubble blowing mixture and a wand for blowing bubbles. Bubble blowers surround the labyrinth with the task to blow as many bubbles as they can to the labyrinth walkers who are making music or waving their scarves as they walk into and out of the labyrinth. When a walker completes the labyrinth, s/he trades places with a "bubble blower" who now takes the scarf or musical instrument and joyously walks the labyrinth.



COLORING THE LABYRINTH

Walk the labyrinth, then take a box of crayons, markers, or colored pencils and a sheet of paper with a large labyrinth printed on it. Color the labyrinth in any manner you wish. Explain the choice of colors to another person. There are no right or wrong answers. Useful for learning how others view the labyrinth experience



MEDITATION ON HEALING

Healing is not only physical but also occurs on the emotional, mental, and spiritual levels. A physical healing is often described as a cure. While a cure might not be possible, healing is always an option. As you walk the labyrinth, meditate on the following: What is the most important lesson your illness and recovery has taught you? How has your illness had a positive effect on your life? How has it affected your relationships? In what ways are you more whole than before you illness? What about your illness are you grateful for? How has your spirit been influenced? What is required for continued healing? If you are with a larger group, discuss your answers.



RELEASING, RECEIVING, THANKSGIVING

A very simple walk that is appropriate for any spiritual tradition and can be done with no preparation other than brief instructions is one of releasing, receiving, and thanksgiving. The first half of the labyrinth is walked as the letting go of worries, concerns, and fears. This is symbolized by walking with the hands palm down in a gesture of release. At the center of the labyrinth the palms are turned up in a gesture of receiving whatever gifts of insight and peace are offered. Leaving the labyrinth the palms are placed together in a gesture of prayer and thanksgiving as you walk towards the exit.



COMPASSION WALK

Seek consolation, comfort, and a way to let go following the loss of a loved one. Ask people to walk the labyrinth. Provide slips of paper for writing down prayers, memories, and wishes for the loved one and his/her family. The messages are carried into the labyrinth by each walker and deposited in a glass bowl as a gesture of letting go. At the end of the day the contents of the bowl are ritually burned to release the energy of the expressions to the universe. This can be very moving and meaningful to participants.