



Australian Labyrinth
Network

Ancestor Spirit Labyrinth
Modified by Geoff Rodda

“The labyrinth is a beautiful way to bring the spirit back to the shared land.”

“Congratulations to the builder for the vision.”

Visitors from Uluru

Entry in the San Remo Reflections Journal April 2007

“We aren’t walking the labyrinth to learn about *it*, we are walking the labyrinth to learn about *ourselves*.” Eve Hogan

Next: Labyrinth Building

Welcome to ‘Labyrinths Matter’ Newsletter

In this edition we explore the language of the labyrinth. There are some delightful examples of how walking labyrinths can turn people’s lives around – as the metaphor of their walks unfold . . .



“by walking the labyrinth you gather an inner spaciousness. And there is a place where you can go. I think it is very important that we do have a well-stocked inner-world to draw on.” . . . The Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress

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 - Language of the Labyrinth is Metaphor
 - Seeing through the lens of the labyrinth
 - Mindfulness practice leads to the labyrinth
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Walking the Labyrinth of Relationships

The language of the labyrinth is the Metaphor.

by Eve Eschner Hogan



Labyrinths have taken their rightful place in spas, churches, hospitals, parks, schools, gardens and many a back yard over the last couple of decades. Many of us are becoming aware of them as a beautiful path of peace, contemplation and prayer. Most of us however, may not be aware of them as a tool for peering into our relationships.

First, let me reveal that the language of the labyrinth is metaphor. We aren't walking the labyrinth to learn about *it*, we are walking the labyrinth to learn about *ourselves*. Everything we notice—from a brick out of place to animal scat can offer a powerful “aha” if we look past the literal into the metaphorical messages. Simply put, what you notice on the labyrinth is what you are being invited to notice in yourself.

A delightful example of a ‘metaphor’ is appears on the next page. It is about a woman who walks her dog and discovers she has choices in her life.

When I first discovered the labyrinth, nearly twenty years ago, I was anxious to share it with my husband. I stepped onto the path ahead of him and noticed right away my discomfort walking in front of him.

Knowing this had nothing to do with the labyrinth, I looked for the symbolism in our marriage.

I realized that there, too, I was concerned that my success with some individual projects would be reached ahead of his. Realizing this allowed me to be mindful not to sabotage my own success to keep the “status quo” and to be aware of supporting the success of his projects simultaneously.

Next, I noticed that while we started one right after the other, we soon were walking side-by-side, then on opposite sides of the labyrinth, then together again. I looked for the metaphor and could easily see the cyclical nature of relationship.

Indeed, sometimes it is “him and me together against the world,” and other times a sense of “where is that guy going?” Realizing that there are “steps we can take” to move toward a more loving connection when we start “spinning out” is a helpful recognition.

When I work with couples, I have them walk into the labyrinth individually, yet at the same time, meet in the centre and then find a way to walk out together, in contact with each other. This is the tricky part as the path is narrow with only room for one, and yet it is also the revealing part. Who leads? Who trusts? Who “cheats”? Who controls? Who has self-doubt? Do they play and dance their way through the decisions that walking the path together brings or do they argue and vie for the lead? One couple finally decided not to walk together, neither trusting the other as to which way to go. Remarkably, their whole relationship played out in that one journey out of the labyrinth.

Once when leading a group of forty people on a labyrinth walk someone said, “I’ll come back tomorrow when there is no one else here.”

To which I replied, “By all means, come back and walk the labyrinth alone—but don’t miss this!

It is one thing to achieve relationship mastery alone in your “cave” and an entirely different experience whilst actually in relationship!”

The invitation is for you to find your nearest labyrinth whether you walk it in tandem or all on your own, the path will reveal what you need to see in yourself if you are self-observant. , (World Wide labyrinth locator: <http://labyrinthlocator.com/>)

That self-observance will lead you to self-awareness. Self-awareness leads to choices, and mastery over those choices will help you heal your relationships.

Extract from Spirituality & Health July 2015

<http://spiritualityhealth.com/blog/eve-hogan/walking-labyrinth-relationships>

Veriditas Webinar. “Walking the Labyrinth of Relationships.”

To hear this discussion between Eve Hogan and Lauren Artress email Anne Bull to receive the link webinars@veriditas.org

Important: Did you know you can listen live or when you have time. Cost: Veriditas Subscribers free.



About Eve Eschner Hogan.

Eve is a relationship specialist, and author of several books including *The EROS Equation: A SOUL-ution for Relationships*.

Learn more about Eve's retreats at <http://sacredmauiretreats.com/>

Its Solved by Walking . . .

“Walking the Labyrinth of Relationships.” by Eve Hogan

Eve is a relationship specialist and author of *The Way of the Winding Path*. Eve is proprietor of [The Sacred Garden](#) on Mauri

Once a woman came to walk my labyrinth. After walking on the labyrinth for a little while she came up to me laughing to tell me what had happened.

“When I arrived, you may have noticed, I was angry about something in my relationship. At first, I was mad about that too, but then the metaphor unfolded.

I went to walk the labyrinth to work it out and came across a pile of dog poop on the path. Or I can do something about it. I can ignore it and move on, clean it up myself or report it in the hopes someone else cleans it up.

I suddenly realized that “poop happens” and I have a choice about how to handle it. I can be angry and storm through the rest of my journey, or day, carrying that anger with me.

What I don't want to do is (metaphorically) stomp in it and allow that one moment in time to stink up the rest of my life.

She laughed with a great sense of relief at seeing that ability to make choices set her free.



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“Seeing the Journey Ahead with New Eyes: Living Through the Lens of the Labyrinth.” by Maia Scott.

"I tell people all the time, 'No, I don't wear glasses. They don't help me see any better. My eyeball is actually perfect and the pathway to the brain from there is not.' While glasses have never helped me see more clearly, walking the labyrinth certainly has.

That first walk in which I had myself a big juicy pity party because I didn't get to the centre as promptly as everyone else, taught me to read between these lines of life. And I realized a longer journey can sometimes be the better bargain.

Thereafter, I craved this magnified, extra large print version of life's little lessons, From then on; I dared to look at life through the lens of the labyrinth.

The Labyrinth Society Gathering 16 – 18 October 15 Indiana, USA by Lars Howlett

Maia Scott, one of three keynote speakers at this years Gathering, brought her experience of many years as a visually-impaired bodywork professional with degrees in Dance, Therapeutic Recreation, and Fine Arts.

Living through the Lens of the Labyrinth is a semi-autobiographical exploration of vision and insight to incite creative thinking, collaboration, and boundary pushing.

Through performance, Maia meets special people who learn to see differently by way of the labyrinth; through meditation, seeing each other through new eyes.



My intention for this presentation is to honour and celebrate that everyone sees differently even when observing the same thing. It is that phenomenon of individuality in unity that makes the TLS Gathering such a significant inspiration boost I look forward to joining throughout the year."

[Read Miai's fascinating Biography](#)

Mindfulness Practice and the Labyrinth Experience in a University Setting . . .

by Tina Christensen

Judy Redman is a Uniting Church minister who coordinates the chaplaincy teams for the Albury-Wodonga campuses of both Charles Sturt and La Trobe Universities.



She first encountered labyrinths at a National Youth Convention and a denominational University Students' retreat, but didn't think much more at the time. Only later attending a gathering called the Wisdom's Feast, where she experienced a facilitated walk did she connect with the labyrinth.

Judy was inspired to bring the labyrinth to the universities after listening to one of the campus counsellors describing a mindfulness exercise. He would get people to walk around a room as slowly as possible. "I made the connection between that process and what the labyrinth could offer." Mindfulness experiences are being used extensively in counselling at the moment and so Judy thought a labyrinth might be a good addition to campus life and support the work done by the counsellors.

She also appreciates mindfulness practice as a spiritual discipline. "It's employed by many different faith traditions and a labyrinth therefore, introduced as a mindfulness practice can work well in a multi-faith context."

It wasn't long between attending the Wisdom's Feast and introducing the labyrinth to the campus' because she focused on temporary labyrinths. "It didn't take very long at all. The counsellor at Charles Sturt and I drew a 7 ring classical design labyrinth in chalk outside the Learning Commons (aka library) and shortly after that I used flour to mark out one on the grass at La Trobe.

Flour only lasts a few days even if it doesn't rain, so we looked for something more permanent and for the next one I did on grass, I borrowed the line marker from the soccer club that uses our sports field. It is big and has four wheels and is designed to mark straight lines, so was very hard work.

We then applied for some funding from the staff well-being fund to buy a more suitable marker - a little one with only two wheels that is much easier to push. The outline lasts several weeks, especially in Winter when the grass doesn't grow so fast."

"Every so often we get students who 'run' the labyrinth. I always wonder how they don't get giddy, but they seem to enjoy themselves. I had fun walking one by the light of a number of mobile phones during an evening event. I mentioned it to several students and they wanted to try it then and there!"

Judy could not say specifically who walks as her office is a long way from where the labyrinths are sited, however people whose offices overlook the sites have told her "they see people using them regularly."

Currently there are no organised walks. New students find out about their existence though posters, emails, Facebook posts that Judy does and an 'old school' sandwich board sited near the location. Brochures explaining 'what it is' and 'how to' use it are left in waterproof plastic boxes near the entry to each labyrinth.

Mindfulness Practice and the Labyrinth Experience in a University Setting . . . (cont.)

The value of labyrinth walking is being embraced more and more. This year for example, the School of Community Health included a labyrinth activity in their orientation program.



“It is difficult to tell how much they have altered stress levels or the enjoyment of the outdoors. People certainly use them whenever I make them available. And enthusiasm comes from the least expected places sometimes. For example, the man who mows the lawns at La Trobe and the person in charge of facilities at Charles Sturt are both firm advocates.

Judy has been successful getting funding for a suitable sports field marker and spray paint. “The labyrinth we have at Charles Sturt is now semi-permanent, in that it is painted on a gravel surface and only needs re-coating every 2-3 months. The paint to do this costs around \$30-40. It is an 11 ring classical pattern, because this is easier to draw than a Chartres, although I prefer to walk a Chartres.”

Weather permitting; Judy enjoys walking several times a week herself. Going forward, she would like to offer some guided walks, however she doesn't feel she has the expertise. This is apart from lack of time and a university timetable to accommodate! She values the fact that introducing this new element has expanded people's perception of what chaplaincy is (not just bible study) and enabled her to connect with students and faculty who don't see themselves as conventionally religious.

It seems the journey with labyrinths for Judy and her universities has been a delight. When asked, would she do it all again, her response is “Yes, it has definitely been worth it. I am working towards making them available on a more permanent basis.” Lucky students and staff at Latrobe and Sturt universities!

What people said . . .

One of her favourite labyrinth encounter stories concerns a student, on his way to buy an energy drink. The young man stopped to see what she was doing. He walked and then told Judy how the labyrinth walk had energised him so he no longer needed to buy a drink.

Another time there was a member of staff who stood for a very long time in the middle. When she came out, she asked for instructions on how to draw one in her carport at home so she could walk regularly. She'd had an incredible sense of 'release'.

And yet another story relays how turning our focus 'in' on the labyrinth can shift perception; a staff member at La Trobe was stunned that despite there always being traffic noise from the nearby freeway, once she stepped into the labyrinth, she no longer heard it. What she did hear were birds and other sounds of nature. The traffic sounds returned only when she stepped out again.

NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

Celebrating 10 years of TLS 'Branching Out' in Australia.

The Labyrinth Society is an international organization whose mission is to support all those who create, maintain and use labyrinths, and to serve the global community by providing education, networking and opportunities to experience transformation.

In 2005 The Labyrinth Society's appointed its first Australian Representative. As the role developed as a Country position it has led to focus across Australian. Further TLS assistance was provided through scholarships for 2 people to attend the Gathering as well as a Special Purpose Grant for tea-light candles and first aid kit for public and private labyrinth events. Not only did the Society provide the resources it's CEO and Board members over time generously contributed guidance and support. The following is a glimpse of the changing profile of labyrinths in Australia last decade:

- National newsletter set up is emailed to 300 people.
- TLS RR's or contact people in all States and Territories
- Worldwide Labyrinth Locator list of 16 grew to 110.
- Key public candlelight labyrinth walks.
- Hosted Veriditas Facilitator Training 4 States (80 people).
- Hosted instruction in labyrinth building 2 States (40 people)
- World Labyrinth Day celebrated in 8 States and Territories.
- High profile permanent labyrinths 2 in hospitals & 3 in parks.
- Resourcing the construction of temporary labyrinths.
- There has been a Gathering held in Victoria.
- Australian Labyrinth Facebook Group 40 members

Australian Labyrinth Network

This informal network is made up of members of the International Labyrinth Society, Veriditas Trained and Certified Labyrinth Facilitators and Subscribers. There are also people who build labyrinths and walk labyrinths.

2016 we will survey readers to find out their interest in: - the newsletter, Facebook. holding and/or attending Labyrinth Gatherings. We will also assess interest in becoming a formal network.

Outlines for the next editions of the newsletter include:

2015 Summer Labyrinth construction, costs, and outcomes.
 2016 Autumn Use of finger labyrinths in therapy & creativity.
 2016 Winter Mental & physical disabilities.
 2016 Spring Myths and legends of labyrinths and mazes.
 2016 Summer Use of labyrinths for children.

- Join Newsletter Mailing List here
- Unsubscribe from newsletter mailing list here.
- Join Australian Labyrinth Facebook here

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Resources

Aust Labyrinth Locator



Key International Resources.

The Labyrinth Society

This is an A – Z labyrinth resource base for the World - Also check out the new market place. <http://labyrinthociety.org/market/marketplace>

Veriditas

Trains people in the art facilitating labyrinth walks as well as resource and support through webinars that are open to facilitators and the public.

The World Wide Labyrinth Locator

List yours and find one to walk all around the World.

• Other Resources.

Labyrinth Enterprises

Robert Ferre's website for labyrinth construction, sacred geometry, publications etc.

Labyrinthos

Jeff Seward, Labyrinth historian lots of photo's too.

Geomancy

Sig Lonegren, is a geomancer and dowser.