

"The labyrinth of recovery from an eating disorder" by Jo Cook is an absolute stand out article and one I urge you to read. It is on pages 7 and 8. It is a reprint from the July 2007 "Labyrinths Matter" Newsletter.



The Labyrinth

Trust the path
 to lead
 have confidence in the direction
 find solace in the rhythm
 as you walk
 towards discovery
 Rest and ponder
 draw strength
 complete your walk
 in faith
 made whole

Jo Cook



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THE AUSTRALIA LABYRINTH STORY SO FAR By Lorraine Rodda - Australian Representative

The labyrinth journey in Australia commenced at least 30 years ago with a resurgence in the late 1990's through to the mid the 2000's. So in many ways we are now reinventing the wheel. However, this time we have the benefit of the internet and peak International labyrinth organisations to help us on our journey with others in a smaller world. So far my research indicates that about 12 people travelled to America to attend facilitator training courses with Veriditas and no doubt as a result of this valuable ground work, there is now a growing interest in the benefits of labyrinth walking in Australia. This re emerging interest seemingly through a largely unconnected but strong labyrinth movement of people who have been "walking" to have labyrinths as an integral part of the communities in which they live, learn, work and play. Labyrinth websites have been created with establishing a data base listing 53 labyrinths by State & Territory e.g.

The Australian Labyrinth Locator Cedar Prest, a professional artist and a Veriditas labyrinth facilitator, is hosting this data base of Australian labyrinths.



www.labyrinthlinkaustralia.org

Worldwide Labyrinth Locator . This project is sponsored by The Labyrinth Society and Veriditas, Inc. through a generous grant from the Faith, Hope and Love Foundation. helps us to be connected to the global labyrinth community. www.labyrinthlocator.org

In recent years The Labyrinth Society Inc membership has grown to 25. Today, fourteen members are TLS Representatives in 5 States and 1 Territory of Australia.. This has been a highly successful way of introducing the labyrinth to the wider community. e.g. A quarterly newsletter is emailed to 250 people living in all States and Territories of Australia. It is also emailed to New Zealand and Singapore. In addition, archive copies are listed as a resource in the Labyrinth Network North West's website in USA .
<http://www.labyrinthnetworknorthwest.org/>

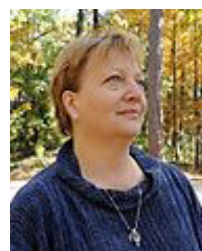
In Victoria, an effective way of networking has been through promoting the labyrinth at an Australian wide Meditation Expo, holding of a health forum in the research and education precinct of a large public hospital, and convening facilitator training courses and building workshops. In New South Wales the labyrinth was launched in a regional centre . The TLS Representative attended the public launch of plans for permanent labyrinth in the Children's Hospital. In Tasmania a Mental Health Conference featured the labyrinth and in Western Australia Facilitator training and building workshops were also held. So here we are threading our way across Australia stepping out of the labyrinth maze, trusting the path to find our Australian labyrinth centre.

ABOUT THE LABYRINTH SOCIETY

By Lisa Gidlow Moriarty
TLS President

The Labyrinth Society is a labor of love. The members of TLS are individuals who, because of their work with labyrinths worldwide, have formed a diverse and energetic community for the celebration and enjoyment of their common interest, the labyrinth. We endeavor to inspire and empower one another both in the leadership of the organization and in the work we do with the labyrinth.

Designed to serve those whose imaginations have been captured and sparked by the labyrinth symbol, the Society exists in order to support all who create, maintain, and enjoy labyrinths. By sharing our enthusiasm and



resources, and by providing education about the many aspects of the labyrinth's design and uses, we offer the global community unique opportunities for connection and transformation. I invite you to explore this website to get a sense of the labyrinth's history, its role in

the modern world, and its potential for the future. As you explore the labyrinth's paths, consider their relevance for you, and consider joining us on our ongoing journey of discovery.

<http://www.labyrinthociety.org/>

THE LABYRINTH WALK EXPERIENCE
By Lorraine Rodda.

Part of the last years feast of labyrinth events in Melbourne was a health forum at the Alfred Hospital on Thursday October 23, 2008.



The evening began with the opportunity to walk a canvas Chartres labyrinth: introduced by Robert Ferre and accompanied by Shane Charles on the didgeridoo. The labyrinth was on loan from the RMIT University's Spirituality Centre.



The Labyrinth Walk Experience:

Feedback from the labyrinth walk:- Important to keep the session grounded and practical otherwise it could have been too much theory without experience. The labyrinth "adds energy" even when not being walked on - to know it was there, see it in the breaks etc.



*As a first time walker I felt I needed more instruction, but it seems there are no good or bad ways of taking it, and it depends on one's mood what one gets out of it.

*Walking the labyrinth added to the experience - seems an essential part of the forum. Have read about, but not walked, a labyrinth before.

*I missed the explanation. From what I saw when I arrived, a facilitator was needed to space and limit the number of people on the labyrinth. - As a first time facilitator on the evening I agree that towards the end spacing of people was not optimal as I had not take into account some difficulties with a wheelchair.

*I missed the explanation, but I feel it is always important to have one available for people to experience for themselves at any talk about labyrinths.

*Maximum rating as I knew very little about labyrinths before the night it was important to hear the explanation and to have a labyrinth to walk.

Health Forum - Alfred Hospital October 2008
By Dr Margaret Rainbird



The group then gathered in the lecture theatre to hear from several speakers. Sixty three people were in attendance which was very gratifying. Their backgrounds ranged from medical practice, social work, pastoral care and hospital chaplaincy as well as people from community based Mental Health Services.

HEALTH FORUM - ALFRED HOSPITAL
By Dr Margaret Rainbird.

The forum was chaired by Paula McLeod, a psychologist and labyrinth facilitator. Paula outlined the purpose of the Forum invited a panel of Australian health practitioners and researchers to provide a "snap shot" of the current Australian experience.

In her introduction Paula highlighting the Australian experience as embracing labyrinth walking for over 30 years. Australian Labyrinth Society Members seeing the emerging use of labyrinths as a tool for healing in our health care settings invited Robert Ferre, to share with us his knowledge and expertise. Robert is a leading international figure in the labyrinth revival in health care settings in America.



Dr Michael Stevens, Oncologist Children's Hospital in Westmead NSW

The Labyrinth a tool for stress relief for staff with access for patients and the community.

Dr Michael Stevens spoke about his passion for the labyrinth, especially the creation on beaches and his previous painful but rewarding experiences as a labyrinth builder and the plans he has for the installation of a permanent Chartres labyrinth at the Westmead Children's Hospital in Sydney



Whilst the labyrinth will be available to anyone who wishes to walk it, Michael's primary intention in making it available is providing a source of stress relief for over stretched staff. He introduced us to the concept of the Clock of the Long Now as the time frame the process seems to be running on. He hopes to be able to use it at sunrise on the winter solstice next year. (2009)

Labyrinths are not new, are not dangerous, take little space and are therapeutic.
Anita Gouthro, Nurse & Masters Student.



Anita Gouthro with a nursing background, having worked in many challenging environments around the world and is a Masters student at La Trobe University. She was able to do her Masters based on the labyrinth and spoke about introducing labyrinths to Australian nurses, doctors and allied health professionals. Anita will also produce a booklet as a resource for people seeking to create labyrinths.

Introducing Labyrinths to the Community Welfare Training Sector.
By Dr. Margaret Rainbird



I described my experience in running one day workshops for professionals working in the community welfare sector. These were diverse and interesting groups of people who really enjoyed the opportunity to meet and experience the labyrinth and hopefully go on to use it in their work.

LABYRINTHS IN HOSPITAL SETTINGS.
By Robert Ferre



Robert spoke of several specific hospitals in the U.S.A. that have permanent labyrinths. It was really interesting to hear about the varying philosophies of these hospitals and wonderful anecdotes about how their labyrinths are used. We have some catching up to do in Australia.

12 Reasons to have labyrinths in hospitals.
<http://www.labyrinth-enterprises.com/12hospitalpdf.pdf>

Key Points - Introducing labyrinths in hospitals.

The first, and most important step is to set up a committee of interested "inside" people.

Chaplain or Director of Mission
Any influential person
The CEO's wife (if CEO is a man)
The CEO (if a woman)
The architectural firm
Anyone who will listen
Hold a labyrinth walk and see who comes.

Tip . . .

It is never enough just to tell someone it is a good idea. They will rarely follow up on their own. You need to give them documentation, building suggestions, patterns, locations, along with potential uses and benefits, costs, fundraising ideas, etc.

MAKING SENSE OF THE RECOVERY FROM ANOREXIA.

Jo Cook - Masters in Education & Certified Veriditas Facilitator

After a brief break Jo Cook shared her very personal story about how the labyrinth came in to her life at a time of great need when she was suffering from anorexia and all of its consequences.



Part of her talk was told as the story of a little girl and her increasingly painful and difficult walk in to the labyrinth and the assistance she received to walk back out again: better sheltered and protected than when she walked in.

The illustrations for this story were magnificent and it was really good to have that complete change of approach for the later part of the evening. I don't know about anyone else but I was getting tired by then and Jo's story held me captivated.

All in all I think the forum and response to it showed the potential for similar events in hospitals around Australia to introduce the labyrinth and its benefits.

Dr Margaret Rainbird
<http://www.vitalpeople.com.au/about.htm>
TLS Representative in N.S.W.

INTRODUCING LABYRINTHS TO THE WELFARE TRAINING SECTOR.

Dr. Margaret Rainbird

<http://www.vitalpeople.com.au/about.htm>

I have given 2 separate full day workshops to professionals in the community welfare sector through the Centre for Community Welfare Training in NSW. The professional backgrounds of the participants have included psychology, social work and mental health. Their work roles have included birth education; counselling for problem gamblers, home carers & residents of a women's refuge; mental health workers in western NSW etc. Their labyrinth experience has ranged from none, never heard of it, to having walked a very old one on the island of Iona.

The format of the workshop included defining the labyrinth and distinguishing it from the maze. I went through the history of the labyrinth both ancient and more recent and then discussed how it is used in modern times and what the potential benefits of walking the labyrinth are. I touched on viewing a labyrinth walk as a metaphor for other aspects of life and went through some of the basic 'road rules' to facilitate walking it as a group.

We also discussed the difference between holding an intention for the walk and having expectations. I minimised any discussion of other people's experiences of walking the labyrinth prior to their first walk because I didn't want that to colour their experience.

The participants then walked the labyrinth (a canvas 22'x24', 7 circuit classic) and we discussed the experience as a group afterwards. They walked the labyrinth at least one more time during the workshop so that they had the opportunity to realise that each walk is different and to potentially deepen the experience. In the later section of the workshop I gave them the seed pattern for the 7 circuit classic labyrinth and talked about its possible applications in their work. These obviously include using a finger labyrinth to :

- Centre themselves prior to seeing a client.
- Facilitate ease and comfort in the client
- Let go of the day prior to leaving for home
- Another suggestion is finding a way to create a permanent or canvas one for use by themselves and their clients.

Each participant was given a hand painted finger labyrinth on a felt square.

I had a limited capacity to follow up whether they continued to use and benefit from the labyrinth as I didn't have their contact details but evaluation forms showed very positive feedback. Many of the participants were very excited to have been introduced to the labyrinth and its possibilities.



MOSIAC MEDITATION GARDEN LABYRINTH PROJECT Castlemaine Victoria

By Lisa Mitchell

Co-Ordinator The Old School House

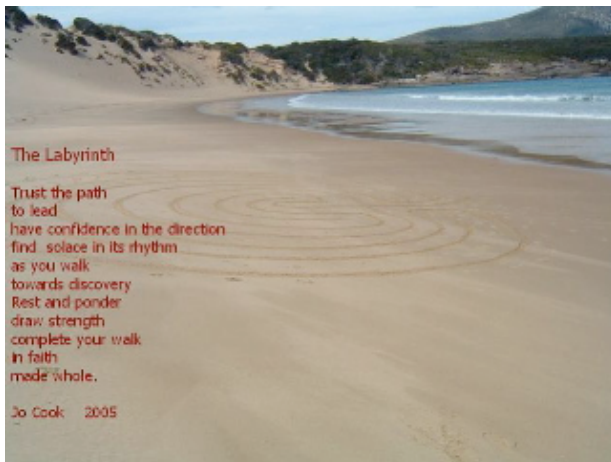
We have been running mosaic/clay workshops auspiced under the Grief & Loss program at Mt. Alexander Hospital to produce tiles & pavers focusing on imagery of life, death & transformation. We will be exhibiting these in the Phee Broadway Library Foyer 22nd April....13th May.

We are very excited to learn about World Labyrinth Day as we are a third of the way through our community project & seeking further funding to complete it. As labyrinth day falls during the exhibition we plan to make a temporary labyrinth on the Anglican church site where the Meditation garden will eventually be installed. (I'm hoping that as well as generating interest in labyrinths it may generate donations to actually install one !!!) The proposed site is a redundant tennis court spray painting directly onto the asphalt seems to be the simplest solution.

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THE LABYRINTH OF RECOVERY FROM AN EATING DISORDER.

By Jo Cook



The Labyrinth

Trust the path
to lead
have confidence in the direction
find solace in the rhythm
as you walk
towards discovery
Rest and ponder
draw strength
complete your walk
in faith
made whole

Jo Cook

Recovery from an eating disorder is a complex and confusing journey. My experience is that it is not a linear pathway where one jumps a hurdle and then leaves in behind – conquered. The journey is best described as one of many twists and turns, when at times it seems that one is travelling in a backwards direction. The labyrinth is an ancient and mysterious archetype that is a useful metaphor for understanding the road to recovery from an eating disorder.

Anita Johnson in her book, **Eating in the Light of the Moon**, writes of women entering the labyrinth of recovery as they travel on a winding path to their centre and then exit with a new way of being in the world.

For those unfamiliar with this ancient pattern with a purpose, The Labyrinth is different from a maze (which has dead ends and false passages), the labyrinth has a single path that leads unerringly to the centre. It shows us that no time or effort is ever wasted; if we stay the course, every step, however circuitous, however many turns, however distant it seems, takes us closer to our goal.

It is a difficult task to determine the starting point of recovery. Is it that moment when you first seek help? Or that moment when you first recognise what others around you have been seeing? It maybe when you finally utter the word anorexia to a trusted friend as an explanation of what's happening to you. Does the recovery journey begin at the point of hospitalisation when others intervene in an attempt to take control of your behavior? Or could it be when those around you begin to relax a little and re-gain their faith in you? The truth is, there is no one instance that prompts recovery and it is all of these and more. Recognition of the illness does not guarantee an end of denial but it is an important event in the journey. I recall the fear of recognition, which prompted the verse on fear. However, denial and comforting behaviors persist well after this point and are difficult to combat.

Fear

I caught a glimpse
this morning
of the imposter
Searching for me
in the strange image
before my eyes
The sight unnerving
So victorious
sneering through the destruction
tightening the grasp
crushing the spirit

Jo Cook

This is when the journey in the labyrinth takes a sharp turn, one that on the surface appears to be a backward step. Johnson refers to this in her book and says of recovery "that it may appear to the sufferer that she is backsliding, that things are getting worse rather than better. She may feel frustrated over not making her way easily or as smoothly as she thinks she should, and become impatient with herself for not getting "better" as quickly as she had expected".

THE LABYRINTH OF RECOVERY - Continued

This process can be frustrating and confusing but the journey through the labyrinth is also one of discovery. One needs to allow the time for discovery to complete the journey. One such discovery is an understanding of the difference between hunger and starvation and why irrational and frightening thoughts, previously foreign to you, are possible.

You don't have to be hungry to be starving.

Hunger and starvation
ought to be as one
for when Hunger leaves Starvation
destruction has begun.
Hunger is the signal
the spoken of the two
Starvation remains silent
for he has work to do.
Starvation has no feeling
that's how he wins his place
Hunger on the other hand
has a far more sensitive face.
Hunger wishes you no harm
It signals what you need
Starvation, the imposter
is motivated by greed.
Starvation seeks to own you
He plays games with your mind
Hunger is more caring
They are not one of a kind.
Hunger ought rule Starvation
Not let him out of sight
For Starvation without Hunger
Just simply isn't right.

Jo Cook

The recovery and discovery requires patience and confidence both from within and from around you. The patience to discover the true nourishment you seek and the confidence to regain your Self. It requires trust in yourself once more and an acceptance of the encouragement from those who support you.

The journey is your own to make but it is not necessarily always a solo journey. At times your spouse alongside you, or a friend who offers words of support accompanies you in the labyrinth. You must make the commitment to complete the journey and the support of a wise and empathetic counsellor is vital as you progress towards the centre of your being and then prepare for your exit from the labyrinth. The beginning point of recovery then, may not be important.

No doubt it will be different with each individual and I suspect their families would cite their own indicators of recovery. What are important are the journey and the discoveries one makes to form new understandings of themselves and the disorder. With this gained knowledge and appreciation of self the suffer will be able to exit the labyrinth, the journey completed! Johnson writes that "someone can fully recover from an eating disorder. Once recovered, she can go through the rest of her life without having to struggle with food, fat or dieting. Once she discovers that her urge to eat (or not) when she is not physically hungry (or is) is a signal of a different hunger she needs to address, she can begin to discover ways of feeding herself the nourishment she truly desires".

About the Author.

Jo Cook was 43 when diagnosed with an eating disorder, in 2004. She is married and has four children. Two boys aged 20 and 17 and two daughters aged 15 and 12. Jo is a teacher and holds the position of the Director of the Centre for Excellence at the Hutchins School. After having some time on sick leave, Jo negotiated with her school to take leave for 2005. Through her illness, Jo unexpectedly became aware of the labyrinth as a tool for transformation and healing and in February of this year traveled to San Francisco to experience it for herself. Coincidentally, then reading *Eating in the Light of the Moon* by Anita Johnson, which addresses eating disorders in women using the labyrinth as the metaphor for growth and the journey to recovery. She now has in Hobart a 12m x 12m canvas replica of the Chartres Labyrinth and conducts workshops and reflective walks. It is transportable. For further information on The Labyrinth as a Pathway to growth please feel free to contact Jo at Email j_cook@pjc.com.au or Phone 0417143084

Update

Since this article was published in the Labyrinth Matters newsletter in July 2007 Jo has been appointed chair of the Tasmanian Governments Independent Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services. She completed her training with Veriditas and is now a Certified Labyrinth Facilitator and is The Labyrinth Society's Representative in Tasmania.

COMPANION THROUGH AN ORDEAL
By Margaret Rainbird NSW TLS Representative

I have studied and practised many different healing modalities over a 30 year career and last year completed a 2 year diploma in shamanic practice. One component of the course was a 3 day vision quest in the Central Desert at a place called Mary Vale south of Alice Springs. The purpose of a vision quest is to create a state of awareness that makes us more receptive to Spirit, to our inner selves and our intuition. Ideally we receive a vision of our next step or future direction.

To achieve these ends we are separated from familiar surroundings (their comforts and demands) and spend varying amounts of time with no food and minimal sleep.

We travelled from Alice to the 'base camp' and no food was eaten after that bus trip. 24 hours later we did a sweat lodge. It took a lot of discipline to make myself go in to a deliberately heated enclosure when it was already over 30 degrees and the middle of the day. We then dispersed to find the places where we would set up our individual medicine wheels that we were to remain within for 3 days and nights. We took enough water with us and very little else.

As you can imagine, there are different levels of ordeal in this experience: the heat, the flies, the hunger, nausea, sleep deprivation, solitude (for some this is bliss). On the first afternoon I was lamenting not having brought a finger labyrinth with me to help 'pass the time' as well as get in to a meditative state rather than a hot, hungry, grumpy state. I drew a couple in my journal then suddenly had the idea of trying to build one within the medicine wheel. As the day cooled I started clearing the leaf litter within the space I had. My choice of location had been a little grove of trees on the bank of the dry river bed as I knew I wouldn't survive without shade.

The next morning while the day was still relatively cool I decided to have a go at drawing a 7 circuit labyrinth in the sand, using my hiking boot as the width of the paths. It fitted perfectly first go between small trees at the East, North and South margins of the wheel leaving me some 'living space' in the West.

The excitement and joy that I felt at creating that sacred space within a sacred space was so uplifting and energising given my living conditions at the time. It felt so right. I now knew that I would make it through the quest. I gathered small twigs within the wheel to reinforce the lines and I walked my labyrinth.



The most I could do at some times of the day was just move around the largest tree as the angle at which it cast its shade changed. I walked the labyrinth at sunrise, sunset and whenever I got to the point where I just didn't think I could keep going.

There was much about this time in the desert that was amazing: the stars in the night sky, living on sun and moon time rather than clock time. I gained a lot of awareness about my resilience and resourcefulness at the same time as I struggled with the concept of the need to mortify the body in order to contact the spirit. I wrote in my journal at the time:

"There are aspects of shamanic work that I absolutely love. I have trouble, on the other hand, with the harsh, brutal aspects that believe that suffering is the path to spiritual growth and opening. The labyrinth is a different doorway to Spirit. The path is laid out and the seeker walks it. At their pace, in their time and it opens what is ready to be opened. It may be emotion, it may be bodily sensation, it may be insight. It may be release or replenishment. It may contain surprise or deep familiarity. As we walk its twists and turns we twist and turn within ourselves. It is gentle, non threatening and powerful".

FACILITATOR TRAINING WEEKEND - ROBERT FERRE By Paula McLeod VIC TLS Representative

The Facilitator Workshop was an interesting and rich two days of conversation and training for both new and experienced facilitators. A diverse group of 40 people gathered at Campion Spirituality Centre to explore the many dimensions of labyrinth facilitation.



Robert Ferre provided a comprehensive exploration of the history of labyrinths from their ancient origins through to their various applications in an amazing array of contemporary settings. The holistic and healing aspects of the labyrinth were unpacked and facilitators given practical guidance on how to facilitate labyrinth walks and workshops.

One of the underpinning themes of the workshop was to always trust the labyrinth, as each person will have a different experience every time they walk. The way we walk the labyrinth reflects where we are at in our life and the path can open our minds to possibilities great and small in very individual and unique ways.

As Robert explained it is important that facilitators allow people space and freedom for this experience. The simplicity of the labyrinth Robert reminded us makes it impossible to fail, all you have to do is walk, just like breathing it comes naturally. As facilitators we don't "make the labyrinth experience happen for people" because the labyrinth meets each person where they are and its path encourages them to take the next step on their unique life journey. We must be cautious about creating expectations when facilitating as nothing in a labyrinth walk is "supposed" to happen – what happens, happens for that person. To quote Robert – "The labyrinth meets us where we are and takes us to where we are going – at our own speed."

Input on sharing post - labyrinth walk experiences was valuable and reinforced the need for facilitators to use reflective listening techniques and to affirm individual responses. Again we were reminded to empathise not analyse and to let go of our expectations for participants responses.



The session on constructing a masking tape classical labyrinth in 5 minutes was a highlight and a godsend for facilitators. The tape machine is pushed out in front of you with the sticky side of the tape facing upwards. Starting with a short straight line - this later will link to the entrance - start making a spiral with the centre about 1400 mm. The masking tape is available at hardware stores. This labyrinth needed 2 x 55 mm rolls @ \$6.40 each The Tape Making Machine Working Group rejoiced in their efforts



Armed with a very comprehensive manual filled with resources and practical ideas, as well as new found networks participants left Robert's workshop dwelling on the endless possibilities for enhancing their work with labyrinths.

LABYRINTHS IN PLACES Labyrinths are found in many places. Some are permanent and some are brought in temporarily for events. The challenge for labyrinth enthusiasts is often how to get permission to introduce a labyrinth into a specific environment. This section of the website examines some of the places where labyrinths may be found, the benefits of having them there, how they are used, and how people were able to install them there in the first place.

USING LABYRINTHS IN COUNSELLING

The following article has been extracted from www.labyrinthociety.org/labyrinths-in-places

While finger labyrinths are a terrific catalyst to most therapeutic issues, some clients will refuse to try them. For instance, those who've been brought up in a religion or belief system that associates the labyrinth pattern (or relaxation techniques in general), with fear and misunderstanding. Other potentially difficult situations for using finger labyrinths are with those who are actively psychotic, clinically depressed, in the manic phase of Bipolar Disorder, and those who have Borderline Personality Disorder. This doesn't mean that you can't use a finger labyrinth with any of these diagnostically-labeled clients. It just means that more caution should be used as each (with the use of a finger labyrinth) may come face to face with the underlying issues they've been trying to consciously avoid dealing with.

In addition, working with finger labyrinths as part of a therapeutic strategy can also present a potential challenge to both newer and more experienced therapists. As I see it, labyrinths are an intuitive playground for the spirit. They involve intuition and a willingness to allow whatever comes up in the process of finger walking to surface without judgment or censorship. Therefore, therapists who think they "know" what each of their clients need and have a theoretical road map of how to get each there using his or her favorite structured therapeutic modality (i.e. Transpersonal, Humanistic, Jungian, Freudian, Cognitive-Behavioral etc.) may find using a finger labyrinth in therapy rather disorienting and sometimes a struggle at first. With experience, most therapists using finger labyrinths report clients are resolving their issues more quickly while the therapists themselves are experiencing heightened intuitive gifts and better listening skills: the cornerstones of every successful therapist.

Having used walking labyrinths numerous times in therapy situations as well, it is clear that they, like finger labyrinths, can have a profound effect on both relaxation and trust.

It has been my experience that walking labyrinths (especially when walked by more than one person at the same time) tend to hold up a hypothetical "mirror" in front of a client where he/she can see the truth behind any defense mechanisms made up of unproductive thoughts, attitudes, or beliefs that are held in the client's mind. As a result, clients seem more ready to look at and potentially release, some of these defenses and go on to develop new, more satisfying strategies.

Case

A couple came to me to learn relaxation techniques to better cope with the anger and frustration they felt when dealing with authority figures. I invited each to walk the labyrinth that was on my premises. The wife did so; the husband refused to take part. After briefly discussing her experience, the couple went on their way.

The following week when they returned, the wife was very excited and proceeded to talk about how "nice" those in authority positions seemed to be that week in their interactions with her. Her husband said they still treated him "just as badly." I noticed that her face had a soft smile on it (almost an inner glow), and her body language was much more open than during the previous week. His face and body features continued to look like that of an angry man (much like hers had looked the previous week.) She said that it seemed like a miracle the way everyone was so nice to her. I suggested to her that maybe the world didn't change, but that her expectations of the world did and that was enough for the people in authority to look at her and treat her differently. This was a very eye-opening statement for her and it immediately began to unravel long-held beliefs about how she was powerless to have positive relationships, especially with those she perceived to be in authority positions. As a result of incorporating the walking labyrinth early in the counseling process, this woman went from being angry and closed to confident and open when dealing with authority figures.

Little Miracles on the Path
By Linda Mikell

Linda Mikell is long-time lover of the labyrinth and has made it her ministry to collect and share stories on the labyrinth and of how people have been effected by their labyrinth experience. She is a Veriditas trained facilitator, a member of the Veriditas Council and the NE USA Regional Representative. She distributes a story each month. If you'd like to be on her distribution list, or if you have a story to add to her collection, email her at edlinmmik@optonline.net.

A young mother in our congregation sent me this wonderful "New Beginnings" story. I thought it very appropriate for our March story when we are all looking forward to the new beginnings of the spring. There are TWO new beginnings in this story, so read through to the end to find out about the second one. It's actually two love stories.

Many of our life experiences center around the labyrinth. There are many "miracles" to tell. Please send me your story so we continue to connect on this level. The particular labyrinth (Avalon) in this story has a "kiva" center. You step down into a circular well and sit on the steps. s,

New Beginnings

My first labor was an 80-hour odyssey with multiple interventions. It was not the natural labor I had desired or that Hypnobirthing had prepared me for. By my second pregnancy I'd moved to New York, a state that requires insurance companies to cover midwives and planned homebirths. I exercised daily, listened to my hypnobirthing CD, and envisioned a peaceful labor experience in my own home. I awoke on a sunny July morning 3 days prior to my due date and prepared to go on a hike with my 2 year old daughter. I was in early labor and knew my son would be born later that day.

A friend came over and was surprised I still wanted to hike. She followed me to Stony Brook's Avalon Park, a nature preserve, and we hiked up to the labyrinth with our daughters running and laughing ahead. When we arrived to the labyrinth, I did not complete it.

I went straight to the center and sat to call my midwife to let her know I would need her later that day. I sat for a moment there and reflected on the perfection of being at the labyrinth's center, at the Source, as I embarked on this spiritual journey of labor, childbirth, and parenting two children.



Being in nature and feeling the movement of my body was how I wanted to be with this labor of love. We hiked next through a rhododendron forest then through a field of wildflowers with a stand of trees forming a circle along the

trail and we spent some time there I returned home that evening with a sleeping daughter, and my surges went from tightening sensations to incredible pulsating sensations throughout my whole core. Everyone was summoned, and my midwife told me later that when she arrived I was already in transition. My son Tahvo was born at 2 a.m. under the stars and trees into a birthing pool on my back deck as a friend saged us all.

I return to this special place, Avalon, and will always remember it as part of my son's birth day. One of my most recent visits there was magical: WILL U MARRY ME was written with sticks and laid on the freshly fallen snow in the heart of the labyrinth for someone else to remember always as they walk their path in the labyrinth of life.

MY LABYRINTH WALK – so far!

Rev. Dr. Helen Malcolm
TLS Regional Representative Northern Victoria
Veriditas Certified Labyrinth Facilitator.

I first met the labyrinth when I read a book called 'Sacred Space' by Stephen Wright and Jean Sayre-Adams, which led me to Lauren Artress' book 'Walking the Labyrinth'.

My imagination was captured, but it was a long time before I walked a labyrinth in a garden in Tasmania and even longer before I was 'properly' introduced to the labyrinth during a workshop at a newly constructed outdoor, tiled labyrinth in Launceston, Tasmania.

Then I was well and truly hooked and when the opportunity arose to train with Lauren in Melbourne in 2008. I leapt at it.



Since then I have imported an 11 circuit canvas Chartres style labyrinth and run workshops for church members, patients, University staff and students. I am busy trying to get the local Clinical School and hospital to install labyrinths and am making progress. I hope to be able to do some research on the labyrinth – particularly with patients but also staff and students.

Dr Lisa Shortridge, the other TLS regional rep. for this area, and I are also hoping to get some labyrinths erected in public places and are busy organizing a World Labyrinth Day walk on 2nd May. We will have an indoor Chartres labyrinth and an outdoor Cretan labyrinth for people to walk from 1pm after an introductory talk.

The most exciting upcoming event is a family doctor rural conference in Crete where my abstract has been accepted to present a workshop – 'Walking the Labyrinth – from Minotaur to Medicine'. I plan to discuss the origin and uses of the labyrinth, talk about current research using the labyrinth in the medical field and then give participants the opportunity to walk a Cretan (of course!) labyrinth. My mind is occupied with how to construct the labyrinth in a carpeted hall without damaging the carpet – all in the tea-break before the workshop! But overriding that preoccupation is the magic and the excitement of being able to bring the labyrinth back to Crete as a useful tool for doctors to use for themselves and their patients in stress management.

Labyrinth Healthcare Online Network.
This could be a great opportunity for health professionals in Australia to join a health specific online International Health labyrinth network.

Over the past decade, labyrinths have been used as a form of meditation, prayer and healing.

This "Labyrinths in Healthcare" Group has been established as a container for collecting information regarding how labyrinths are being used as a healing tool, current bio/psychosocial/spiritual published research studies and to keep an up-to-date list of healthcare labyrinths within the United States and the world.

All medical professionals are welcome to join. Email me at the link below and I will send an invitation to join the Healthcare Group. Email Rev Pam Taylor, D.Min., BCC Sr Pediatric Chaplain Texas Children's Hospital

Email pltaylor@texaschildrens.org

THE CLOWN CHAKRA- Activate little known but important Chakra By John Rhodes, Chair TLS Research C'tee

Scientists have found that all our problems can be placed under one heading: Seriousness. Seriousness is the leading cause of everything from Cancer to Reincarnation. Scientists from the Clown Academy have already discovered a new source of healing.

It is a psychic energy point located between the heart chakra and the throat chakra. It is called the clown chakra. If people are feeling miserable; if they have financial problems; if their relationship situation is in the pits; if they are in ill health; if they have a need to sue people; if they find fault with their brother; then obviously their clown chakra is closed. When this happens, the scientists have observed under a high-powered microscope that the cells of every organ display a sad face; and when the clown chakra is open and functioning normally, the cells display a happy face.



When the clown chakra is opened & working (or rather, playing) properly, the psychic mechanism sucks up misery, pain, anger, resentment, grievances, unhappiness and so on, and converts the energy into tiny red heart-shaped balloons. These red heart balloons are directed to the dis-eased" cell or situation, and a happy face appears instantly.

Sometimes the red heart balloons are called endorphins, due to the fact that when anyone experiences them the feeling of separation ends - they experience being back home and no longer an orphan. This is the well known "end orphan" (endorphin) effect. So if you think someone is attacking you, Clown scientists recommend that you visualize sending that person red heart shaped balloons filled with God's Love and Joy. Remember to keep your clown chakra open and remember to laugh seriousness causes reincarnation.

Come Walk With Us



" We sat side by side in the morning light & looked out at the future together" www.storypeople.com]

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Archive Copies of "Labyrinths Matter"

The Labyrinth Network Northwest in USA is hosting "Labyrinths Matter" Newsletter. .
<http://www.labyrinthnetworknorthwest.org/>