

How to Keep a Labyrinth Alive: Tips for Restoration & Revival

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Awareness:

Do people know about the labyrinth, where it is, and what it could be used for?

Many people still don't know what a labyrinth is or have a limited understanding of the variety of experiences that are possible in the space. Permanent signs* or temporary posters can be hung in nearby buildings, on street corners, along paths and in the parking lot. Post regular reminders in newsletters, on social media, and bulletin boards. Have a brochure available with more detailed information about the history, use, and resources for learning about labyrinths. List the labyrinth in online databases such as the Labyrinth Locator (labyrinthlocator.com), WFS Labyrinth Map (wellfedspirit.org/welcome/map-intro), or other regional directories. Include a page about the labyrinth on your website and share seasonal photos, videos and events on social media. Hold a dedication ceremony to educate folks about the labyrinth, create presentations or workshops to remind them about it, and offer labyrinth books for your community to borrow. Leave a journal in a weatherproof box near the entrance for people to share their experiences and you can get a sense of how, when and why people are visiting.

*See labyrinth sign handout by Robert Ferré at <https://www.veriditas.org/Labyrinth-Restoration>

Stewardship:

Is there a trained labyrinth facilitator, keeper, or committee that looks after the labyrinth?

It has been said that 'labyrinths take care of themselves.' While it's true that labyrinths lead a life of their own, they need dedicated and caring people to look after and tend to them. Communicate with the labyrinth builder (if possible) to get their advice about a long-term maintenance schedule. Becoming (or befriending) a [Veriditas trained labyrinth facilitator](#) is a major step in knowing how to host events, educate others and share the labyrinth experience. A labyrinth keeper also needs to sweep, clean, and tidy up the space with an eye out for maintenance concerns and schedules. The steward should cultivate awareness of the labyrinth and organize a community of caretakers or group of volunteers devoted to the labyrinth. Stewardship is also about honoring the land, people, and animals who are connected to the site and selflessly passing the torch to a future leader when their priorities or energy shifts away from the labyrinth.

Recurring Events:

Are you hosting monthly, seasonal, or annual gatherings centered on the labyrinth?

One of the most beneficial undertakings for a labyrinth is holding recurring events to maintain awareness, energy, and engagement. Consistency is key to developing community momentum and sustaining a loyal following. Full moon walks are popular because they shift around to different days of the week and First Fridays, Third Thursdays, etc., are an easily remembered option. The solstice and equinox are popular times for quarterly walks; themed events around annual holidays (New Years, [World Labyrinth Day](#), and Lent, for example) could be an annual commitment. If an event has low turnout, don't give up! Try offering live music, experimenting with a different time/date, or varying the focus to offer something distinctive (yoga? drumming? dancing? poetry? centering prayer? sound healing? Taizé?) Then promote the event far and wide. Weddings and memorials can help pay for maintenance & upkeep.

Placemaking:

Does the labyrinth invite people in? Is the space accessible, attractive, and grounding?

Sometimes there is so much attention in the creation of the labyrinth itself, the approach and surroundings are overlooked or incomplete. The labyrinth should be easily found and accessed. Consider the paths (or lack thereof) from the nearest buildings, sidewalks, parking lots, and other thoroughfares. Is there signage (both near and far)? Lighting? Shade? Something marking the entrance? A literal or symbolic invitation into the space? What leads up to and surrounds the labyrinth will have a big impact on helping people discover, locate and arrive at the threshold. Identify ways to augment the labyrinth so that it both stands out as an attractive space to visit and is a container that where people and energy will remain. Living labyrinths act like a magnet that consciously and subconsciously draw people in through mindful placemaking. Distractions or clutter needs to be minimized as well.

Maintenance:

Is the labyrinth being regularly maintained and are problems being addressed?

There are seasonal, annual, and long-term stresses on labyrinths that should be considered. Maintenance will vary greatly depending on the materials, climate, and setting, but here are some common challenges: Weeds should be removed on a seasonal or monthly basis, especially in the Spring. Organic labyrinths often need missing or misplaced bricks, stones, or branches replaced. Standing water is one of the greatest threats to discoloration and damage to labyrinths and should be mitigated. Good drainage is key to labyrinth survival! If leaves, animal droppings, or other organic material accumulate then blowing or power washing should be undertaken as necessary. Concrete labyrinths require resealing every three years to maintain a barrier of protection. If painted or paver labyrinths begin fading, the lines may need to be resealed or restored for the design to be vibrant and visible. If there are major issues with the foundation, materials, or environment, then a [labyrinth professional](#) should be consulted to repair, restore, or recreate the design. Funds for routine maintenance should be set aside and earmarked for the labyrinth, its approach and surroundings.

Seasoning:

Can you collaborate with others to infuse the labyrinth with a greater variety of energy?

Labyrinths resonate with a broad audience and will live longer as part of a diverse ecosystem. Open the space to other types of groups, events, or experiences along with traditional group walks. Connect with local communities already formed around mindfulness, mental health, spirituality, exercise, art, music, dance, history, leadership, healing, recovery, youth, families, elderly, team building, social activism, etc. The more people that use the space, the more energy will coalesce in and around the labyrinth. Greater diversity will engender broader reach and deeper resonance with all aspects of the labyrinth. Temporarily modify or alter the space with art installations, plantings, flowers, chalk drawings, prayer flags, ribbons, lights, objects, or candles to reawaken the look and feel of the space. Walk the labyrinth daily, or as often as you can, introduce it to others, and invite them to experience it with you or on their own time. Pour your energy into the labyrinth and be openminded so as to allow the labyrinth to lead a life of its own! There may come a time when the labyrinth needs to be laid to rest, reincarnated, or reimagined in another form. Practice non-attachment and trust the path...