



A community needs people whose inner landscape aligns with the landscape. Scott Hensley's dedication to community includes introducing others to the ancient, contemplative practice of labyrinth walking.

Scott Hensley's full-time career was winding down when he took up the ancient, contemplative practice of labyrinth walking. Meandering the unicursal path of the labyrinth spoke to his inner compass, brought him peace, and revealed a new way forward.

Scott partnered in a not-for-profit called EvolveEdu to help teachers in Clark County get high-level professional development. He also formed Walk Vegas to spread the peace labyrinth walking can bring.

"Labyrinths are an enigma," says Scott. "They have been present across centuries, cultures, and continents, but until recently, people haven't been very aware of labyrinths or how walking them can quiet the mind, open the heart, and ground the body."

Walk Vegas (www.walkvegas.org) offers monthly labyrinth events at sites around the valley and provides an interactive labyrinth map that provides photographs and locations for labyrinths in Nevada, California, Arizona, and Utah.

As Scott's labyrinth ministry grows, he contemplates creative ways to share the benefits of labyrinth walking. Thus, when Scott and his sister, Shawn, booked a Disney Arctic Expedition to the Arctic Circle, he dreamed of holding a labyrinth walk on the ship's deck.

Scott didn't ask Disney's permission to offer a labyrinth walk. Rather, he says, he just put the idea into the universe. He also stowed one of his portable canvas labyrinths in his luggage. It ate up 17 of the 50 pounds of luggage he could bring.

While on the trip, Scott met Doug, a Disney Adventure guide who, as fate would have it, had walked a labyrinth Scott photographed. "It was kismet ... The connection I had asked for," says Scott.

Meeting Doug provided Scott with an impromptu opportunity to offer what is likely the northernmost labyrinth walk. The experience put Scott on top of the world. "As we walked the labyrinth looking at the vastness of Artic, I sent waves of peace toward Russia," says Scott. "It was such a beautiful moment ... a still, liminal space in my life."

Scott's next labyrinth exploration will be to create a vibrant public labyrinth for the 10th Annual RiSE Lantern Festival, which is expected to attract 20,000 attendees to the desert south of Las Vegas early next October.

ABOUT LABYRINTHS

Labyrinths are an archetypal contemplation tool found across centuries, continents, and cultures.

A labyrinth's uncomplicated design is a thing of beauty often confused with mazes. Yet, a labyrinth's unicursal path — wherein the beginning and an end are the same — represents the life path. It has twists and turns but no dead ends. It provides a place for meditation that parallels our inner journeys. Walking a labyrinth offers opportunities to reflect on where we are in life to gain new insights and understanding.

There is no "correct" way to walk a labyrinth, as the walk is personal. Slowly walking a labyrinth may offer a chance to unwind and release stressors, while a brisk walk might energize the body, mind, and spirit.

Labyrinth walking reduces anxiety and elicits a "relaxation response." This effect has significant long-term health benefits, including lowering blood pressure, slowing breathing rates, reducing incidents of chronic pain and insomnia.

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