

The Laurel of Asheville, September 2014

Holistic Health Feature: “Labyrinths Offer Pathways to Meditation”

Story by Corina Heich | Photo by Paul M. Howey

Walking a labyrinth helps clear the mind, ease stress, and stimulate the imagination. Many find this age-old method of meditation emotionally and physically healing, and claim that it encourages creativity and resourceful problem solving.

“A labyrinth is a place where we find ourselves, where a person is often able to see more deeply into themselves. It’s a tool for transformation, a path that allows us to discover different perspectives,” says Chuck Hunner, a nationally known creator of labyrinths.

A jeweler since 1972, Chuck discovered labyrinths in 1998 when a gentleman in south Florida taught him how to draw them. Chuck traced his first labyrinth on a sandy beach the following morning.

“My thinking calmed, the hemispheres of my brain began to work in unison, and I felt the same way that I feel sitting with my eyes closed, perfectly still, in my meditation. I had found a way to find the peace I experience with meditation walking with my eyes open.”

Instantly inspired, Chuck began incorporating labyrinthine designs into his jewelry. In 2002, he assisted Robert Ferré with the construction of a labyrinth in Kanuga, North Carolina. Since then, Chuck has helped design and install more than 25 permanent labyrinths across the country. He has constructed labyrinths for hospitals, churches, schools, and individuals.

His patterns are often inspired by the sacred geometry of numbers and proportions. “If we were to measure the way leaves come out of branches, we’d be able to find a coherence within. A geometric coherence. That’s sacred geometry. It’s everywhere around us in nature,” he explains.

“It’s possible to just have seven concentric paths and connect them at random, but really there’s a rhythm and a cadence to an effective labyrinth. There are plenty of different types of labyrinths. In my mind, the seven circuit and eleven circuit, especially the very old ones, can be very healing,” he continues.

While some labyrinths, such as corn mazes, incite a competition to reach the end, labyrinths such as those Chuck designs inspire healing and internal balance. Following the path to the center and retracing your steps comprise the main ritual, but pace, breath, and intention are as unique as each individual on the path.

“What I consider the best way to walk a labyrinth is to follow the path and watch your thoughts,” says Chuck.

For many, this ritual becomes transformative. It’s certainly given Chuck a new purpose in life. “I would rather make permanent labyrinths than do anything else. It’s my greatest passion,” he says.

Consider visiting the labyrinth at the Center for Spiritual Living at 2 Science of Mind Way in West Asheville, one of his labyrinths in our area. Walk the path, center yourself, and retrace your steps. The benefits might surprise you.

“There are no wrong turns, no dead ends, only one path to the center,” says Chuck. “If you keep going forward, you’re going to be successful in getting to the center. You can’t get lost if you persevere.”

For more information about Chuck Hunner and his labyrinths, visit goldenspirit.com. Corina Heich is a writer, editor, and avid reader living in south Asheville.



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