Module 5 Lesson 3

What does this mean for us as mentors and doulas? What do we do with this information, with this concept, with this angle through the kaleidoscope that we might peek? What do we do with it? What does it mean? We know that the people we work with are going to go on a Descent, and they're going to meet their inner Gatekeeper. So, like we talked about, part of our job and our role is to help them awaken their adult archetypes, right? The Hunter, Huntress, the Love Warrior, so that when they meet the Gatekeeper, they might not cling so tight. It's like a little child with their special blankie. You know, I cannot go to sleep without this blankie. But yes, they can, right? Yes, they can. But the child archetype holds on that tight, whereas the adult archetype might ask, *"Huh, how would I go to sleep without that blankie? What would I do? Who would I be without that blankie?"* So part of our job is getting them in that place of activating and awakening their adult archetypes. And can we see that in doing so, and that in our preparation with them, either in class or in a prenatal appointment, we are preparing them to meet the Gatekeeper and to pass through the gates.

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What if we see our work through that lens? Think about that for a minute. How does that shift the way you have seen your job, your work, you think about that, you are preparing people to move through the gates that they will encounter along the way? What does that look like? Well, when we present to people the labyrinth, we offer this idea that along the way they may run into some gates. They may run into the gate of excitement, the gate of great doubt, they may run into the gate of holy terror. So just throwing this idea out that there may be gates that they have to hit, and what will they do in that moment? So starting there, offering this perspective, this angle.

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If we think about teaching the stages of labor, we might think, okay, so in early labor, what gate might they walk through? Some people might be at the gate of excitement in early labor so this might be a good place to teach them a relaxation technique, a pain coping practice that brings them into their body, into the moment. It might be a good time to talk to them about staying nourished and staying hydrated, because they're so excited, they might forget about that. And when we talk about active labor, many people in active labor at some point hit the gate of great doubt. They are not sure they can do this. Well, when we do birth art with people, aren't we introducing them to the gate of great doubt? Yes, because they have a blank piece of paper in front of them and a chalk in their hand, and they don't know what to do. So that's the beauty of it, right? It's a little mini introduction.

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So what do you do when you don't know what to do? Yeah, birth art gives them the opportunity to explore that, to feel into that momentary gate of doubt, questioning themselves. So we can use that process to offer them the opportunity to inquire within, to discover something new about themselves. So when they hit that gate of great doubt in labor, they kind of know what to do. They know that they can look at things from a little bit different angle, and find a new resource, find a new idea. So when we do birth hour with people, we are preparing them for their heroic journey. It's all part of it. It's all linked together, just so amazing.

04:38
Also in active labor, a lot of times people do hit that gate of great terror where their fear arises. And in this module, what do you know? There is a process for you to learn and to work with people that is about let's step up to the gate of great terror, holy terror right now ahead of time. It's what we call a compassionate and courageous exploration of fears, because we know in Birthing from Within our approach around fear is that if we just tell people not to worry or not to be afraid, they're only going to be more afraid and more worried, ultimately, because it doesn't just go away like that. So we use the time in preparation, in working with people ahead of time, to get them to look at their fear. What is it that they're afraid of, and why? And what would they do if that happened then when they hit that moment of holy terror? It's not the first time that they're looking this fear in the eye, and they have some resources to move through that gate. They might still be scared, but they have a resource. They have a tool because of something that we offer them ahead of time in the preparation phase.

05:59
And transition, when we talk about the stages of labor, and we introduce the idea of transition, what if we were to throw out there the possibility they might have to do something that they've always said they would never do, like scream or cry or ask for help? You don't have to name it the One Forbidden Thing, people might not understand that languaging, but you can, which is what we talked about last time, is like encouraging people to start to try doing things that they've never liked doing, like sending their food back in a restaurant or asking for help in the grocery store. Because if we suggest to them ahead of time that they might have to do the thing that they're hoping they won't have to do, if they thought about that concept, then in the moment, it's not as shocking. Meeting the Gatekeeper isn't as shocking in that moment if they have to actually give up that one thing. Pain coping practices, birth art, doing the compassionate exploration of fear, all of those things are designed to grow the compassion they have in themselves, for themselves, to help them uncover some new knowing that they have more possibilities, more options that they might have thought of ahead of time, that might have fit more in the box of what they always knew to be true. So then they have more resources, more ideas,

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and they can awaken their Love Warrior who will tell them you are worthy of love no matter what, even if you cry, even if you scream, even if you poop in front of people right?

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I've met a lot of pregnant people over the years who are really hoping they'll be the one that doesn't poop in front of people. What if they have to do that in order to really let go and push, right? They're still worthy of love. We know that. And when talking about postpartum, we can introduce this idea of allies, of the ones who bring the food of life and the water of life. If they thought of this ahead of time, they might know that it's not just food that they need dropped off. They also need emotional support and spiritual connection. That's the food and the water of life. So we can offer them these ideas, so that when they come to these various gates, it's not the first time they've ever thought about it. They're not in their child archetype, holding on so tightly, they will still have a process of letting go, and the challenge will still be there, but maybe it won't throw them off as far. Maybe they'll feel resourced and compassionate for themselves even in those hardest moments.

09:10

So for you as a mentor and a doula you might consider for yourself, what are the gates you are running into along this path for you, what has your inner gatekeeper been taking from you along the way? You might even journal about this. I wonder if any of you have run into the gate of not knowing enough, or the gate of relationship, where you realize, in this field, there are going to be times when you let somebody down. You can't be there and do it all for every person every time. And there will be a person who says, *"If only I had known that."* And then what's that gatekeeper taking from you in that moment? What's your old agreement about being the one who has all the answers or who can protect people from the hard moments? There might be a gate for you of disillusionment when you realize that birth isn't always beautiful. Sometimes it's really messed up, sometimes it's traumatizing. That can be a gate of disillusionment.

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You have to let go of that old belief that's hard, or the gate of certainty when you realize that what you always thought to be true, if we just take people along this path, they'll be fine. Maybe you've already crossed that one, that one where you thought there was a right or wrong, a light or a shadow, but not both. The reason I ask you to inquire for yourself about this experience for you as a doula or as a mentor, is because the more we start to recognize this experience in ourselves, the more we can see how it manifests in the people we work with, whether that's in a prenatal appointment, or in a birth preparation class, or during birth itself, or as a postpartum doula, or in a postpartum visit or reunion. What are the gates that they had to cross through, and how did they know what to do in those moments? What did they do when they met their inner Gatekeeper? And most importantly, what do

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they know about themselves now that they didn't know before they crossed that threshold? What have they discovered is more true about themselves?

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