

# Resource Document

## Birth Art Using Visualization



*Below are some key elements to keep in mind when using a visualization with a birth art assignment. Familiarize yourself with the five tips below. Jot down a word or two on an index card to help them to become second nature to you. In time, the structure of these tips will become the “riverbanks” to the “river of words” that lead to the trance-like state that often results from visualization.*

1. Think about a visualization as a dialog, or conversation in which the doula or mentor is speaking and the parent’s response is internal and made up of sounds, sensations, and images. Pause after each phrase, or sentence, so parents can have an internal response . . . might be 3-6 seconds, which can feel like a very long time to a new mentor. Allow yourself to sink into the silence.
2. Be clear within yourself about what the assignment is and your "vision" of this birth art experience (stepping into the unknown, trying something new, pushing past what is familiar, etc...) without

being attached to what parents specifically draw or learn. Keep the assignment simple. State it clearly, or if you are a beginner, you may choose to read it. If you are clear in your own mind of what the intention of the assignment is and you have made a drawing of that same assignment recently, then the assignment will be integrated within you and come authentically from you... rather than you trying to remember the words.

3. Primarily, you are using your voice to direct parents toward their inner world, and to elicit imagery. If you rattle the assignment off quickly, they will be in their heads processing WORDS and the meaning of words because you have not given them enough time to allow an IMAGE to arise. Use words that refer to the senses, particularly visual. You can say something like, "Notice the colors, shapes, lines, symbols that arise when you think of . . ."
4. Aim for speaking for about 2-3 minutes. This is long enough for parents to turn their attention inward, shift to their right brain, and slowwwww down enough for images to emerge. There is no need for them to be relaxed, calm or comfortable, or to close their eyes. You can invoke a feeling of slowing down and closing eyes indirectly through the way you speak.

*think poetry . . . not a homework assignment.*

5. Maintain momentum and attention by emphasizing certain words or phrases, and repeating important ones throughout the visualization. The mind is receptive to repetition and you are trying to get them into a trance-like state. Repetition enhances trance. Use interesting words—be "juicy" and creative. Think poetry, not a homework assignment. Let your words go up and down, varying their pacing and volume, being sure to pause after those phrases that invite images.