

## **Reflection on Assistant Experiences**

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Throughout this semester, and during my clinical experiences as an assistant I have made several improvements as a midwife. These improvements have been in ways that were quite unexpected. I originally anticipated that I would improve in skill and competency during this semester. Instead, I feel like I have made the biggest strides in self-confidence, finding my voice, patience, and forgiveness. I have learned that I must speak up for myself and make my needs known while at the same time understanding the busy schedules and forgetfulness that accompanies most midwives. At times I felt like I was being ignored or pushed aside. But I now know that expecting an answer from a midwife immediately is an unreasonable expectation due to the nature of their profession and schedule. I learned that determination is necessary in getting a response.

Clinically speaking, this semester has been slow and challenging. My current midwife has decided to return to school and has been taking fewer and fewer clients over the last several months. This has in turn meant less clinic days, fewer appointments, and barely any births. This has made it difficult to get the clinical hours required for this semester. To remedy this, I have arranged to travel out of state to a birth center during the break to get the clinical hours and experiences I need. Another struggle I have had is in trying to find another preceptor locally willing to take on another student. In Alabama midwifery is still new, so many midwives are not able to take on students yet. But I was finally able to find a midwife willing to become a preceptor. She has agreed to take me on for 6 months, so I will need to continue my search for future semesters.

Originally, I had thought that my midwife would know what to teach me and when. I assumed that she would assist me in practicing all the necessary skills until I mastered them. I was not very vocal, if at all, in what I needed. The semester was half over before I realized that I was not learning anything new. I do not blame my midwife; it was my responsibility to let her know my needs. In the future I plan to have

weekly, monthly, and semester goals to help me stay on track. This will also help my midwife know where to focus her teaching and which skills to observe.

Growth and change are difficult but necessary tasks in personal and professional areas. In the past I have found myself shy, quiet, lacking in self-confidence, and one who holds a grudge and does not forgive easily. My clinical experiences this semester have helped me change some of these behaviors. I have learned to be determined and direct when I need a response from someone. I have decided that holding a grudge against someone who does not even realize that you are upset will get you nowhere. I have learned that letting my needs be known and attaching a firm deadline is important personally and professionally. Being open and honest about my feelings has helped me become a better student and will help me become a better midwife in the future.

Although my experiences this semester were not what I expected or wanted, I learned a lot that will help me in the future. I still have many professional and personal skills to develop and plan to use what I have learned this semester to assist me in getting what I need in the semesters to come and throughout my life and career as a midwife.