

Imagery

Picture in your mind a blackboard. On the board write the things that enter your thoughts that cause concern; family, job, money, labor and birth, parenting, or anything else that does not allow you to completely relax. Allow the blackboard to become completely filled with these concerns; do not try to force them from your mind. (Pause) Now look at the blackboard and see if it is completely filled, do not be concerned about this. These are things that come into your mind and frequently prevent you from relaxing. Take the eraser resting in the blackboard tray and completely erase everything written on the board. Erase it completely and totally.

Now I want you to write only one word on the board, a word that often controls your thoughts about labor and birth- PAIN. It is a part of childbirth. But you have the tools and techniques to erase it and allow your body to work through the labor and birth. Start at the P and completely erase the letter P with the techniques of position- side-lying, hands and knees, walking, and rocking in a chair. Imagine a soft, big comfortable rocker and the gentle sway that rocks you and your baby. Now erase the letter A by the use of affirmations; positive statements that reinforce your belief in your ability to give birth to this baby. Now erase the letter I with the use of imagery; imagine a place that makes you feel secure, warm, comfortable, loved, and relaxed. And now the letter N, erase this letter with your need to use any of the other comfort measures available to you. Those might include a warm shower or bath, music, massage, warm packs or ice packs, and pain medication. You have erased the pain from both your body and your mind by the techniques that you have chosen to use to help make your labor and birth the experience you want it to be.

Relaxation Example

Close your eyes inhale slowly and deeply, now exhale. Feel your body in relation to the carpet or floor, feel the texture of the carpet and feel the hardness of the floor. Now let your whole being sink deeply into the carpet and begin to concentrate on releasing the tension from the muscles in your body. Start with your head, feel your scalp tingle as you release the tension there. Release your facial muscles and neck muscles. Perhaps you need to shift your position a little to make these muscles more comfortable. When your facial muscles are tight, the muscles in your perineum are also tight. So let these muscles become loose and feel heavy and warm. Now concentrate on your shoulders and your arms. Release these muscles and feel the tension move out the tips of your fingers. Continue down your chest and abdomen, then to your lower back releasing any tension that you have. Let the muscles become warm and heavy. Now concentrate on your thighs, hips, buttocks, and perineum. Your thighs are becoming warm and heavy as you release the tension there. Let that warm feeling spread down your thighs to the calves of your legs. And finally release your ankles, feet, and toes. Let any tension in your lower body flow out the bottom of your feet. You are totally and completely relaxed now. Breathe slowly and deeply at a comfortable rate.

When you relax your body you also must relax your mind. Let the cares and worries leave so you can enjoy the true feeling of being totally relaxed. Let's take a trip to the beach. It is warm but not hot, the ocean is a beautiful blue, and the sand is pure and white. There is a gentle breeze and you can hear the waves gently lapping at the beach. As you approach the beach you see that there are ten steps going down to the beach. Let's go down these steps and as you go down them, you will become more and more relaxed. (COUNT BACKWARD FROM 10 TO 1 slowly). Now step onto the beach and feel the sand on your feet. You are totally and completely relaxed. Let's walk on the beach now. You may want to feel the water lapping at your toes, or relax in a comfortable lounge chair with a soft towel. Enjoy the feeling of peacefulness as you relax under the warm sun... (allow a few minutes of silence). Now let's return to the steps. We are going to go up the steps but we will remain as relaxed and in control as you feel walking by the ocean. (COUNT FROM 1 TO 10 QUICKLY). Now you are back here with me, feeling warm heavy, and very relaxed.