

LOOKING INWARD

Pregnancy is a time of great change, emotionally as well as physically. Often, women discover new and profound senses of spirituality or connection with the world through their babies' births. Many find that pregnancy and birth call on them to connect with other women in their family, to own their history as a woman and girl, or to explore deep feelings about having a female body. These kinds of transformations may be just as important as the birth of your baby.

There are infinite ways in which women explore their feelings and grow. For example, some talk with their partner or other people close to them, write, paint, pray, meditate, or walk in the desert. All women have their own ways of relaxing and connecting to the processes unfolding inside them. The ideas here are just suggestions. They might help you focus on aspects of your pregnancy right now, or maybe they will inspire to the ideas that seem more appropriate to you.

Write! Get a special journal or make one yourself. Write whatever you feel or draw pictures using all sorts of mediums for creating. Don't censor yourself. No one needs to read your journal except for you. Later, you will find yourself amazed as you read back over your journey through pregnancy.

Dance.

Create Art! Even if you don't think of yourself as an artist, creating images can be a powerful way to uncover your feelings.

Take a special bath. Add flowers or natural oils such as almond. Try soothing herbs like chamomile or lavender. Give yourself a massage and think about your body and how it feels and how amazing it is.

Make yourself a special meal or a nice cup of tea.

Explore your sexual and birth histories. Some questions you may want to think about:

- ~ how did I feel when I had my very first period.
- ~How did I feel when my breasts started changing?
- ~How did I feel when I found out I was pregnant?
- ~What are my fears about this pregnancy and birth? What are the things I think could go wrong? DO I need more information about these things?
- ~What do I think of as the ideal birth experience?
- ~How do I feel about being a mother? Are these my ideas or my families?

Here are some references about pregnancy and birth if you'd like more information:

Our Bodies, Ourselves For the New Century. Boston Women's Health Collective.
Heart and Hands: A Midwife's Guide to Birth. Davis, Elizabeth
Birthing from Within. England, Pam and Rob Horowitz.
The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth. Kitzinger, Sheila
A Good Birth, Safe Birth. Korte, Diana and Roberta Scaer
Spiritual Midwifery, Ina May Gaskin