**2017 Spring Equinox Ritual Outline- Birth of the Authentic Self**

(Lynn, Abbie, Connie, Debby)

*After note: Such a rich celebration-very transformative and beautiful. Facilitators: It’s important to walk through the process of distributing the materials the women bring and the process of walking them into the womb through the “gates”. Since they are blindfolded, their inner experience of that walk was unique to each woman. To sum up, one response of the birthing experience was, “It was real.” They entered a very deep place. We felt the responsibility of gently and lovingly bringing them into the world supported and connected. It was beautiful.*

**Supplies:**

**Debby:** extra blank tickets, flower basket, pens, TV tray/ cloth on ground for entry / hand games/ computer, iPad and phone for music / red scarf /2 foam pads / pillows blankets and sheets / 6 folding chairs / green table cloths / white cloth / stuff to decorate birthing room (candles) / birthing skirt / drinks / extra paper, pens, clipboards for journaling / fan (for 2nd gate / box for crystal /

**Lynn:** pillows, sleeping bags, blankets & sheets / hand games / round card table / ivy / stuff to decorate birthing room / drinks / red cloth around cauldron / journal prompts / make flower vases prompt / red blindfolds

**Abbie:** pillows, sleeping bags, blankets & sheets / Name tags from bag / hand games / folding chairs (back porch)/ prepared vases / folding screen / stuff to decorate birthing room / drinks / firebrick and lighter / dishes/utensils for eating / table on back porch for blankets if it’s cold / prepare steps down to outside / little bowl with water for 3rd gate /

**Connie:** pillows, sleeping bags, blankets & sheets / hand games / green glass bowl? / stuff to decorate birthing room / drinks /

**Set-up:**

**Outside Entry:** Table for extra tickets (basket and pen)

**Foyer:** Music, blindfolds, fan and water, sheet down entry way (women drop stuff off there)

**Back porch:** Chairs, blankets, extra journal paper & pens, vases & flower bucket, prompts, flowers women bring

**Womb Room:** Individual wombs with name tags, crystal, altar staged to go (in kitchen), iPad with heartbeat,

**Birthing Room:** Space for tickets, white & gold-beautiful, with candles, pearls… sumptuous!

**Cauldron** : Decorated on side board-flame thrower, fire brick

**Drink Station & dishes/utensils-Table prepared for food women bring**

**The Ritual**

**1:00-1:20-Arrival and Greeting:** ***(20 minutes)***

* Women deposit their stuff on sheet in the entry and put their red ticket with their name face-up up on top of their stuff. Then they enter the office area with play equipment to mingle and play.
* Facilitators greet them and then bring their sheet, pillows & red ticket to the “womb room” to the appropriate name tag (We’ve laid name tags in front of each womb).
* After matching the ticket to name tag, put the ticket in the basket (When all have arrived, we’ll take this basket to the birthing room.)
* Each woman’s journal, pen, umbrella and coat, purse etc go to back porch on a chair.
* Food goes on the table / fridge.
* **Lay out the tickets in the birthing room-names facing up**
* **Turn on “Ancient Mother” & “Heartbeat**”

**1:20-1:50: *To Begin: In the Foyer:******(30 minutes to have them all laying down*)**

 First 2 facilitators: Call for the woman with name farthest left of the womb circle.

While one of the 2 facilitators blindfolds her and attaches her name tag, the other reads the first reading. Together, with arms holding her, they walk her down the foyer stopping at each “gate” to read the next part of the reading, eventually leading her to her womb. On the walk, facilitators trade back and forth reading the 4 blessings. After she is lying down, grab the next name tag-2 spots down (So you know who is next.)

* 2nd 2 facilitators: When the first 2 facilitators are on the 3rd reading, the next 2 facilitators call the next woman (whoever’s name is next in the womb circle). They follow the same procedure as above. Continue the process until all sisters are laying down.

**4 Blessings:**

***1st******Gate: Fire***

**Now the dark half of the year is passing.
Now do the days grow light and the Earth grows warm.
That which has slept in darkness, awakens, stirs, and swells**

**The Gate of the South is open. As you step forward through this gate, know that its passionate flame is warming Earth’s womb, to quicken her seeds.**

***2nd Gate: Air-(fan)***

**You are part of the great rhythm of life.  As the Mother is reborn in spring, so are you.  Breathe in the lushness of your aliveness, your power and vitality.**

**The Gate of the East is open. As you step forward through this gate, know that sacred air is blowing, tickling into awareness the freshness of new beginnings, new possibilities, and new life.**

***3rdGate: (water drop on forehead?)***

**You begin with the wisdom of your crone self; wisdom gathered from your present journey on this planet as well as the wisdom of all your ancestor crones that came before. This wisdom will flow through your umbilical cord to guide you to this new day, new journey. With love, compassion and playfulness, the Gate of the West opens. As you step forward through this gate, know that it sends its cleansing waters to nourish and hold you in the buoyancy of her amniotic fluid. From this you receive essential nourishment to grow and thrive.**

**4th Gate:**

**Your own body also holds all the wisdom of Earth Mother.  You and she are always connected. From this knowing you have the power to gather to you, your family of Now. *The Gate of the North is open. As you step forward through this gate, know that you have been provided a secure foundation to plant your roots and grow.***

After she is lying down and the sheet is over her…

**You are in your womb. Relax and ask yourself, who are you attached to? Who is in your family of Now? Who do you love? Who loves you? Who do you trust? What possibilities can grow and thrive surrounded and nurtured by these loved ones?**

(Get the name tag 2 spots down and return to get the next woman in line.)

**1:50-2:05: Visualization:** **(15 minutes)** (leave a moment to ingest after each paragraph)

(Connie): **Nestle into the womb that surrounds you. Feel safe, feel warm, feel open. This fluid inner world protects you completely. Movement is slow and gentle and you are surrounded with love. Totally let go and trust in this most sacred of spaces. Notice the energy around you. It pulses with life; you are within a perfect vessel to nurture your growing new life form. And there you are; just a tiny, brilliant spark within a fertilized cell. Take a moment to connect to this spark of life. She carries all the answers as to why she decided to journey onto the Earth plane right now. She has an intention for embarking on this journey.**

(Lynn): **Cells dividing and dividing again; your new body begins to take shape. The spark within you tenderly touches each new part of your newly, forming, miracle being. The spark now ignites the formation of vital organs. A quickening heartbeat emerges, the drum beat of your life. It will be yours and yours only.**

(Debby): **Lungs are opening their petals like a flower, a tree, a deep sea coral; preparing to support the breath of life.**

(Abbie): **Your spinal cord surges with the sap of life. The fluid surrounds and follows a precious highway of nerves to the brain. Ah, the brain, sparks are just wildly flying here, wondrously igniting a flurry of cells forming and connecting, connecting, and connecting. It’s fireworks!**

(Connie): **Even as a tiny being, still in formation, you can know and feel this immense, unending, universal love that wants to bring you into the here and now; a grand life to be lived fully and with gratitude.**

(Lynn): **Now the spark starts to form tiny buds on your body. They will emerge as tiny limbs. Oh look-tiny arms, feet, ten fingers, ten toes-so precious! Just imagine all the loving things these hands will do, touching everything so as to learn the ways of the world-the skin of the mother, the bark of a tree, the silk of the rabbit’s ears, a lover’s body.**

(Debby): **And your feet-walking the four winds, dancing, jumping in rain puddles and letting mud squish between your toes.**

(Abbie): **Now your ears and eyes-the spark has touched them! Watch them grow. You are created to hear the rustling of the leaves on the trees, the meadowlark’s evening song, the humming of the bees as they collect the nectar of life-the rainfall, the waters rushing to the ocean, the cry of the coyote, the hoot hoot of the owl, the mother’s sweet, sweet lullaby, and the whisper of a lover in the depths of the night. Your eyes are created, deep and open to behold the beauty of all creation.**

(Connie): **Oh, oh, now the spark is igniting your taste buds, your sense of smell and their ability and power to carry you home, again and again as you grow older.**

(Lynn): **You are complete. A miracle has occurred. How can this creation of new life form ever be understood? Goddess says, “It is not to be ‘understood’. It is to be felt and savored, and imagined over and over. The completion of creation is never really complete, but it is perfect every time. It is wondrous, miraculous, complex, and beautiful- so beautiful!”**

(Debby): **Take some moments to revel in your new form. Admire your sparkle, your absolutely divine *energy* being, that has now taken the shape of a new *human* being.**

(Abbie): **Be aware: you carry the spark of your authentic self in every pulse, breath, and touch your body will experience. She, your authentic self, chose to share your experience on this plane. Her support and guidance will help you to achieve all that you were born to do. As your body is reborn, so too shall the awareness of your authentic self, awaken.**

(Connie): **With strength, wisdom, love and beauty, you are ready to be born into your new family of Now. Birth is the inner and outer song of Spring.**

**2:05-2:30: After the visualization***-* **(25 minutes)** *Abbie and Debby go to the birthing room*

Connie, starting with the first person that was led into the womb, helps her up and leads her into the kitchen passage while *whispering* something like,

 **“It’s your time to be born. All is ready. All has been prepared for you. Your magical new life is waiting. Come with me…Come with me…”**

When she’s ½ way down the kitchen, Lynn takes over, taking her to the birthing room saying something like:

**“Anything is possible in this new life you’ve chosen! Your spark shines so brightly within you. Your authentic self is pulsing with life-so ready to be born. It’s time…It’s time!”**

**Birthing Room:** Debby puts birthing skirt over her head while and Abbie removes her blindfold. Then they birth her by pulling the birthing skirt down over her body.

**“Look, she’s crowning! She’s perfect, she glows… Thank you for choosing to be born right now. Thank you for all you will bring to our world. We love you. Welcome to your new world.”**

Before each woman leaves, crumple her red ticket (afterbirth) and hand it to her.

**“This represents your afterbirth; that which you are choosing to leave behind as you enter your family of now.** Before you go outside, put it in the cauldron on the sideboard. Your journal is on a chair on the back porch and there are prompts for activities there. Breathe in and experience the newness, the wonder of this new world you have been born into.”

Then the next woman is ushered in.

When the last woman is in the birthing room, Connie and Lynn set up the altar- round table with green cloth over it. Crystal goes in the center, elevated onto the box. Then they get the cauldron and go to the back porch.

**2:30-3:00- On the Back Deck: (30 minutes to get to the lake)** Women have been journaling and putting flowers in their vases. **(Debby)-** start song on her phone, “See the Light” by Clair Ryann (You Tube)while they finish up.

 **(Abbie) *The Cauldron:*** (10)

 **“After birth there is always preparation so that the new child is brought into the cleanest, sweetest environment possible. Part of this cleansing instinct can be to choose how the afterbirth will be dealt with. Our afterbirth carries the memory of our growth in the womb. The placenta, joining us to our mother, brought us oxygen and nutrients. It also released carbon dioxide and waste products, the stuff that wouldn’t help us grow. We have been born into a new world. We do not need to carry any waste products into this new world. How wonderful that the afterbirth gathered these together so that we can let them go. Our choice for this release is to burn them and then to scatter the ashes into the waters below. They will travel far, tumbling and cleansing and eventually will be absorbed into the mother again.”**

 **(Lynn) -*Lighting the Cauldron:*** Lights the fire: Sing “Rise Up O Flame” (10 min.)

**(Lynn)-** Asks them to dress for a walk to the lake.

 **(Connie): “Our spirit wisdom has led us on a journey to be born anew into our family of Now. As we take our first steps with our sisters to the waters below, open your senses. Feel the love your heart carries for this new life. Relish the strength of the body that has been given into your keeping, and embrace with all your senses the wonder of the world you have been born into.”**

**(Lynn)**- Carries the cauldron, we all follow and sing: “Mother I Feel You Under My Feet” and then, “The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water, Return”. (10 min.)

**3:00-3:20-At the Lake: (20 minutes)**

**(Lynn)-** **“After release comes flow; flowing forward into our new family of now.”**

 Throw the ashes in the lake while we sing: “We All Come from the Goddess”.

***(Debby)-Circling up, Pre-Walk:***

**“You stand at a threshold. This is the time you’re choosing to answer the call of returning to your authentic self. What does this look like, feel like, sound like? How will you interact with others? How will you love? How will you trust? We’re going to use the next 10 minutes to walk along the lake. With the ease that comes from opening yourself to the natural world, trust the messages you receive on this first journey into your new world.**

**We’ll ring the bell when it’s time to return to the deck.”**

**At the deck: “If you would bring your vase of flowers back to the living room, we’ll use them to create our altar. Also, if you prefer to sit in a chair for sharing, bring one from the deck. We’ll eat while we share.”**

**3:45-5:00-Grab food and drinks then, (Connie) Sharing:** **(75 minutes)**

**Close:** Sing: “May the Circle be Open, but Unbroken”, and “Thank You for your Loving Heart.”