Ocean-uterine contraction visualization script

This is a visualization exercise to compare ocean waves to uterine contractions and the process of birth.

Imagine you are a sea turtle with a body designed to swim effortlessly. Nature is calling you to the shore to birth your young. You are floating in the middle of the ocean. The seawater is so dense you glide effortlessly. You enjoy the warm sun over your face and body as you are buoyant in the salty seawater. You are not alone as you feel the flutter and sounds of birds above.

This is similar to early labor where you are able to enjoy the movement of your baby. The u/c’s are mild and you easily talk and walk through them. They are effortless like the buoyancy of the middle of the ocean where there are no waves, just gentle ripples. Enjoy this beginning of labor like the warm sun over your face. Enjoy the flutter of your baby.

The ocean ripples start drifting you closer to shore. As you see the shore closer you notice the ripples getting stronger and closer together. You feel the sun much warmer on your face. Your body feels heavy and you have to work to stay afloat. In the beginning you just move your arms and legs gently to stay afloat. As the waves move you closer to shore they get stronger, last longer and come more often. You confidently do the crawl swim stroke. The sun is stronger and you feel it drying out your back, face and lips. You begin to tire, so you change from the crawl to the side swim stroke. It is a nice change and feels comfortable. The sounds of birds are music to your ears, very relaxing and soothing. As you move closer to the shore you see an object on the shore. It is far away so you can only make out the outline of a person. The sun is stronger and you have been in the ocean for several hours. You do the breaststroke in which the soothing ocean water refreshes your face and takes the sting of the sun away. You slow your stroke. The shore is closer and you recognize the outline of your beloved partner with something in his arms. You continue to swim but feel that you are tiring. The waves remain strong and regular as they bring you towards the shore. Again you change position to the backstroke where you slow down your pace, but continue to make progress towards the shore and your beloved. You are tired, so you take advantage of resting between each wave and the lower energy need of the backstroke. You have traveled a great distance. When you started this journey you could barely see the shore. Now you clearly see the outline of your beloved who is holding a beautiful baby. Your baby, who is radiant and calm. You have worked hard to stay afloat with these strong waves that are pushing you closer to the shore. You realize you are very close to your goal, the shore.

In active labor, the u/c’s get regular, stronger, closer and last longer. You work harder and harder as the contractions become more intense in order to bring your baby down the birth canal. When you tire in active labor it is effective strategy to use coping mechanisms such as changing your position, refreshing your face with water in a shower or with a wash cloth, listening to music, or visualizing your baby. These are a few suggestions. Use coping skills that work for you.

You continue to work hard staying afloat in the ocean waves. The sun is now burning your face and lips. They feel hot and dry. You are slightly nauseous but a cool breeze brings you relief. Again you see the shore clearly, with your partner smiling and baby beaming. You realize your journey is almost over. You have renewed strength and sense of purpose. The waves become choppy and churning. You are experiencing a mixture of leg cramps, incredible pressure from the water, chills, and doubt as your body signals its fatigue from the past 10-12 hours of
work. You focus on the shore and the beauty it holds. You quietly and confidently remind
yourself of your inner strength and how far you have traveled. Before you can reach the shore
you see the waves crashing and turning under the sand. These waves are the most intense before
the shore. This is the surf, which has scary, loud, consuming waves that rumble and lift your
body like a roller coaster speeding up and down. You have anticipated this intense furor of
waves. You have practiced relaxing your body and mind to glide along with the waves to shore.
Your knowledge of the undertow’s strength and brevity has empowered you to ride these strong
waves confidently to the shore. You realize it will be scary and intense but also know it is the
shortest part of your journey.

Like the crashing surf, transition is very intense. It is fast and furious. After hours of
handling u/c’s in active labor the intensity of transition will signal that the end is near. Progress
thorough transition whichever way works for you. Some women like many animals, close their
eyes and quietly reserve their strength for delivery. Others moan, cry, and/or rock with the
intense contractions. And some others are very vocal and active during transition contractions.
There is no wrong or right way to go through transition. Do what works for you, your body, and
your labor.

The explosive waves of the surf launch you on the ocean/beach/water line. At this point
you are so exhausted that you can not stand. You have your family in sight about 10 feet ahead
and slowly methodically inch towards them. You are working hard, crawling on your hands and
knees, and using all your strength. You are exhausted from the ocean waves, the numerous hours
traveled, and the hot sun, but you know you are so close. Your heart is singing: “one more step”,
“you are almost there”, “you can do it”. You take a break from the crawling. Brush off sand, lick
your lips to remove the sting of the salt water and sun. You refocus on your goal and move along
with renewed strength and determination. You feel and may tremble with the intensity of your
body’s physical efforts and emotional triumph into a long deep embrace of you and your baby
and beloved. You have reached your goal and are encircled by the love and warmth of your
family.

Pushing is a great effort for most women. The baby is inching out little by little. The baby
slowly travels approximately 5 inches or less through the birth canal. The slow descent through
the birth canal is important to give your tissues and muscles time to stretch as well as squeeze
fluid from the baby’s lungs so your baby can breathe at birth. Many women find pushing a relief.
Others identify burning during pushing which is the stretching of your tissues. And some women
find it painful to push, especially if the baby is in an unfavorable position such as posterior,
which can cause backpain.

With each push, realize you are one step closer to your baby. Listen to your body and
work with your body to birth your baby. You have worked long and hard and will soon enjoy the
fruits of your labor. As you baby’s head appears at your vaginal opening it may be crowned with
lovely hair. Many babies have hair that is an inch long or more. Some woman feel renewed
strength if they watch their baby’s head emerging in a mirror or touch it. The task of childbirth is
exciting, exhausting, instinctual, stressful, a lot of work & worry, and fill of love. Once your
baby is born, you can start your exciting life together.

I know you can meet this challenge. Believe in yourself and your body.

All my best, Elissa