



BEYOND COMPETITION

A Guide to
Birthing Your
Unique Practice

the **WEBSITE DOULA**

Are you ready?

While we enter birth work because we feel a deep calling, the journey to birthing your unique practice is rarely easy. This e-guide was born from my own experience as a doula and childbirth educator for 20+ years and countless conversations I have shared with birth professionals like you as a website designer and business coach.

I am deeply inspired by the vision, commitment, unique skills and training of each birth worker I meet. Sadly, I often hear difficult stories of competition and comparison. I firmly believe that to stand strong and invest in your practice you must find your unique voice and style.

I want you to feel confident, clear and excited to share your unique practice and find your place in the local birth community.

LET'S GET STARTED!

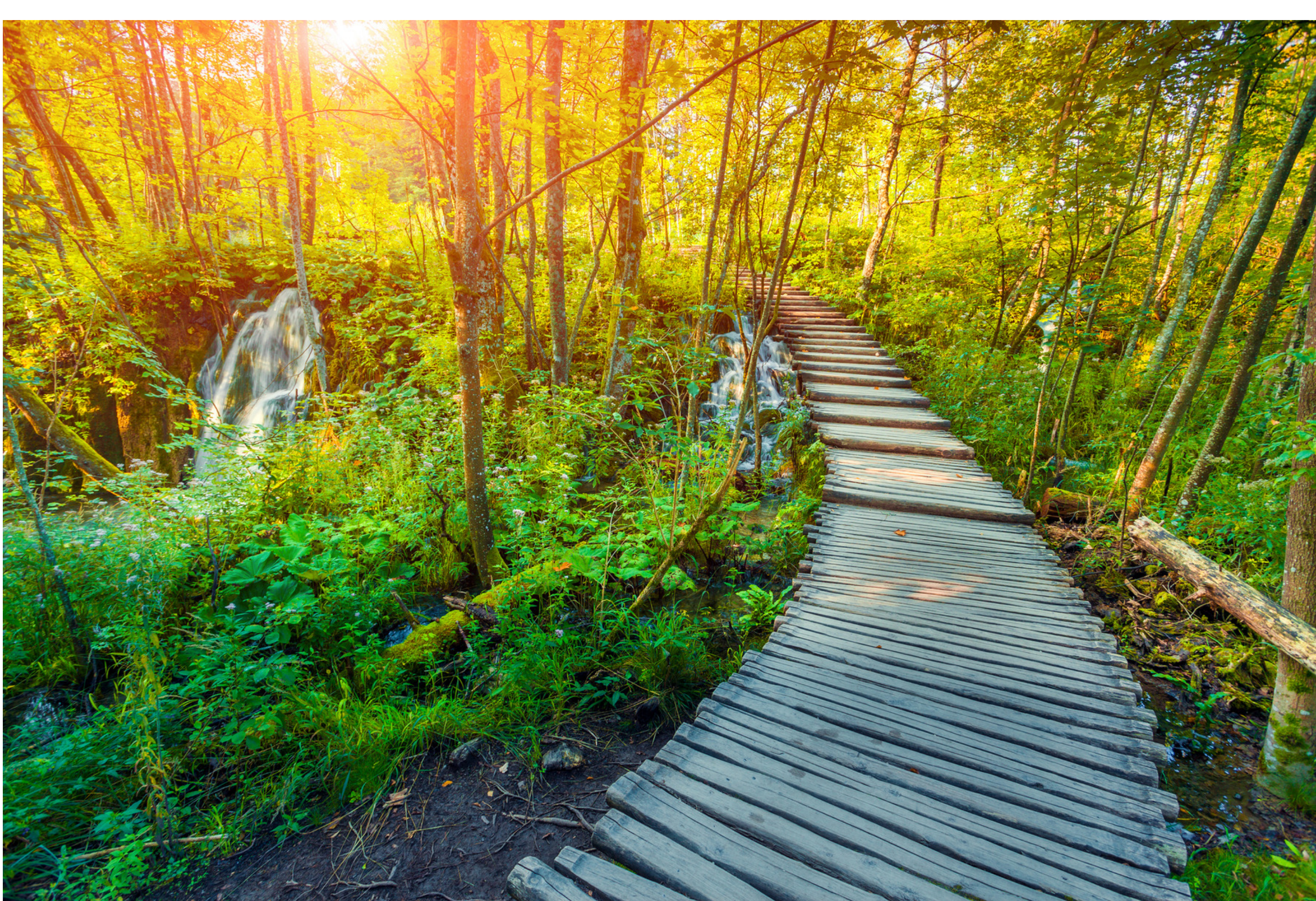


- Sarah Juliusson
the WEBSITE DOULA

You're not just another doula.

Still, it may feel like it sometimes, whether you are in a community with a strong doula presence, or a small town with just a few of you. As you seek your place in the birth community and try to find great clients to support it is common to have moments of wondering if there is room for all of you.

This e-guide is all about finding your unique path as a birth professional. Your task is to move beyond the competition model and define your own unique practice, sharing your value with ideal clients so that they can recognize you as the perfect match for their needs.



How to use this ebook

I created Beyond Competition as a source of creative reflection and inspiration. My hope is that you will gain a strong sense of what makes your practice unique, renewed confidence in all you have to offer, and new tools to help you grow your practice.

Make it yours.

Print out your own copy and find your favorite pen. I expect you to fill this ebook with your reflections.

Go somewhere.

Do not work with this in random moments on a cluttered desk. I'd love for you to go to a favorite cozy cafe. Be sure to have chocolate by your side.

Have fun.

This is meant to be a chance for creative reflection not just a task. Doodle in the margins. Make a collage. Put on some favorite music and dance when you feel stuck.

Share your journey.

Share your reflections with someone who knows your practice well. Outside feedback will help you go deeper and be sure you are on the right track. Sometimes friends and family have the best perspective on what makes us unique.

Competitive? Me? Nah...

Not sure competition is an issue in your community? Keep reading...

Many doulas express frustration with their conflict between feeling this is a calling, and needing to earn money. Even more complicated, we're often "competing" against dear friends. When we blend our calling with our need to earn an income, competition can surface...

On the whole, I see a wonderful sense of teamwork in the birth community. Still, as a Website Doula helping clients define their brand I hear about the dynamics of competition all the time.

To be clear, I am NOT questioning the value of investing in your practice and doing your best to thrive in your community.

When I talk about competition or comparison, I'm referring to the related negative dynamics and pressure that can hold us back from success.

Examples might include social media or website envy, public "put downs" of other practice styles, feeling the need to "catch up" with other local birth pros, and constantly thinking about her practice instead of focusing on your own.

JOURNAL TIME

>> I invite you to take a few moments to journal here on your personal relationship to competition. What do you believe to be TRUE about yourself and competition?



"Comparison is crazy-making. It stamps on potential and truth and all the good things you might already have going for you if you weren't so busy shadow-boxing with the people who you think have it better."

~ Danielle LaPorte

JOURNAL TIME

>> Taking a closer look at your local birth community, how do birth pros work together in positive collaborative ways?
Where do you see signs of unhealthy competition?

Do you ever find yourself...

If you're reading this thinking "This isn't me. I don't experience competition in my birth community," then great; not everybody responds to being in business in the same way.

Still, it may be that you are experiencing some aspects of negative competition without identifying it as such. Here is a simple checklist for you to consider. Most birth professionals I talk with have experienced at least a few of these:



Feeling possessive
of your referral
sources and
community
partners.

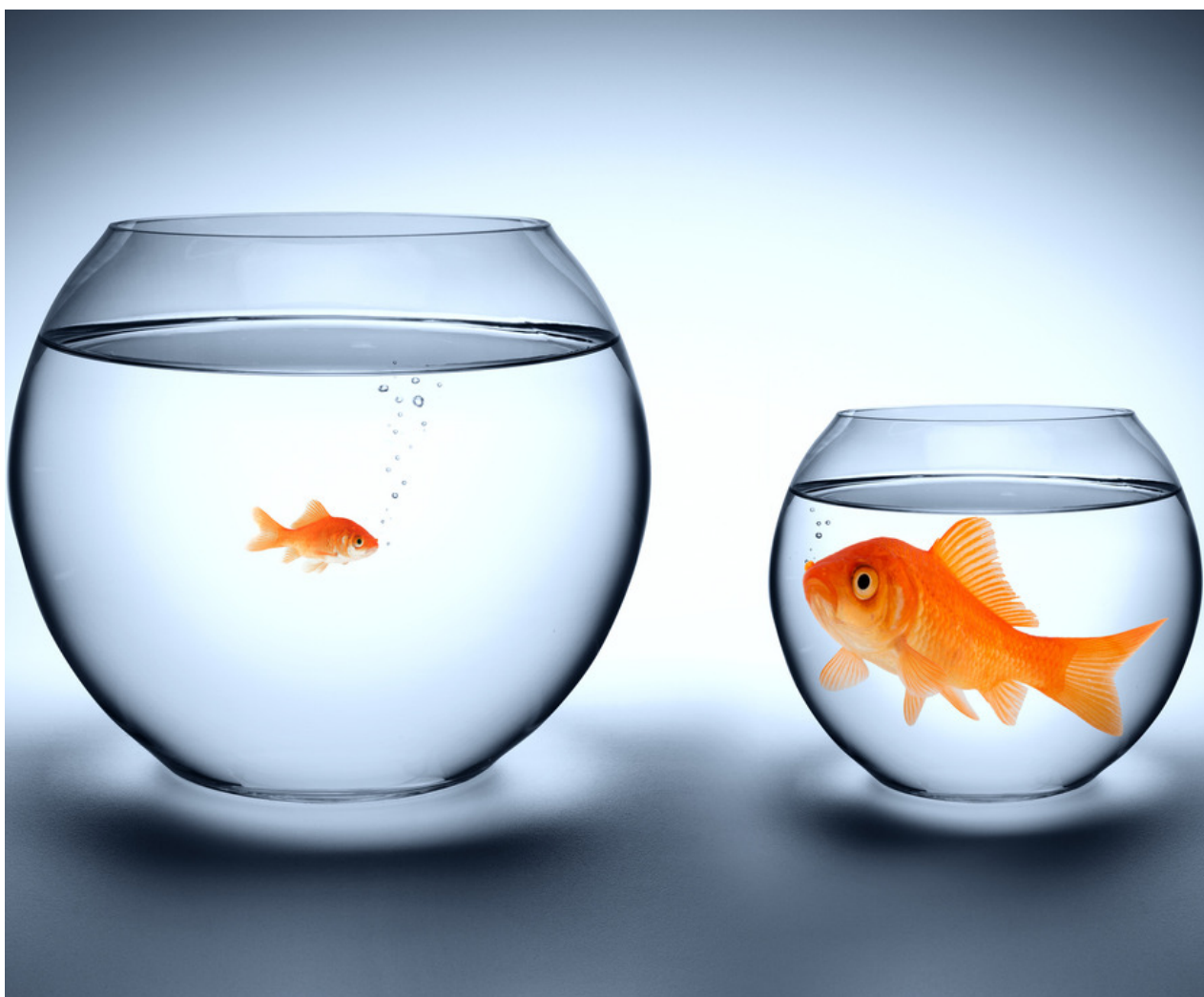
Feeling threatened
by her new
website or cards.





Your heart sinks
when yet another
prospective client
chooses her
instead of you.

Randomly thinking
about her practice
when you should be
working on
yours.



Constantly
comparing
yourself to other
birth or
postpartum pros.

Holding back
because you're
not sure if you
have what it takes
to succeed.



Do you suffer from ODS?

You're not alone!

If any of the above patterns sound familiar , you may be suffering from "ODS", Other Doula Syndrome. You may even be great friends with some of them, and that's ok. When these patterns are present they tend to impact your ability to fully invest in your own business. If you struggle with any of these emotional responses to competition, even if only one of them strikes a chord with you, it is worth taking the time to take a closer look at this dynamic.



JOURNAL TIME

>> How do you see "Other Doula Syndrome" having an impact on your relationship with other birth pros, or your experience as a business owner?

[illegible]

What makes you unique?

To move beyond the impact of negative competitive energy, we have to understand and value our unique path as a birth pro. Each of us brings a special blend of qualities and experiences that shape how we practice.

The heart of your practice is not created through a single training workshop, but rather a lifetime of learning and growth that led you to this path, and further shaped by each family you support. The questions on the following pages will help you better define your unique path, and consider how you communicate your value to clients.



a few examples...



Jenny created a
VBAC class
based on her
birth experience.

Marla's past
job in daycare
led to her role
as a sibling doula.



Robin's love of
knitting inspired
weekly pregnancy
knitting circles

Evelyn strongly
values informed
consent, and
provides extensive
handouts & links.



JOURNAL TIME

>> What led you to become a birth or postpartum professional? How do your path & philosophy shape your practice?

[illegible]



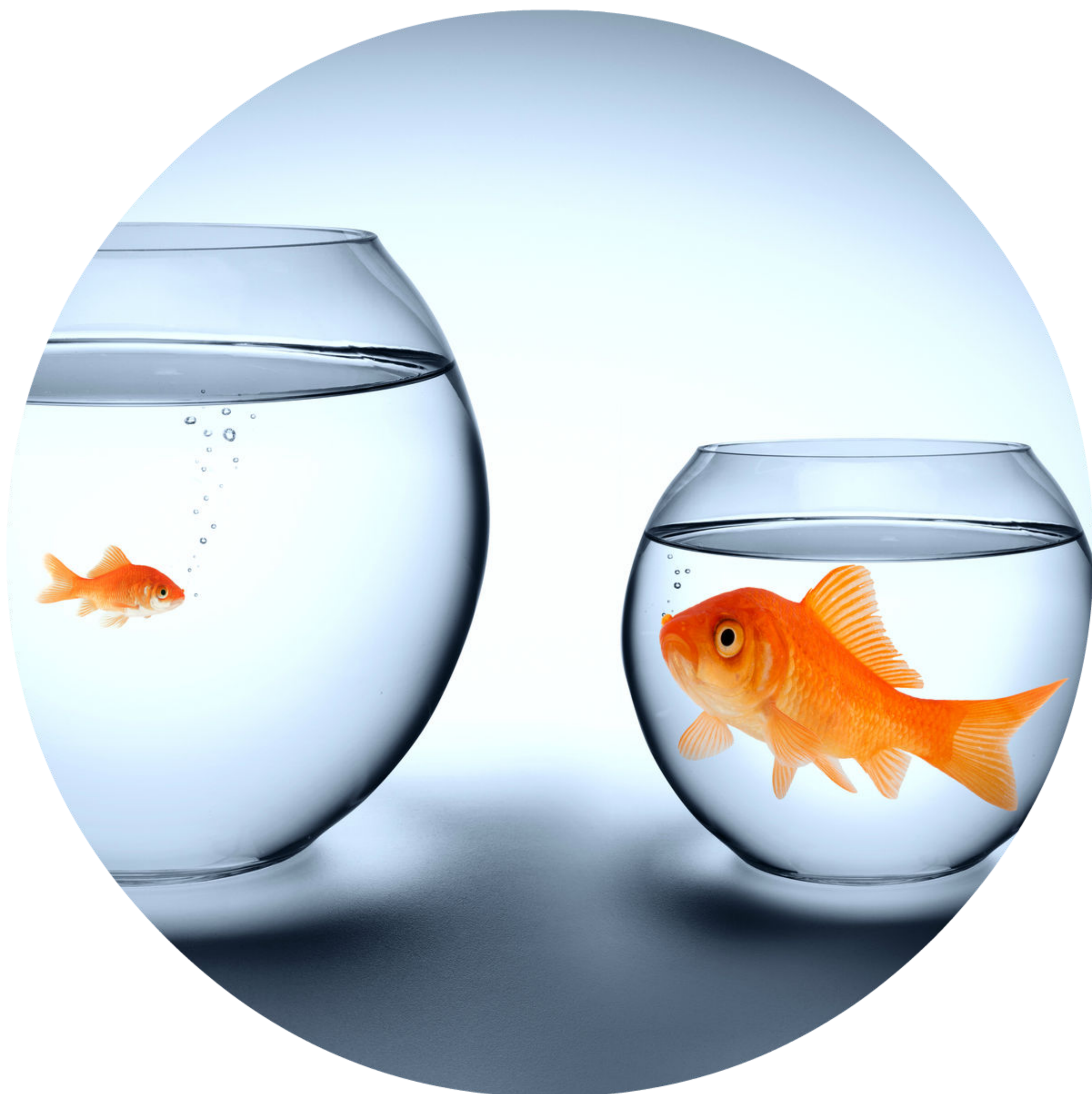
"Rather than comparing, imagine. Imagine yourself feeling the way you want to feel - successful, brilliant, artistically free, earthy, healthy, connected. That's it. You're not making yourself less than or more than anyone else - you're simply giving yourself permission to want what you want.."

~ Danielle LaPorte

JOURNAL TIME

>> How have your past education and work experience influenced your skills and offerings?

[illegible]



""Comparison is all about
conformity and competition..""

~ Brené Brown

JOURNAL TIME

What are your unique skills, interests, and talents? How might you incorporate these into your practice?

[illegible]

JOURNAL TIME

>> What are the core values and vibe of your practice? How do clients feel in your care? How is this reflected in your offerings and marketing materials?



"Always be a first-rate version of
yourself, instead of a
second-rate version of somebody
else."

~ Judy Garland

JOURNAL TIME

>> For this final question I am asking you to step into a place of clarity and confidence in what you have to offer. What would families be missing out on if they chose not to hire you? How is your practice unique in your community? What do clients love about your care?

Who is your ideal client?

Now that you have a strong sense of what makes your practice unique, you are ready for the final step: creating your ideal client. Each of us has particular clients who are an extra-fabulous fit for our practice.

When you tailor your marketing and services to your ideal client you will attract MORE families because your unique value shines through.



Why create an ideal client?

When you tailor your efforts to an ideal client, families who resonate with what your ideal client is seeking and needing from your services will be better able to recognize you as the best fit for their needs.

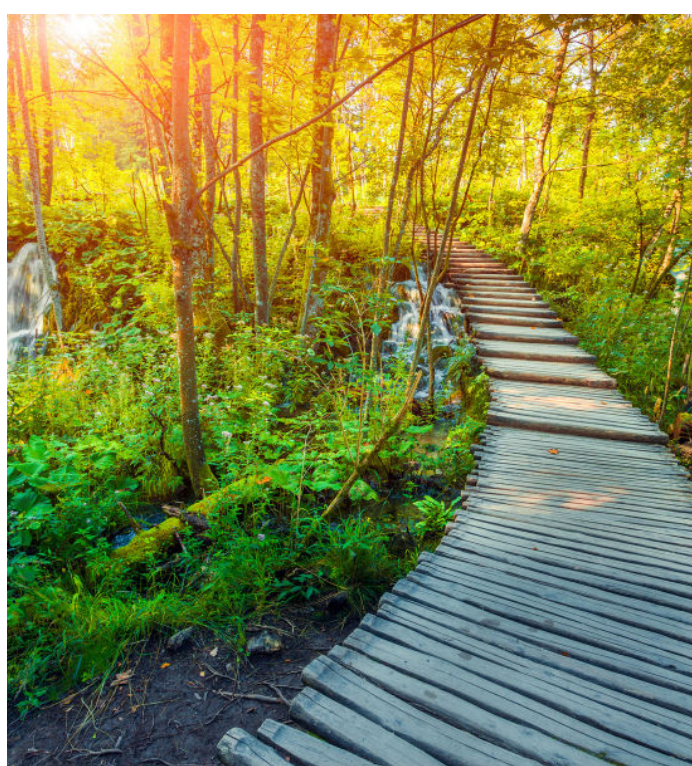
Hint: your ideal client is not necessarily your favorite type of client.

Put yourself in the shoes of a prospective client. They are not looking to fulfill your ideals, they are looking to find the right practice to meet their practical and emotional needs.



YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

>>Your task is to create an imagined client so lifelike that you feel as though you might actually know her. You might find it helpful to consider creative elements such as a playlist or a pinterest board exploring her style. For example, the board below suggests that our ideal client is crafty, reflective, loves nature and travel, adores her coffee, has a garden, loves spending time outside, is tech savvy, and has a clean, simple, vintage-inspired style.



YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

>> NAME, AGE, HOME LIFE, PREGNANCY HISTORY

>> RELATIONSHIP STATUS. WHAT IS PARTNER SEEKING FROM YOUR CARE? DO THEIR FRIENDS HAVE BABIES?

YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

>> LIFESTYLE. WHERE DO THEY LIVE? HOW DOES HOME FEEL? WORK? HOW DO THEY USE FREE TIME? HOBBIES? CLOTHING STYLE?

>> RELATIONSHIP TO TECHNOLOGY. SMART PHONE? SAVVY? SOCIAL MEDIA.

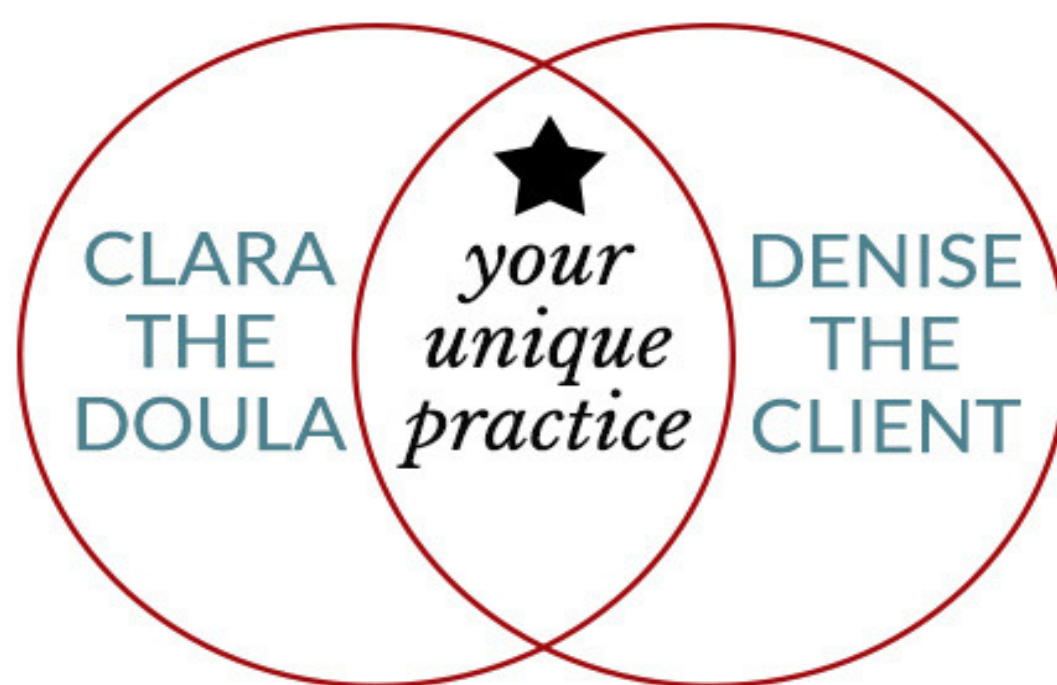
YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

>> WHY ARE THEY SEEKING YOUR SERVICES? WHAT ARE THEIR HOPES AND FEARS? WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS ARE THEY ASKING (PERSONAL & PRACTICAL)? WHAT NEEDS DO THEY HAVE THAT THEY HOPE YOU WILL FULFILL?

Birthing your unique practice.

Now that you have a better sense of what makes you unique and you've met your ideal client, the next step is to find common ground.

Your best practice will emerge from the place where your practice style merges with what your ideal client is seeking.



EXAMPLE: Clara the doula is a devoted knitter. She is very nurturing and loves connecting people. She has a special interest in supporting fathers. Christie the client loves all things handmade. She doesn't have any friends with children and is feeling a bit isolated. Her partner isn't sure about hiring a doula.

She is Seeking

- Longs to meet other pregnant women.
- Wants to found a doula her husband will feel comfortable with.
- A doula practice that feels personalized.

My Ideas

- Monthly client gathering
- Client only facebook group
- Local resources page
- Handknit cap for babies
- Add section on website for partner needs & more partner testimonials.