


Conceptual/Theoretical

Revisiting ‘*Discipline*’ in Relation to Caring Science as Sacred Science: Revisiting *Discipline* of Nursing

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The purpose of this manuscript is to invite a revisiting of the concept of the “discipline” of Nursing, with attention to the spiritual consciousness of “Nurse” within the sacred concept of self-caring and caring-healing consciousness. The notion of including the spiritual, evolving consciousness of “Nurse,” in harmony with evolution of Professional Nursing, is congruent with a mature disciplinary matrix of caring science as sacred science. This congruence between Nurse/Nursing contributes to the evolution of Nursing, Holistic Practices and Era III unitary transformative disciplinary thinking.

Keywords: *spiritual self-caring; caring consciousness; disciplinary matrix; nursing; nurse; holistic nurse; caring science; sacred science*

Introduction

In this pandemic transition, we cannot stand outside of our self, or practice from a detached bystander point of view; nor can we practice from distant theory. If we revisit the *discipline* of Nursing, by stepping into an evolved field of caring science as sacred science, a solemn hush comes over us. We are invited to a new and hidden meaning of the concept of professional *discipline*. That is, *self-discipline*, to enter the sacred of spiritual self-caring, calling for alignment of spiritual growth with professional growth, through the evolution of human consciousness. Such evolution is now a necessary Nursing disciplinary—congruent requirement for sustaining self, humanity, community, our planet.

Pre-Pandemic “*Discipline*” of Nursing

Before our pre-pandemic awakening, the usual meaning of *discipline* had more classic scientific implications: For example, the *discipline* of Nursing has been noted to hold the worldview, the relational

ontology of whole person-universe; the *discipline* holds the theories, the knowledge boundaries; identifies what counts as knowledge. The discipline holds the research traditions alongside the core values, philosophical orientation to humanity, unitary world view of human-universe oneness, and so on (AUTHOR, 2018, p. 64). This usual template for professional *discipline* is foundational to the history of Holistic Nursing and contributes to the advancement of Nursing in the scientific community. However, it addresses only one side of the issue: what is missing is attention *self-discipline* for spiritual consciousness evolution of Nurse in harmony with Nursing’s Professional development. This includes one’s own evolution of caring-healing consciousness for self. The integration of spiritual evolution of Nurse in alignment with Professional Disciplinary-Nursing maturity is now called for if the Nursing can fully evolve to address post-pandemic awakening for sustaining humanity/Sacred Mother Earth. This turn

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leads to an evolving paradigm, which touches upon *nurse as-disciple* for spiritual growth, with *discipline* of Nursing underpinned by Caring Science as Sacred Science.

Caring Science as Sacred Science: Disciplinary Foundation

Caring science, and Era III unitary—transformative thinking extends our disciplinary understanding of Nursing. Caring science, and Transpersonal Caring, resides within a unitary field of consciousness (AUTHOR, 2018). This paradigmatic evolution of theory and science, has been acknowledged as the most mature Nursing paradigm to accommodate nursing's human phenomena of wholeness, caring, health, presence, pattern, consciousness, spirit-energy, and so on (AUTHOR, 2008, 2018, 2021; Cowling & Smith, 1999, 2008, 2013; Newman, 2008).

Seeking Disciplinary Congruence

At this crossroads of pandemic upheavals and disruptions, a new disciplinary challenge is called forth for Nursing and Nurses. An Era III unitary human-planet-universe disciplinary focus now is required to pursue ontological—epistemological—praxis-values (or axiology) congruence between conventional materialistic objective disciplinary views in Western Science, and non-physical human-evolving energy-spirit consciousness, congruent with Era III thinking and Holistic Nursing.

We are called to move from an epistemological-ontological Separatist view of *discipline*—specific -scientific knowledge, to unitary whole person/whole universe epistemological-ontological-axiological **praxis** congruence as disciplinary guide for mature Holistic Nursing. That is, Unitary Paradigm III *discipline-specific Holistic praxis* invites attention to axiology—core values—as the starting point for evolving within a unitary worldview/relational ontology, as well as epistemological authenticity.

Another Kind of Discipline

Unitary Era III timeless universal worldview of Caring, serves as guide to actualizing Nursing's

holistic disciplinary commitment to humanity/society/civilization, our world. Axiology is the philosophical term for study of these core values.

Timeless, core, eternal, lasting values that Nursing honors as universal for moral practice are referred to a *Veritas* (AUTHOR, 2018). Raising new questions: What is important? What matters? And what is lasting and timeless beyond the current moment of crisis and fear?

Numerous philosophical, scientific treatises, and writings about knowledge and science across time, remind us that teachings from the world's greatest saints, yogis, and sages were about another kind of *discipline*. Now here in post-pandemic existential time, we open to an *inner-disciplinary knowing*—that which emerges from within, inviting inner and outer alignment for *veritas** (core timeless values*) praxis. This sanctions a human-spirit awakening; beyond the material knowing of rational-cognitive-ego world. This other world is spirit-energy, non-physical and trans-rational, beyond knowing to “no-knowing”—“not knowing” a form of hidden primordial knowing, available to anyone, seeking deep truth (AUTHOR, 2019, p. 62). These congruent *disciplinary* practices open up sacred space for a wise knowing of Self as Spirit, disclosing the shadow-light on our shared humanity—awakening to the truth or falsity of alignment with higher Self/Soul/Source.

A Turn Toward Deep Truth—Sacred Science

Caring Science unleashes an expanded spirit-filled worldview/universe with which to consider/reconsider discipline and disciplinary foundation for a Sacred Caring Science.

Era III Unitary *Disciplinary* thinking quests authenticity of Oneness of human-universe in relation to Values (*Veritas*). This evolved *disciplinary* shift moves from usual disciplinary criteria of control, prediction, and rational knowledge as power. This usual focus on Caring is through use of sloganized “caring” without meaning, found on healthcare mission brochures, tag lines of marketing. Now we can shift toward a self-maturing holistic *disciplinary* praxis in alignment with core oneness, integrating physical–non-physical values, such as an encompassing, unitary spirit-energy consciousness and worldview, embracing an ethic of *Belonging*

versus Separation, and caring as a sacred science praxis. Caring science is sacred because we are dealing with mystery, the life force of spirit-energy/soul of self/other (AUTHOR, 2018).

Entering the sacred of human-unitary caring, now calls for *disciplinary praxis authenticity*—that is *disciplinary* congruence between and among axiology (universal values), ontology (ways of Being), and epistemology (Knowledge/ ways of knowing/what counts as knowledge) and praxis (*eupraxis-good practice*). This shift for congruence moves from the exclusive, *conventional* disciplinary criteria, to *congruence* disciplinary criteria, necessitating personal–professional, spiritual evolution and right- relation alignment; thus, allowing for more mature, self-disciplinary—guided holistic caring praxis. This shift invites a new shared caring science as sacred science consciousness and challenge within the field.

Rhetorical Questions: how do we move from the physical, conventional Western scientific view of *professional discipline*? To Joyously participating in new *self-disciplinary* personal/professional evolution to engage in authentic, caring-healing as sacred praxis?

In other words, without the spiritual-consciousness evolution of Nurse, it is not possible to have a mature discipline of Nursing.

Pandemic as Opening Portal

The closed pre-pandemic outer worldview disrupted our physical time, space and living patterns. However, with the perpetual COVID-19 disruption, after enough pain and suffering from our physical, five-sense existence, now we “see” that distress, disruption, change, conflict, threats, illness, disease, and death are all part of the sacred circle of life; not something to conceal or run from. in the wisdom of Jon Kabat Zinn: “*wherever you go, there you are*”—there is no place to hide.

If we reconsider the pandemic, metaphorically and literally, from a sacred caring unitary lens, then the pandemic now becomes a portal to a new consciousness, confronting the stark reality of our quantum universe—we are all connected; everything is connected on non-physical, energetic spirit plane. If we look anew at crisis and chaos as a global existential-spiritual threat, they have potential to open our previously closed human heart. Here we surrender to something greater than our physical self—to our inner Being, granting the sacred to return in midst of the profane.

Timeless Veritas—Lasting Truth

Ig/nor/ance of one’s true self, or being preoccupied with outer world turbulence, generates more fear and suffering, leading to more and more upheaval. This very material physical-outer world dilemma begs for an introspective, existential shift, a search for the sacred, for the spiritual, toward meaningful, self-consoling contemplative practices—seeking Veritas: inner truth, which is timeless, lasting and evolving in graceful divine flow (AUTHOR, 2018).

The existential-spiritual Veritas awakening after experiencing outer chaos, marks a higher consciousness, spiraling upward and downward in alignment—serving as an inner guide and “Way-Shower” for compassion, strength, purpose, meaning, and creative insights. Veritas invites stillness and silence, to go within, releasing, repatterning, the all-encompassing, global field of fear, isolation, sensory and touch-deprivation; loss, grief, death and dying and all in-between.

We now come face-to-face with self-true inner self. It is here in the quantum shift from outer physical to inner spirit- filled, infinite field of universal cosmic Love that we embrace the sacred life/death cycles as one. It is here with this deep turn, dedicated to a new form of *disciplined Veritas* practices, that we access the existential, the ineffable, opening to the holy, the sacred, the wonder, the miraculous. We await and expect/accept sacred “creative emergence” (Smith, 1999) as we open to infinite possibilities—approaching Chardin’s “Omega point”—God/Divine—Love consciousness.

The wisdom teachings of Joseph Campbell identified different disciplinary steps toward self-growth that help us to transcend and transition from outer to inner self/world. They include Being and Belonging as One consciousness; Evolving to Higher vibrational Consciousness; and connecting with field of Cosmic-Infinite Love—these are all other ways to “*follow your bliss*,” experience Joy, Wonder, Rapture, Beauty, Grace, Divine, Miracles—within and without.

Caritas/Veritas Self-Discipline: (AUTHOR, 2018, p. 2022)

Now we see that all caring, sacred science holistic practitioners call forth Caritas–Veritas spiritual

growth work, more than ever before. Because we practice who we are; we research who we are; we teach who we are; and we live who we are. So, our very Being/Becoming more human and humane is what is at stake in sacred caring-healing work. Such holistic practices of deepening our humanity requires a form of *deep, self-caring discipline* in small and grand ways.

All traditions and cultures around the world have ways to enter sacred spiritual practices.

Traditional practices across diverse cultures unite in exercising some form of prayer-meditation; fasting; ceremonies; rituals; acts of worship; celebration; acts of simplicity, solitude—all forms of *self-discipline*, dedicated to deep personal practice.

Nevertheless, there are endless ways to enter the inner kingdom.

As Rumi put it:

“There are a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground.”

As we transition during this time to a higher order toward our true divine self, non-physical/non-rational, non-local consciousness, spirit-guided ways, we are helped to find a new grounding to move forward. Each of the so-called spiritual-religious practices require *self-discipline*, commitment, patterns, even rituals, to help us embrace greater dimensions to human existence, beyond the body- material physical. These common ways to approach the sacred and the holy invite us to transpersonal paradox of “*Now Presence*,” the notion of the “*Eternal Now*,” present to the here-and-now, while simultaneously transcending the ego present. Dropping into “*Being-in-the- Moment*,” becomes a gift to self/ a graceful, self-disciplinary holistic practice to advance our relation to everything else. This ability to transcend through authentic presence, opens us to a larger universe—liberates, clears, and opens the higher consciousness field.

Seven Sacred Sutras: One of a Thousand Ways to Kiss the Ground

The words Holistic Nursing Discipline have embedded within it, being a disciple for self -growth, self -mastery, to evolve toward holistic Caring-Healing Consciousness toward Cosmic Universal Energy of Love, which is infinite and everlasting. Love, the greatest source for Self and Healing.

On my healing journey of caring science as sacred science, I too struggled with the shift toward an authentic deeper meaning of discipline; asking myself, what are my personal, sacred timeless Veritas practices for Caritas/Love? In the middle of the night, I identified my personal sacred practices which shifted from my outer disciplinary focus to my inner message, deep within self. I share them here, with hope or possibility, they may serve as one way forward for others, in a simple yet powerful form of veritas/caritas praxis.

These simple, yet powerful, Seven Sacred Sutras offer one path toward becoming a **disciple** for Veritas–Caritas Self, contributing to holistic nursing in particular, becoming perhaps the most mature health and caring-healing profession in the world.

Sutras

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Sacred Sutras *—Ancient Hindu teachings—**Sutra**, (Sanskrit: “thread” or “string”)—a brief aphoristic composition; Pali sutta in Hinduism, in Buddhism, a more extended exposition, the basic form of the Theravada (Way of Elders) and Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) traditions. The early Indian philosophers did not work with written texts...; thus, there was a need for explanatory works of the utmost brevity that could be committed to memory (as a form of worship) (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/sutra> retrieved October 19, 2020).

Personal Sutras: For me, Sutras are energetically laden words or phrases that point to spiritual truths ... beyond the simple aphorisms themselves. They point to something more spiritually profound.

I wake in the early morning dark and ponder my private thoughts, what are my Sutra spiritual truth practices? How do I face myself, beyond myself? What are my practices to access the sacred, the holy, beyond what is presenting in outer world? Can I name my sacred sutras? What are my personal brevity stations of spiritual truth to which I return—that I commit to memory—when there is no place to hide; and no way of turning my face away.

Here is what I offer from the dark of morning meditation as my Sacred Sutras—perhaps they can be yours or at least pointers to another truth-teaching along the broken road of our world today.

These are my brief prayers and practices to face myself; to stop the mind; breathe every breath a prayer; to open to unknowns and mysteries; to bow in awe, gratitude, and devotion to the beyond. To "see" anew what is right in front of me, even in midst of despair, sadness, confusion, heartaches, death and dying of a world/universe/worldview that is turning upside down ... and no place to run.

*Please pause here and ponder my **Seven Sacred Sutras** as an opening, contemplative meditation and entrance for perhaps facing yourself, entering inner Sacred Space, which is greater than self.*

Please contemplate each one in Silence for at least a moment as an invitation into sacred passage to inner Source, Soul and Sacred.

Seven Sacred Sutras:

Stillness

Our True Nature is stillness (Keating)

Silence

Now It's time to walk outside and be quiet (Rumi)

Solitude

If you wish to meet your Lord, then practice solitude (Sufi)

Spirit

The body is the house where spirit lives (Rumi)

Simplicity

...by the way of humility, I am the way of simplicity... be not owned by your possessions (Keating).

Service (Sacred)

Sacred service raises our consciousness...it defines our humanity...we are co-creators with The Divine.

Surrender

...This is lover's work, to break through and become... to die before we die (Rumi).

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Closing

Since we cannot turn our face away, and since there is no hiding place down here (Maya Angelou), we are called to ask again, how are we to live? Are there any "Sutras" or perennial spiritual truth-messages we turn to, as we continue to "face" this pandemic of the century? How are we to face our sacred self and surrender to a share unitary consciousness with grace and gratitude, without succumbing to Kierkegaard's "fear and trembling unto death?"

(From Author:, 2021, p. 3).

In this space of *Eternal Now*, there is a sense of sacred Spirit—All is One—in this *Now*.

Self-disciplinary holistic spirit-filled practices are ways to have a love affair between you and YOU. Each breath in a "*Caritas/Veritas Moment*," is a little miracle in this eternal now—opening up space for spirit to awaken.

Just as you inhale and exhale; you are inspired and able to let go, release—being more aligned "between your personality and your Soul" (Zukav, 2001); more in graceful rhythm with the impermanent flow of the universe and all of nature.

These simple Sutra exercises for self can be a simple starting point, to shift from fear to universal Cosmic-Infinite Love. Any small, disciplined *Caritas/Veritas* act for self, compels a reconstructed definition of a mature *discipline*, giving entirely new meaning to the ontological self -discipline required for sacred caring science.

Finally, we now know from within a unitary quantum worldview—small acts of self-caring have great impact. Whatever one person radiates into the unitary field, is affecting the whole energetic field of human consciousness. This simple step forward is a form of sacred activism (AUTHOR, 2019; Harvey, 2000). Now, holistic sacred caring-healing praxis for self/other/our world/universe is needed in our midst, this very moment. By evolving the disciplinary matrix of Holistic Nursing, through uniting the personal -spiritual with the professional—scientific meaning of discipline, Holistic Nurses hold the future for a mature Nursing paradigm of sacred caring science, offering hope for a world in despair.


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