

You're Not You

Dr. Jean Watson (2005) describes the transpersonal caring relationship as a mutually beneficial experience for both the nurse as well as the patient. In this experience both are mutually searching for meaning and wholeness. Caring is not something that can be learned in class. Caring is something that develops organically from within. Caring requires unconditional acceptance which utilizes a holistic treatment approach. In the movie by Wolfe (2014) *You're Not You*, the caregiver-patient relationship is demonstrated as caregiver Bec provides care for ALS patient Kate. At first Bec does not understand what it means to be a caregiver and is simply looking for a part time job. As the movie progresses Bec develops a caring relationship with Kate which ultimately ends with Kate passing away with Bec at her side. The movie was very emotional, relatable, and exemplifies the transpersonal caring relationship theory.

23:00-26:15

Kate struggles to get out of bed, it is late at night, and no one is home. Evan is out for the evening, Bec is at a bar with her friend. Kate walks down the hall dragging her foot due to her degenerative disease and decreased muscle tone. Kate peers over the balcony as she pushes her walker slowly toward the stairs. She appears blank and emotionless. She gazes down the stairs, the walker wheel creeps toward the edge of the stairwell. Kate loses her balance, and in this instant Bec feels something is wrong. A blank text message comes to Bec from Kate. Bec rushes toward Kate and Evan's home. As Bec enters the entryway she sees the overturned walker at the base of the stairs. Kate is found upstairs lying on the floor in a pool of her own urine. Kate request Bec bathe her before Evan returns home. As Bec is gently washing her back she removes her shirt due to it being wet. The two say nothing to each other but appear to have an

understanding that Kate was at the end of her rope. Bec appears worried as Kate is clearly distraught.

As this scene unfolds the connection between Bec and Kate has been solidified. There is nothing stronger in life than human connection. Much about caring for another human being is the emotional connection that can be formed even without words. The non-verbal cues the two share demonstrate the compassion humans have for each other.

Watson (2005) describes transpersonal caring as the ability to center consciousness and intentionality focused on caring, healing and wholeness rather than on disease pathophysiology. The obvious fact is that Bec was washing Kate, but the symbolic metaphor for this scene is the cleansing and starting of a new chapter in Kates life. The scene eludes to Kate questioning suicide. Often people hit this rock bottom before they make a life altering change.

1:13:15-1:15:00

Bec is seated at the piano playing a soft classical song. Evan wheels Kate close to the piano and places her hands on top of Bec's hands. Kate's eyes close as Bec plays the song. There is a close up of their hands connected as Bec plays softly on the keys of the piano. Bec and Kate smile at each other.

Human contact is powerful. The connection that the two shared in this scene was heart warming as well as heart breaking. The dichotomy of happiness as well as sadness was shared by both. Part of experiencing transpersonal caring is connection like these. In this scene both characters share a caring moment that is natural, unplanned and very authentic. This uninterrupted moment shared is the essence of Watson's (2005) "caring moment". This

connection demonstrates the holistic approach of caring for another as they intertwine their mind, body, and spirit.

You can tell from the smile they share that both characters are loving the time shared together as they leave a lasting impression on one another. This caring moment exemplifies the joy and power human connection has.

1:16:00-1:19:15

Bec is in bed embracing Kate. Bec appears worried. Kate near death struggles to formulate words. Kate shares with her gratitude for Bec's care and makes Bec promise to find someone who sees her for who she is. In response Bec thanks Kate for giving her direction and meaning in life.

During this scene it was difficult not to reflect on all the patients I have cared for in the past and the meaning they have given to me. Transpersonal caring theory explains the healing potential for both the care giver as well as the one being cared for (Watson, 2005).

Caring is reciprocal as evidenced by this scene. Bec appreciates the kind words, but what is more moving is that even as Kate nears death Bec divulges how much she has gained from caring for her. These moments are priceless in nursing. They are raw, emotionally charged, and genuine. Patient's often do not realize the two-way street that caring for someone provides. This is transpersonal caring theory in its purest form.

Thru analysis of this film I am reminded of my purpose and my magnetism toward caring for others. I am grateful for the many experiences I have shared with my patients as well as their families. The allure of nursing has always meant more than just handing out meds or performing other nursing interventions. Sure, I love helping people get better or take away pain and

suffering, but above all I crave the human connection I have with my patients. In each of these mentioned scenes transpersonal caring theory is demonstrated.

Nurses of today appear to be torn between the machine of caring for people with a focus on efficiency as well as economics, vs. caring with compassion. Watson (2005) provides an important glimpse of the way that healing nursing should be performed in a metaphysical sense. This theory of transpersonal caring and other compassion driven concepts is helping nurses discover meaning and purpose to their work. These theories allow for restoration of harmony to nursing in a time where nurses are facing increasing complexity and influential views of healthcare as a business rather than a sacred holistic healing of the mind, body, and soul.

Reference

- Watson, J. (2005). Caring science as a sacred science. In McEwen, M. and Wills, E. (Ed.). *Theoretical basis for nursing*. USA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Wolfe, G., (Director), & Swank, H. & Greenspan, A. (Producers). (2014). *You're Not You* [Motion Picture]. United States: Daryl Prince Productions.