Imagine a hospital where the philosophy guiding nursing practice includes, “Creating a healing environment at all levels (physical as well as non-physical, subtle environment of energy and consciousness), whereby wholeness, beauty, comfort, dignity, and peace are potentiated”.

Sounds like the place where you would want yourself or a loved one to be cared for, right? Perhaps it also sounds like a place where you could grow your own practice and career as well. Truly, what practice model could be more congruent to Healing Touch than one guided by a theory which explicitly embraces the subtle environment of energy and consciousness?

Hospitals around the world that have adopted Dr. Jean Watson’s Caring Theory to inform their practice are doing just that…creating true and transcendent healing environments for their patients and staff. Jean Watson, RN, PhD, AHN_BC, FAAN is Distinguished Professor at the University of Colorado, and her Caring Theory (evolving to Caritas Consciousness) makes explicit the values, knowledge and practices not just of nursing but of all healing arts. Many hospitals that have achieved Magnet status (a marker of excellence in nursing), implemented Caring Theory as part of that journey.

But how? How can you institutionalize “opening and attending to spiritual mysterious”? The examples are many, creative and nourishing, spiritual and truly connected in their approach. Resurrection Hospital in Chicago, IL uses their computerized documentation system to prompt nurses to assess for “Risk for compromised human dignity” and document an intervention based on Watson’s Caring Theory. It is one of the most commonly used nursing diagnoses by their staff, and offers “allowance for miracles” as one of the nursing interventions.

INOVA Health in Falls Church, Virginia created Centering Lounges/Nurse Sanctuaries where their staff can find sacred space to heal their own spirit and center before they go forth to make authentic connections with their patients’ healing process. The theory is fluid enough to allow for implementation that
reflects the culture and needs of the unique hospitals, units and individuals who have chosen to adopt it to guide their practice.

How can administration in the institutional setting possibly measure or evaluate whether their health care providers are “being authentically present…”? John Nelson, RN, MS was a co-creator of a Caring Factor Survey (CFS) based on Watson’s work. He is currently using the CFS in international multi-site research to evaluate patient perception of being cared for. This work has been used to create a profile of a Caritas Nurse; a nurse who is reported by his/her patients to be a caring person.

In addition, his Healthcare Environment Inc. group is using the survey along with HeartMath and biochemical measurements to assess the physiological effects on patients of healthcare providers performing their interventions with loving-kindness and healing intentionality.

The work continues to grow, and as it evolves the International Caritas Consortium (ICC) has taken form. The ICC is a small and esteemed group of educators, researchers and practitioners who are engaged in the authentic exploration of Caring/Caritas Theory. One of the manifestations of their work is the development of a multi-site database of measured Caring Behaviors. Dr. Joanne Duffy, RN, PhD, CCRN is spearheading the initiative that will use her reliability and validity-tested Caring Assessment Tool to gather data from multiple institutions, providing a way to benchmark the level to which patients perceive their nurses to be engaged in the expression of Caring Theory.

There are many examples across hospitals, clinics, schools and universities where Watson’s Caring Theory is the guiding light for patient and multidisciplinary healer self-care. Visit http://www2.uchsc.edu/son/caring to learn more about Caring Theory and Caritas Consciousness, find articles for download and organizations near you engaged in the work. You can also look forward to the upcoming release of the revised 2nd edition of Watson’s seminal work *Nursing: The Philosophy and Science of Caring* which will be available in the spring of 2008. All of her books, including that upcoming release, can be purchased through Amazon.com or the University of Colorado bookstore (www.uchsc.edu/bookstore (800) 591-2884).

Have more questions or want to find ways to get involved? You can contact me, Kathy Lynch, RN at Kathryn.Lynch@UCHSC.edu. Namaste!
Jean Watson’s Caring Theory

*original Caring Theory in italics, evolving Caritas Consciousness in bold

1) **Formation of humanistic-altruistic system of values**  
   Practice of loving-kindness and equanimity within context of caring consciousness;

2) **Instillation of faith-hope**  
   Being authentically present, and enabling and sustaining the deep belief system and subjective life world of self and one-being-cared-for;

3) **Cultivation of sensitivity to one’s self and to others**  
   Cultivation of one's own spiritual practices and transpersonal self, going beyond ego self;

4) **Development of a helping-trusting, human caring relationship**  
   Developing and sustaining a helping-trusting, authentic caring relationship;

5) **Promotion and acceptance of the expression of positive and negative feelings**  
   Being present to, and supportive of the expression of positive and negative feelings as a connection with deeper spirit of self and the one-being-cared-for;

6) **Systematic use of a creative problem-solving caring process**  
   Creative use of self and all ways of knowing as part of the caring process; to engage in artistry of caring-healing practices;

7) **Promotion of transpersonal teaching-learning**  
   Engaging in genuine teaching-learning experience that attends to unity of being and meaning attempting to stay within other's frame of reference;

8) **Provision for a supportive, protective, and/or corrective mental, physical, societal, and spiritual environment,**  
   Creating healing environment at all levels, (physical as well as non-physical, subtle environment of energy and consciousness, whereby wholeness, beauty, comfort, dignity, and peace are potentiated;

9) **Assistance with gratification of human needs**  
   Assisting with basic needs, with an intentional caring consciousness, administering ‘human care essentials', which potentiate alignment of mindbodyspirit, wholeness, and unity of being in all aspects of care; tending to both embodied spirit and evolving spiritual emergence;

10) **Allowance for existential-phenomenological-spiritual forces**  
    Opening and attending to spiritual-mysterious and existential dimensions of one's own life-death; soul care for self and the one-being-care-for.
Jean Watson's Bio:
Dr. Jean Watson is Distinguished Professor of Nursing and holds an endowed Chair in Caring Science at the University of Colorado Denver and Health Sciences Center. She is founder of the original Center for Human Caring in Colorado and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. She previously served as Dean of Nursing at the University Health Sciences Center and is a Past President of the National League for Nursing.

Dr. Watson has earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in nursing and psychiatric-mental health nursing and holds her PhD in educational psychology and counseling. She is a widely published author and recipient of several awards and honors, including an international Kellogg Fellowship in Australia, a Fulbright Research Award in Sweden. She holds six (6) Honorary Doctoral Degrees, including 3 International Honorary Doctorates (Sweden, United Kingdom, and Quebec, Canada).

She has been Distinguished Lecturer and Endowed Lecturer at universities throughout the United States and been around the world several times. Clinical nurses and academic programs throughout the world use her published works on the philosophy and theory of human caring and the art and science of caring in nursing.

Dr. Watson’s caring philosophy is used to guide transformative models of caring and healing practices for nurses and patients alike, in diverse settings worldwide. Watson has been featured in numerous national videos on nursing theory and the art of nursing. She is the recipient of several national awards, including The Fetzer Institute Norman Cousins Award, in recognition of her commitment to developing; maintaining and exemplifying relationship-centered care practices.

At the University of Colorado, Dr. Watson holds the title of Distinguished Professor of Nursing; the highest honor accorded its faculty for scholarly work. In 1999 she assumed the Murchinson-Scoville Chair in Caring Science, the nation's first endowed chair in Caring Science, based at the University of Colorado Denver & Health Sciences Center. As author /co-author of over 12 books on caring, her latest books range from empirical measurements of caring, to new postmodern philosophies of caring and healing. Her most recent book is *Caring Science as Sacred Science* (2005) Philadelphia:FA Davis. These latest works, both AJN books of the year awards, seek to bridge paradigms as well as point toward transformative models for the 21st century. A new revised edition of her first book, *Nursing The Philosophy and Science of Caring* will be published in 2007. (jwFeb2006)

Kathy's Bio:
Kathy Lynch, RN, works on a Medical unit with a Renal and Infectious Disease specialty at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, IL. She completed her undergraduate education at University of Colorado Health Sciences Center where she remains a Regular Fellow and Research Assistant to Jean Watson. Kathy has an interest in CAM and Caritas modalities for geriatric care, and is currently enrolled in the BSN-PhD program at Rush.