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THE ACTUALIZED CARING MOMENT:

A GROUNDED THEORY OF CARING IN NURSING PRACTICE

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Nursing at Massey University
New Zealand**

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Dedication

To the ones who have a beautiful compassionate heart
in thinking, writing, talking, and having care
for mankind, living beings and nature

To mother Somboon, and father Chankeaw
for giving life to three of us Payom, Chusit, Malee
and seeding metta* in our hearts and minds

To teachers in the form of persons, or books, and nature
for conveying knowledge and wisdom
to understand, to know, the way of life

To husband Peerapol who is alongside me
with love and understanding
To baby Anatta who brings the lesson of joy and sadness

To Euswas and Wiriya families for their kind support
To all beings who share common suffering and happiness
May all "beings" in this world be well and at peace

* A Thai word derived from Pali language means loving kindness

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide a partial theoretical description of the phenomenon of caring in nursing practice. Three practice settings involving cancer patients were selected: hospital, hospice, and community with thirty patients and thirty-two nurses participating in the study. A research design combining a phenomenological perspective and grounded theory strategies was implemented. Data were collected by indepth interview, participant observation, and records. The data were analysed by the method of constant comparative analysis.

A number of concepts were developed from the data and the theoretical framework of "The Actualized Caring Moment" was formulated to explain how the actual caring process occurs in nursing practice. This caring moment is the moment at which the nurse and the patient realise their intersubjective connectedness in transforming healing-growing as human beings in a specific-dynamic changing situation. The actualized caring moment is a gestalt configuration of three main caring components: The preconditions, The ongoing interaction, and The situated context.

The Preconditions, which consist of the nurse, personally and professionally prepared to care, and the patient, a person with compromised health and wellbeing, are prerequisites for the occurrence of the caring process. The nurse has the qualities of benevolence, commitment, and clinical competency to be ready to care. The patient is a unique person in a vulnerable state and requires assistance from the nurse to meet personal health needs. The Ongoing Interaction, the actual caring process, is the continuity of the nurse-patient interaction moment-by-moment which brings together six caring elements: Being there, Being mindfully present, A relationship of trust, Participation in meeting needs, Empathetic communication, and Balancing knowledge-energy-time. The Situated Context is the situation and environment where the actual caring process is taking place, and this is comprised of circumstances of the nurse-patient meeting and care-facilitating working conditions

The conceptual framework of "The Actualized Caring Moment" offers nurses an opportunity to understand their practice more fully in providing effective nursing service. Consequently, its implications are valuable for education, research, and the development of knowledge focused on the discipline of nursing.

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