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Weathering the Storm Persevering Through a Difficult Time

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

WEATHERING THE STORM
PERSEVERING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
NIEHOFF SCHOOL OF NURSING

BY
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon of Interest

The phenomenon of interest for this research is persevering through a difficult time. As people travel through their lives, an assortment of life events occur, some joyful and fun, some trying and difficult. Challenges arise, decisions are made, changes occur, and life goes on. This researcher has marvelled at the way most people travel through their difficult times. In searching for a way to describe this traveling through, a variety of ideas were considered, including: endurance, diligence, hardiness, and resilience. Meanings and distinctions between these ideas were sought. Clarification of the terms began with definitions.

To endure is to last or continue in existence, to continue in a certain state or condition, to remain in a certain place (Oxford English Dictionary [OED], 1989). Diligence is a constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken (OED, 1989). Hardiness is the capability of endurance, physical or mental (OED, 1989). Funk (1992) says hardiness is a general characteristic exhibited in feelings and behaviors that are depicted as commitment, control, and challenge. Lastly, resilience is the act of
rebounding or springing back, the power of resuming the original shape or position after compression or bending (OED, 1989). Wagnild and Young (1990) view resilience as emotional stamina and see resilience composed of equanimity, self-reliance, existential aloneness, perseverance, and meaningfulness. None of these concepts adequately describe the researchers observations of how, metaphorically speaking, individuals weather a storm.

These concepts are too linear and static to describe weathering the storm. This researcher does not view life as a linear process with a specific beginning or end, nor humans as being linear and static. Instead, this researcher views humans as open, flowing beings who cocreate, along with the universe, the process of life. This thinking clearly fits within the simultaneity paradigm of nursing and is opposed to the more predominant totality paradigm of nursing.

The totality paradigm of nursing has historically focused on the natural sciences and, consequently, the medical perspective of humans. This view posits humans as systems of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual parts. Adaptation and coping are seen as effective responses to a changing environment. Individuals respond to the environment in cause-effect patterns so that life's encounters can be predicted and verified. Control is possible once the causal relationships are decided (Nagle
The goals of nursing in the totality paradigm are to promote health, prevent illness, and care for the sick (Parse, 1987). These goals are significantly different from the nursing goal of this researcher which is quality of life for persons as they define it. This researcher sees the person, not the nurse, as the expert in life and the directing force in personal health. This perspective is congruent with the human becoming theory of nursing (Parse 1981, 1992, 1995) within the simultaneity paradigm of nursing.

The simultaneity paradigm differs from the totality paradigm in several ways. First, humans are viewed as more than and different from the sum of their parts. They are not divisible into separate bio-psycho-social-spiritual components. In Parse’s view humans are viewed as open beings free to choose and give meaning to their situations within the universe. Second, "health is viewed as a process of becoming and as a set of value priorities" (Parse, 1987, p.136). Health is described by the person and not by a standardized set of norms. Here, there is no set standard of health, only how one experiences personal living (Parse, 1987). Third, the goal of nursing differs. In the simultaneity paradigm, Parse’s goal of nursing is the quality of life from the person’s perspective. The person, not the nurse, is the authority. Also within the
simultaneity paradigm, Rogers' goal of nursing is well-being and optimal health.

The decision to align with the simultaneity paradigm was easy and genuine for this researcher. This researcher has a strong personal belief in every human's inherent free choice and has great respect for differing values. The simultaneity paradigm is a natural match that is most comforting and comfortable.

After much thought, the word or concept that best fits the researcher's beliefs and experiences of human beings weathering storms is persevering. Persevering is to continue steadfastly in a course of action, state, purpose or condition, especially in the face of difficulty or obstacles (OED, 1989). Persevering through a difficult time can be seen as continuing to travel in a course of action despite obstacles throughout the course of action. One who persists through a difficult time does so by living the was, is, and will be all-at-once, while transforming.

While the phenomenon of persevering through a difficult time is lived by all human beings, this researcher is interested, and has been interested in women's experiences for some 20 years. As a graduate student with rotations in both inpatient and ambulatory gynecologic oncology units this researcher was often amazed at the strength exhibited by these, often very ill, women. Women faced with the possible life-threatening event of ovarian cancer captured
this researcher’s concern at that time. This concern continued and grew as a familial experience with ovarian cancer occurred. Somehow, women with ovarian cancer confronted their challenges, did what they had to do, and carried on with their lives. These women with ovarian cancer came from varied backgrounds, were different ages, but all seemed to somehow carry on. The researcher was awed at the ability of these women to persevere through difficult times, for the diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer is surely a difficult time. These women, in the face of obstacles, seemed to continue on with their lives and seldom decided to stop confronting the persisting challenges. The challenges were many, prolonged, and often extremely complex. The women the researcher knew were confronted with alterations in their being that changed them profoundly. They faced many changes in their lives, from loss of reproductive ability to disfigurement from medical management. They faced a questionable future as survival time for most women with ovarian cancer is drastically decreased. The question that arises is: what is it like to persevere through a difficult time? What is it like to weather the storm?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to advance nursing science by gaining an understanding of persevering through a difficult time from persons living the phenomenon.
Significance of the Study

A study of persevering through a difficult time advances nursing science in two ways. First, the entity of study, persevering through a difficult time, is a universal human experience. Since it is a universal human experience, understanding gained from this research adds to nurses' knowledge as they strive to better be with individuals as they are living through difficult times. Second, the phenomenon under study is a health-related experience in that it reflects a way of becoming which incarnates value priorities and quality of life (Parse, 1987). Understanding persevering through a difficult time as it is lived by those experiencing it has added to the knowledge base of the human becoming theory of nursing, thus advancing nursing science.

The research was conducted using Parse's methodology (1987, 1990, 1992, 1995). This distinct method evolved from the human becoming theory of nursing (1981, 1992). In keeping with this theory, the goal of nursing is quality of life from the person's perspective and the goals of nursing research are "to uncover the structure of lived experiences" (Parse, 1992, p. 41) and thus to advance nursing science. This research, therefore, contributed to nursing theory development through using a nursing research methodology unique to nursing.

Research Question

The research question is: what is the structure of the
lived experience of persevering through a difficult time?

**Nursing Perspective**

As human beings move through life, many difficult times arise. The difficult times may be short or long, gentle or intense, simple or complex in nature. Human beings faced with a difficult time create ways to carry on, to persevere, to weather the storm.

This metaphor, weathering the storm, has been chosen to illustrate the phenomenon of persevering through a difficult time. The OED (1989) defines a metaphor as a "figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that which is properly applicable," (p.676). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphor as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another," (p.5). A metaphor can make one conscious of some likeness between fundamentally different things or processes (Clancy, 1989).

The term metaphor comes from the Greek word *metaphora* which is derived from *meta* meaning 'over' and *pherein* meaning 'to carry'. Metaphor is a linguistic process whereby aspects of one object are 'carried over' or transferred to another object. The second object then is spoken as if it were the first (Hawkes, 1972). According to Hawkes (1972), metaphor is the most fundamental form of figurative language, it is usually descriptive, and the transference or 'carry over' often results in pictures or images. The appeal
of metaphor can be both visual and linguistic. In this case
the metaphor chosen for persevering through a difficult
time, weathering the storm, is very visual and helps to
understand persevering through a difficult time as a human-
universe process of cocreating health.

To illustrate weathering the storm, the researcher
wrote the following (Petardi, 1995):

WEATHERING THE STORM

A storm is coming, feel it, sense it, know it.
Sounds, smells, tension in the air, askew.
A storm gathering at the horizon, barely there.
Moving in toward shore, fast or slow, I cannot yet
tell.
Darkening clouds mount and gather strength,
volume, structure.
The ocean sways, color deepens, movements change
from calm rhythm to an exaggerated thrusting
and tugging.
Waves roll in, their speed intensifying as the
storm approaches shore.
Waves push toward shore with more determination,
then pull back out to sea with vigor, again
and again.
Moving sea and cloudy sky in cocreation.
Winds whirl stronger and faster, grains of sand
are pushed to movement.
The gathering storm clamors and reaches toward shore and beyond.
Rain starts to fall in scattered patterns, at first one drop here, another over there.
Dark clouds swell and open, rain pounds the shore, waves leap in wild disarray.
Every thing is drenched, battered by the wind, moved.
The storm rages, all at once, winds reel, rain and hail, waves ricocheting here and there.
The storm rages, short or long, I cannot yet tell.
The shore and beyond transforming.
Sand, shells, beach debris, plants, creatures touched and altered.
Never the same, cocreated anew.
Sea oats living on the dune.
Roots gripping, holding tight, valuing their place.
Sea oats-shore line-storming sea: a coexistence.
Sea oats bending with the wind, tips touching earth rebound to sky, again and again and again.
Originating unknown strengths.
Sea oats standing in the rain, a misting spray or fierce outpouring, stalks absorbing or repelling.
A choice is made.
Sea oats living on the dune.
Transcending to new ways of becoming.
Weathering the storm.

Persevering through a difficult time is weathering the storm of the moment. Weathering in this instance is a metaphor for persevering. The OED (1989) defines persevering as: to continue steadfastly in a course of action, state, purpose, or condition, especially in the face of difficulty or obstacles. Weather, as defined by the OED (1989), is coming safely through a period of trouble, adversity, affliction, to pass through and survive. The OED (1989) defines storm as a violent disturbance of affairs whether civil, political, social, or domestic, a violent assault on a fortified place. In this instance, storm has been used as a metaphor for 'a difficult time'.

The human becoming theory of nursing (Parse 1981, 1992) is the framework most consistent with the researcher's view of weathering the storm. That human beings participate with the universe in the cocreation of health is basic to the human becoming theory (Parse, 1992). Human beings live their health by living their personal values, which are unique to them. The human becoming theory is based on three principles that incarnate the basic assumptions of human becoming. Each principle can be related to weathering the storm.
PRINCIPLE 1: STRUCTURING MEANING MULTIDIMENSIONALLY IS
COCREATING REALITY THROUGH THE LANGUAGING
OF VALUING AND IMAGING (Parse, 1981,

This principle means human beings with the universe
cocreate meaning in each situation. This is
accomplished as human beings live personal realities by
what they know and what they prize. Humans weathering
storms cocreate the disturbance and choose how they are
with it, just as the storm, shoreline, and sea oats
all-at-once cocreate their being and becoming anew with
the crashing waves and pounding rain. How a storm is
weathered emerges in human languaging of changes as
meanings are in constant metamorphosis. The meaning of
the storm is structured through choices arising at many
realms of the universe and the values inherent in the
personal reality of the difficult times is incarnated
in languaging. Value priorities arise through
constructing images of what can be in light of what is.
Weathering is steadfastly plowing through the adversity
of disarray while being ricocheted and drenched with
the clamor of the moment. The steadfastness is lived in
moving-being still while speaking-being silent.
Weathering is a way of confirming and not confirming
certain ways of becoming. The way of weathering is the
meaning given to being with the storm.
PRINCIPLE 2: COCREATING RHYTHMICAL PATTERNS OF
RELATING IS LIVING THE PARADOXICAL UNITY
OF REVEALING-CONCEALING, ENABLING-LIMITING
WHILE CONNECTING-SEPARATING (Parse, 1981,

This principle means the human-universe process emerges
with cocreated paradoxical rhythms as one tells and
does not tell, has opportunities and limitations, and
moves toward and away from phenomena, all
simultaneously. This principle relates to weathering
the storm in that the way the storm is lived discloses-
hides the meaning of the tumult. In humans, the tumult
is the incarnation of health as the difficult time
emerges and subsides all-at-once showing and
simultaneously not showing the lived meaning. The fact
that one even identifies an event or process as a
difficult time tells and does not tell about the
meaning given to the situation. The choices humans
make, not only in what to identify as a storm but also
in how to weather a storm, reflects living both
opportunities and limitations. While the clamoring
storm gives rise to pounding rains that drench the
shore and beyond and limits beauty and growth in the
now, opportunities arise for new growth in the will be
as nourishing rains provide life-sustaining water to
the many plants and creatures on the shore and beyond.
Like the sea oats that bend and rebound again and again and the waves that roll in to shore then roll back out to sea, first connecting then separating from the shore, humans as they travel through their difficult times connect and separate multidimensionally all-at-once with the was, the is, and the will be. In doing this, the cadence of patterns are cocreated.


This principle means human beings in the human-universe process transcend with the now and contemplate the will be. One cocreates existence anew through changing the pushing-resisting current as the waves rush forward to the shore and pull back out to sea with vigor and change from a calm rhythm to an exaggerated thrusting and tugging. Humans persevering with the challenge of the turbulence and rage of difficult times choose to propel beyond the storm and cocreate anew with the universe as they emerge from the old to the new, as what was incarnates the now and will be all-at-once. So too the sand, shells, beach debris, plants, and creatures of the shore are touched and altered by the existence of the was, the now, and the will be. As humans persevere through difficult times, processing
the was, the now and the will be, they transform to a new becoming while originating the known and unknown from multidimensional experiences just as the sea oats make choices and transcend to new ways of becoming in weathering their storms.

Summary

Weathering the storm is a metaphor for persevering through a difficult time. From the researcher's view, the simultaneity paradigm, and specifically the human becoming theory of nursing (Parse 1981, 1992) provides a frame of reference for understanding the meaning persons give to persevering through difficult times. The question of this research was: what is it like to persevere through a difficult time? Understanding what this is like adds to both the human becoming theory of nursing and the general understanding of this human health phenomenon.
CHAPTER II
INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Persevering and perseverance have been addressed by a variety of disciplines including: the theater arts, law, business, psychology, poetry, education, theology, and health care. A computerized literature search was conducted for the concepts persevering, persevere, and perseverance in the general, psychological, legal, philosophical, and health care indexes. The Dissertation Abstracts index was also searched. Some disciplines, such as psychology, direct considerable attention to perseverance, others do not. There is also an assortment of literature, both theory and research, from a variety of disciplines, such as business and law, that define perseverance and persevering differently than defined for this particular research. These sources, therefore, are reviewed only briefly.

Theater Arts

The literature search in the area of theater arts produced references to the Castle of Perseverance, a late medieval religious play. This elaborate play presents a series of moral reversals in the life of Mankind starting just after his baptism through his
death as an old man. Mankind is first persuaded to a life of sin then rescued from this evil and taken to the castle of perseverance where he is protected by virtues from sin. Here he lives persevering in a good life until once again sin successfully coaxes him out of the castle and back into a life of mortal sin where he dies crying out for Mercy. Mankind is rescued from hell by God in His goodness to dwell in eternal bliss (Kelley, 1979).

Legal

The legal literature uses the term perseverance to denote persistence in an action to reach a goal. For example, Osler (1991) discusses the realities and possibilities of shock incarceration and how one must persevere to obtain and keep such a program. Bee (1994) describes how preparation, patience, and perseverance are the keys to winning certain legal cases. Finally, Pappas (1994) writes about persevering to obtain changes in inmate double bunking in jail cells. It is apparent perseverance is used to describe continued effort to reach a goal and further investigation into this area is not relevant to this research thus it is not warranted.

Business

Literature in the field of business uses the term perseverance in describing a means to success (Berardo,
Nelton (1994) writes about businesses "that have weathered extraordinary adversity and emerged stronger as a result," (p.44). It is the story of four companies honored for persevering and succeeding against withering odds with "ingenuity, class, integrity, vision, and courage," (p.44). Attention given to perseverance in this field relevant to this research is minimal and does not warrant further investigation.

Psychology

The discipline of psychology is more prolific in dealing with the concept of perseverance. Much research has been done on belief perseverance, that is, the tendency to maintain established beliefs even in the face of evidence that should weaken or reverse those beliefs (Nisbett and Ross, 1980). Belief perseverance has been evaluated along with beliefs about self (Cervone and Palmer, 1990; Davies, 1982; Hubbard, 1984; Lepper, Ross, and Lau, 1986; Ross, Lepper, and Hubbard, 1975), the effect of hypothetical data or explanations (Anderson, 1983; Anderson and Kellam, 1992; O'Sullivan and Durso, 1984), and first impressions (Tetlock, 1983).

Because belief perseverance has been defined as "an inappropriate persistence in an impression when the evidential basis for such a position is completely
invalidated," (Jelalian and Miller, 1984, p. 29), this body of literature holds little value for this particular research. In essence, belief perseverance focuses on believing in something even when the facts do not fit (Lichtenberg, 1984) as compared to perseverance as traveling through a difficult time even in the face of obstacles.

**Education**

A small, but varied look at perseverance is found in the Education literature. Walberg, Tsai, Weinstein, Gabriel, Rasher, Rosecrans, Rovai, Ide, Trujillo, and Vukosavich (1981) did extensive research to reveal common childhood, psychological, family, educational, and cultural traits and conditions of over 200 prominent men born between the 14th and 20th centuries. They found, as a group, essayists, historians, critics, and sociologists were higher in the trait of persevering and poets, novelists, and dramatists were lower than other groups, like, statesmen, generals, and scientists, among others. Also of interest is that 91% of the sample were described in historical texts as persevering which was defined by this research group as "desired to excel, hard working, strong need to achieve, strove for distant goals, persistent, and serious," (p.104). Walberg et al (1981) conclude that childhood traits, including perseverance, and
conditions are only clues to adult eminence, not definite predictors.

Four experiments conducted by Millman, Bieger, Klag, and Pine (1983) found no significant difference in mean learning time between students who were encouraged to persevere and those who were not encouraged to persevere. Experiment 1 included 48 children in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades. Experiments 2, 3, and 4 included 34, 48, and 48 college students, respectively. All subjects were asked to learn word lists. The grade school children were randomly divided into highly encouraged to do well, moderately encouraged to do well, and not encouraged groups. The college students in Experiment 2 were divided into encouraged and discouraged groups. The college students in Experiments 3 and 4 were divided into encouraged and not encouraged groups. The researchers wanted to determine "if a learner is already willing to persevere to the extent needed for learning, does increasing the learner's perseverance alter the degree of learning or learning rate?" (p.425). They conclude that the four experiments show learning rate or efficiency is not modifiable by motivation or incentives.

Shigaki (1983) conducted a research study in Japan to assess what values were being transmitted and how they were being transmitted to young pre-school and
kindergarten age children. Four clusters of values surfaced. Of interest here is the cluster comprised of patience, perseverance, and concentration. Perseverance, also referred to as persistence by this author, was found to be strongly encouraged by Japanese caregivers, both professional staff and parents. Children were encouraged to persevere in an activity and were praised for their perseverance. Data from 14 nurseries and 10 kindergartens were gathered, by observation and interview, over a year. Visits were also made to a variety of other institutions to obtain a well-rounded view. Shigaki was also interested in replicating this study in the United States.

Finally, Bardwell and Braaksma (1985) conducted a study to assess whether motivation, when considered as a multifactored concept including, perseverance, could be used to predict success in school. A group of five instruments to assess motivation was administered to 60 college students in the United States. Grade point averages and college entrance exam scores were also obtained. Through stepwise multiple regression analysis using total score and subscale scores, 23% and 36% of the variance, respectively, in learning performance was explained by motivation. These researchers conclude that motivation can be considered a predictor to school achievement, but motivation must
be considered a multifactored concept.

The field of education gives varied perspectives on perseverance. However, the knowledge contained here is not applicable to this research as persevering to attain a goal is more the focus than persevering through a difficult time.

Literature

A variety of stories and books surface with the computer search of perseverance. William Weston or the Reward of Perseverance (Anonymous, 1832) is the story of a poor country farm boy who is given an opportunity to change his fate. He is given advice to persevere, never yield to despair no matter what obstacles may be placed in his way. He does persevere and becomes a successful, prosperous businessman able to provide for his parents, siblings, and wife.

Wizard's Hall (Yolen, 1991) is the story of a farm boy who saves the Wizard's Hall and all its Magisters (teachers) and students from the Master (an evil wizard) and the Beast. He is able to save all because he really tries and does not give up even though obstacles are in his path throughout the struggle.

Hugh Can Do (Armstrong, 1992) is a children's story of a young orphan boy who sets out to make his fortune. He glimpses his goal and sets out to obtain it. He is beset with a series of setbacks but continues
on, trying hard, persevering to reach his goal, and he finally does succeed.

Finally, *African Americans: Voices of Triumph: Perseverance* (Time-Life Books, 1993) tells the tail of African Americans through stories and pictures from approximately 1500 through the present. The majority of the book reviews African American history in the United States starting with slavery, including African American participation in the Civil War. The role of slaves on plantations in the South and in the underground railroad, and as free men and women as pioneers settling the West, in the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam Conflict are explored. The book continues as it tells of the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Black Panther Party and the struggle for equal rights within the United States. The book depicts the African American’s struggle through their difficult times and how, even when faced with obstacles, they have persevered and weathered their storms.

**Poetry**

A search through Columbia Granger’s World of Poetry (1992) was conducted for the subjects of perseverance and weathering the storm and for the phrase weathering the storm. While no references were
found for weathering the storm, 16 poems were found depicting perseverance in some way.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1809-1882) wrote about perseverance in "A Psalm of Life" (Baym et al, 1985). Here, he writes that men are destined to act so that each day finds them further along. The goal is to be up and doing, achieving, pursuing. Longfellow also wrote "Excelsior" (Baym et al, 1985) which tells the tale of a young mountain climber as he continues his quest despite hardships, refusing to stop, he perseveres to his eventual death. Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) wrote about this phenomenon in "Ulysses" (Rosenthal, 1987):

We are not now that strength which in old
days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield. (p.648)

The theme in Arthur Hugh Clough's (1819-1861) "Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth" (Abrams, 1986) is that even when struggles appear to be in vain, they are not and one must persevere. Frank L. Stanton (1857-1927) begins his poem about perseverance "Keep a-Goin'"
If you strike a thorn or rose,
Keep a-goin'!
If it hails or if it snows,
Keep a-goin'!  (p.135)

Edmund Vance Cooke (1866-1932) says:
No matter who or what you are, or where you are,
the how
Is plug,  (p.124)
when he writes of perseverance in his poem "Plug" (Watson, 1986).

There are several other poets of the late 19th and 20th century who wrote about perseverance. Everard John Appleton (1872-1931) wrote "The Fighting Failure" (Malone, 1943) which says all soldiers are honored, those who win and those who lose. Even those who know they will lose continue to fight the battle, never giving up. Robert W. Service's (1874-1958) "Carry On" (Service, 1940) tells that when life is easy it is effortless to carry on, but when life is hard and full of obstacles, one must carry on anyway, even though it may be difficult. Marianne Moore (1887-1972) wrote "Nevertheless" (Baym et al, 1985) and includes the lines:
...victory won't come
to me unless I go
to it. (p.1189)

Several other 20th century poets have written about perseverance. G.S.Fraser (1915-1980) wrote "On the Persistence of Humanity" (Lindsay and Mackie, 1983) that says people travel through many trying times but carry on, as will those who follow. The theme of Peter Davidson's (b.1928) "The Cost of Pretending" (Davison, 1984) is that one who carries on even when faced with self doubt shall persevere and survive for all times. Michael Hogan (b.1943) wrote "Survivors" (Hogan, 1989) that tells of prisoners traveling to Dzhezkazgan who refuse to acknowledge their eventual death but choose to persevere in thoughts of life. Michael Ryan (b.1946) writes about the urge to go on even though there seems to be nothing in "After" (Smith and Bottems, 1985). The only children's poem found about perseverance was written by Richard Digance and is titled "The Ants at the Olympics" (Prelutsky, 1983). This is a story of the Jungle Olympics and the ants who persevere to compete each year despite "their unfortunate size" (p.177).

Two anonymous poems portray perseverance. "The Reeds in the Loch Sayis" (Mackie, 1967) begins with:

Though raging stormes movis us to shake,
And wind makis waters overflow;
We yield thereto bot dois not break
And is the calm bent up we grow. (p.112)

"Pluck Wins" (Watson, 1986) concludes with:

He gains the prize who will the most endure;
Who faces issues; he who never shirks;
Who waits and watches, and who always works.

(p.124)

The themes apparent in all the poems related to perseverance specify hard work, plugging on, pursuing, keep a-goin', and steadfastness when faced with obstacles on the path of life.

**Christian Theology**

Perseverance, in the Church, is seen as "the capacity to maintain a belief or an allegiance in the face of discouragement or even persecution" (Gentz, 1986, p.800). Early in Church history, those who persevered in the faith were highly esteemed while those who lapsed were blamed and criticized. Spiritually, perseverance always has to do with the continuance in the Christian way, especially in relation to prayer.

The Christian Bible contains many references to perseverance, but one misses much about persevering unless one looks for other words and phrases that also encourage one to continue on despite obstacles. McElligott (1963) says the Scriptures also use phrases as to continue, to abide, to remain, to persist, to
hold fast, to be steadfast, to stand firm, and to be constant among others. There are "over 30 ways in which the Scriptures teach perseverance. All such words express the same idea--continuance in action despite difficulties extending over a long time" (p. 161-162).

Christians view perseverance, along with magnanimity, magnificence, and patience as the virtue of courage (Morgan, 1986). Confidence, consistency (McElligott, 1963), holiness, and charity (Morgan, 1986) are also seen as virtues. These virtues work together to make a courageous human being able to handle fears and sadness. When fears question human ability to persevere, the Holy Spirit gives assurance he will help to resist the impact of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Human perseverance depends on God's grace and the sacraments are the principle means of grace: Baptism, Conformation, and the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the surest, firmest hope for perseverance and one must receive this sacrament often to persevere in a life of Grace (McElligott, 1963).

Saint Paul (McElligott, 1963) believed perseverance was a deliberate way of life which looks to the final end. The thought of reward urges humans on. The final reward is joining Christ and sharing His eternal reward for His suffering.

According to McElligott (1963) Saints Paul, Peter,
John, James, and Joseph all encouraged perseverance in faith and love of God. They all spoke from personal experiences of perseverance in the teachings of Christ. Saint James maintained the opposite of perseverance is inconsistency and he demanded Christians to be consistent and unhesitating in their faith.

McElligott (1963) writes that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the most compelling model of perseverance and her assumption into heaven was her reward for perseverance. It is believed that every moment of her life was a generous sacrifice and if taken as a whole, it was perseverance in a complete sacrifice.

Finally, perseverance does not mean a life long unbroken perseverance in Grace. One can obtain Grace, lose it, and regain it. It is a doctrine of faith that lost Grace can be recovered by perfect contrition and by the sacrament of penance.

Perseverance is the most desirable gift one can hope for in this life. This gift can only come from God. It is by God’s power that those who trust in Him receive salvation, because of their faith, when the end is here.

**Health Care**

Only modest attention is given to the concept of perseverance in the health care literature. This section is divided into non-nursing (social work,
Non-nursing literature will be presented first.

Non-Nursing Literature


Caplan (1990), a noted psychiatrist, found the capacity to assess one’s ability to persevere diminished as self-concept declines. In his work on loss and stress, Caplan found that the loss of an attachment leads to a prolonged period of distress and disability. This period of distress is associated with, among other things, a deterioration in the clarity of the individuals self-concept and the capacity to assess one’s ability to persevere in the face of discomfort. This weakens the will to struggle.
Stuart, a social worker, along with Jensen, and Guire (1979) reviewed weight loss records of 400 women belonging to Weight Watchers during June, 1977. They found that clients in a weight loss program were motivated to persevere in the program by an initial rapid weight loss. After reviewing five months of records for monthly weight loss, they conclude this phenomenon should be thoroughly understood so perseverance in weight loss programs can be encouraged.

The Summative Perseverance Scale, developed by the research team, was used in a study conducted by Azuma and Chasnoff (1993) a statistician and physician. The study’s purpose was to "identify the potency and direction of biological, behavioral, and environmental factors on 3-year developmental outcomes of infants exposed to cocaine and other drugs during gestation using path analytic procedures," (p.396). The Summative Perseverance Scale showed moderate levels of perseverance in each of the three groups of children tested with no significant differences between groups. Path model parameter estimates, however, indicated poor perseverance had twice the effect of prenatal drug exposure on 3-year IQ.

Azuma and Chasnoff (1993) found that the most significant factor affecting 3-year cognitive ability was the level of perseverance. For this study, prenatal
substance exposure also had a significant effect on 3-year cognitive ability. This effect was complex and the effects of drug exposure were mediated through environmental (home setting), biologic (head growth), and behavioral (perseverance) factors.

Nursing Literature

**Totality paradigm.** Nurses Davidson (1991), Saunders (1992), and Leuning (1994) write about nurses persevering to attain a goal (an art therapy program, prescriptive privileges, and health care for women, respectively). While these articles are interesting and describe efforts nurses can take and have taken to obtain a goal, they do not describe persevering through a difficult time.

The following nursing studies, conducted by Wilson (1989), McBride (1993), and Wagnild and Young (1990), do not focus on persevering through a difficult time. Perseverance is only an incidental finding in all three studies. The studies have little significance for this research study and are therefore, only briefly reviewed here.

Using a grounded theory approach, Wilson's (1989) nursing research was done to explore and describe the process of family caregiving for elderly relatives with Alzheimer's dementia. Persevering is only addressed in relation to making the difficult choice of
institutionalizing the relative or persevering in the care giver role in the home.

McBride's (1993) nursing research study found that patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) identified three different themes regarding the impact of their disease: determination/perseverance, acceptance/resignation, and impatience/intolerance. Determination/perseverance, in this study, was conceptualized as "a fighting spirit, a seemingly more proactive response than acceptance," (p.460). McBride also found that more than half of the participants who spoke to determination/perseverance were from the later maturity phase, that is, over 65 years of age.

The focus of McBride's (1993) study was to determine the impact of attitudes and beliefs of COPD patients on their intentions to engage in conditioning exercises, energy conservation, controlled breathing, self-pacing, and relaxation techniques. The purpose of the study was to test the perceived control component of Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to interview 32 patients with COPD. During the interview participants were asked to "describe their feeling about, and control over, the measures recommended to increase their tolerance to activity," (p.459). This exploratory study was analyzed using Ethnograph to identify themes
regarding the impact of COPD on attitude toward endeavors thought to increase activity tolerance.

Wagnild and Young (1990), using a grounded theory approach, conducted nursing research to identify and describe characteristics of successfully adjusted older women. In general, five themes were identified from the data: equanimity, self-reliance, meaningfulness, existential aloneness, and perseverance. Perseverance, as defined in this study, was "a willingness to continue the struggle to reconstruct one's life and to remain involved," (p.254). After interviewing 24 women between the ages of 67 and 92, these authors conclude that these five themes characterize women who bounce back after adversity and together compromise the concept of resilience. All data were coded using a constant comparative method. Of interest is the particular question regarding the management of difficult times in general. Responses to this question were divided into internal and external resources. Internal resources included belief in self, faith in God, and determination among others. External resources included family, friends, and meaningful work and activities. Responses were varied, but each participant identified both internal and external resources in the management of their difficult times.

These three nursing studies are grounded in the
totality paradigm which portrays humans as being able to be broken into distinct bio-psycho-social-spiritual components. Again, because of the simultaneity paradigm perspective of this current research, these studies have marginal significance for this dissertation.

**Simultaneity paradigm.** In the simultaneity paradigm, two nursing research studies have been reported in the literature that have significance for this research. First, Kraynie, in Parse, Coyne, and Smith (1985), reported research findings on a phenomenological study. This study was intended to generate a structural description of persisting in change even though it is difficult. The theory of Man-Living-Health (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1995), now known as the human becoming theory of nursing, was used as the nursing framework. Kraynie (1985) asked two participants to "write a description of a situation in which you experienced sticking with something even though it was difficult" (p.42). The data were analyzed using the Giorgi method which includes:

a) identification of the natural meaning units,
b) identification of themes, c) identification of focal meanings, d) synthesis of situated structural descriptions, and e) synthesis of a general structural description. The description that emerged from the study was "the experience of persisting even though it
is difficult involves living paradoxical patterns of relating which embody turmoil, emerging relief, and satisfaction as growth is enhanced," (p. 67).

The second study done from the simultaneity paradigm perspective was by Smith (1990). She reported research findings on a Parse research method study investigating the lived experience of struggling through a difficult time for persons who are unemployed. The theory of Man-Living-Health (Parse 1981, 1992, 1995), now known as the human becoming theory of nursing, was the nursing perspective for this research. Ten unemployed participants answered Smith's (1990) inquiry of: "describe the meaning of struggling through a difficult time" (p.20). The data were analyzed using the extraction-synthesis process of the Parse research method. This process includes: (a) identifying the extracted essences, (b) identifying the synthesized essences, (c) formulating a proposition, (d) formulating core concepts, and finally, (e) creating the structure of the lived experience. The structure that evolved was "struggling through a difficult time is sculpting new life ways in turbulent change through affirming self while feeling expanded by assets and restricted by obstacles in the midst of grieving the loss of what was cherished," (p.18).

These two nursing research studies, Kraynie (1985)
and Smith (1990), are both grounded in nursing theory and the simultaneity paradigm. Both studies used the human becoming theory of nursing (Parse 1981, 1992, 1995) as a framework for their research and added to both this nursing theory and the general body of nursing as well. While Kraynie's study used a phenomenological method, Smith's study used the Parse research method. The focus of Kraynie's study was persisting in change even though it is difficult and Smith's focus was struggling through a difficult time for the unemployed. The phenomenon of persevering through a difficult time may or may not be distinct from either of these two phenomena. Only by conducting this research did the answers unfold as discussed in Chapter V.

**Summary**

This review of the literature on the phenomenon of perseverance shows that a variety of disciplines have, even if only minimally, addressed perseverance as it relates specifically to their area of study. Clearly, in business and law the term perseverance is used to denote continuance in an action to meet a goal. In psychology it is mainly used to describe belief perseverance which is believing in something even when the facts do not fit. The theater arts literature sheds minimal light on this phenomenon as used in this
research. The education literature does tell a bit about perseverance, but its usefulness is questionable. The Christian theological literature perhaps comes closer to explaining perseverance when faced with obstacles, at least from a Christian perspective. The various works of both literature and poetry also describe persevering through a difficult time. Non-nursing health care literature does little to add insight into the phenomenon of persevering through a difficult time. Perseverance is most often used to mean continuance in an action to reach a goal.

Like the non-nursing literature, the nursing literature minimally addresses perseverance and it too is as an action to reach a goal. In three nursing research studies from the totality paradigm perspective the phenomenon of perseverance is not addressed specifically but surfaces only as an incidental observation in each.

Finally, two nursing research studies are reported here from the simultaneity paradigm perspective using the human becoming theory of nursing as frameworks. Persevering through a difficult time is not the specific focus of either study but persisting in change even though it is difficult (Kraynie, 1985) and struggling through a difficult time for the unemployed (Smith, 1990) may indeed be similar.
This review of literature on perseverance indicates a scarcity of information about how persons persevere through difficult times. It is evident that little is known about how individuals weather storms.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the origins of the Parse research method. A description of the processes of the method follows along with issues related to rigor and credibility. Ethical considerations are also addressed.

Background of the Method

The method of research used in this study is Parse's (1987, 1992, 1995) phenomenological-hermeneutic method designed to be congruent with the philosophy and principles of the human becoming theory of nursing (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1995). The human becoming theory of nursing is grounded in the human sciences and is a framework of interconnected concepts portraying the unitary human-universe mutual process. The human becoming theory posits that humans are unitary. Vital to this theory are the ideas of human-universe process, the coconstitution of health, the meaning the unitary human gives to being and becoming, and human freedom in each situation to choose alternative ways of becoming (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1995). The assumptions of the human becoming theory were born through the weaving together of ideas from Martha Rogers' principles and concepts.
and existential-phenomenological thought, principally from Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty.

Heideggerian phenomenology is based on the belief that bracketing is not possible or desirable for coming to know the world. That is, one's Being-in-the-world, one's history, and one's relations with others make understanding of the world possible (Heidegger, 1972). It is impossible to bracket, to set aside all of one's beliefs, to consider and understand a phenomenon. Husserl, an earlier phenomenologist, however, did believe bracketing was not only possible, but desirable, when investigating a specific phenomenon and his thoughts on this issue are not consistent with the human becoming theory of nursing (Mitchell & Cody, 1993).

The research method used in this study is specific to nursing and was developed by Parse (1987) as a distinct way to investigate human becoming. Prior to the creation of Parse's research method, nursing borrowed methods of research from other sciences for all its investigations. Research using the human becoming theory of nursing was conducted using a variety of borrowed research methods including phenomenology, ethnography, and descriptive exploratory methods, including case and exploratory studies (Parse, Coyne, and Smith, 1985). However, a characteristic of a
mature discipline is the development of distinct methods of inquiry congruent with the ontological bases of that discipline (Parse, 1987, 1992). Research to refine and add to those distinct methods of inquiry should be a priority in nursing. Therefore, a goal of this research is to make a contribution to nursing science using Parse’s nursing research methodology.

Assumptions

The basic assumptions underlying Parse’s research method (1992) are:

1. Humans are open beings in mutual process with the universe.
2. Human becoming is uniquely lived by individuals.
3. Descriptions of lived experiences enhance knowledge of human becoming.
4. Researcher-participant dialogical engagement uncovers the meaning of phenomena as humanly lived.
5. The researcher, through inventing, abiding with logic, and adhering to semantic consistency during the extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretation processes, creates structures of lived experiences and weaves the structure with the theory in ways that enhance the knowledge base of nursing.
Purpose of the Method and Entities for Study

The purpose of the Parse method of research "is to uncover the structure of lived experiences with persons or groups who can articulate the meaning of an experience" (Parse, 1992, p. 41). Entities for study are universal lived experiences of health. Phenomena such as loss, waiting, or joy are examples of universal lived experiences and are therefore appropriate entities to study with this method of research (Parse, 1987, 1992).

Description of the Method

The processes of the method are: (a) participant selection, (b) dialogical engagement, (c) extraction-synthesis, and (d) heuristic interpretation (Parse, 1987). These processes occur simultaneously as the study emerges. Each will be described separately to aid in the understanding of the research.

Participant Selection

Participant selection is important and humans living the research phenomenon are invited to volunteer. It was assumed that persons who agreed to participate gave a genuine account of their experience in dialogue with the researcher (Parse 1987, 1992). An adequate sample for this research method is usually two to ten participants (Parse, 1987).
Eight women 18 years old and over were recruited from a variety of sources, including two cancer support networks and word of mouth. Women with the knowledge and desire to participate were invited to take part in a study on persevering through a difficult time. The youngest participant was 24 years old, the oldest was over 70 years old. All participants were Caucasian and seven lived with family members including, spouse, parents, and or children while one participant lived alone. Though participants had a diagnosis of ovarian cancer and had completed their initial therapy of surgery and chemotherapy or radiation therapy and were not currently receiving medical treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy), they were not urged to discuss a situation related to their diagnosis and treatment. Participants were free to discuss any life situation when they experienced persevering through a difficult time. Participants were able to understand, read, and speak English and were willing to talk with the researcher. The dialogical engagements were audio tape recorded and lasted between nine and 34 minutes. The tapes were transcribed verbatim resulting in transcripts from between five and 23 double spaced pages.

**Context.** Initial contact between the researcher and potential participants was either in person (two)
or over the telephone (six). The researcher met with each participant at the place of her choosing. Six dialogical engagements took place in the participant’s home, one took place at the participant’s place of employment, and one took place in the researcher's home.

**Protection of human subjects.** Approval was obtained from the Loyola University Chicago Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). All participants were given a general explanation of the project, both verbal and written (see Appendix B). Participants signed a consent form (see Appendix C) and a copy of this consent was given to the participant along with a personal letter thanking them for their generous participation.

All consent forms and audio tapes were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s home. All audio tapes were erased upon completion of the study. Participants’ personal identifying information were not used on transcriptions, and will not be on reports, or publications resulting from this research.

**Dialogical Engagement**

Dialogical engagement is the researcher-participant discussion. For the purposes of research, this discussion is tape recorded and later transcribed into typed text. This discussion is not an interview
but a true presence (Parse, 1992). The researcher is truly present with the participant as the participant discusses the phenomenon under study. While the researcher comes to the dialogue having contemplated the meaning of the experience and centering self to be in true presence with the participant, the process is not set in stone but originates as the researcher-participant discussion proceeds (Parse, 1987). The dialogical engagement for this research began with the researcher asking the participant "Can you tell me about your experience of persevering through a difficult time?" Only statements like "go on" or "how does that relate to persevering through a difficult time" were used by the researcher to gain clarity from the participant.

**Extraction-Synthesis**

The extraction-synthesis process occurs as the researcher ponders carefully the transcribed dialogical engagements while listening to the audio tapes. The researcher "dwells with" the dialogical engagements, both the audio tapes and the typed dialogues. This "dwelling with" is an immersion and centering process the researcher undertakes to fully realize the meaning of the lived experience for the participants. There are five major processes in extraction-synthesis which happen simultaneously. The researcher began by
extracting and synthesizing essences in the participants' language. These essences are phrases or sentences that capture the central idea as described by the participants. Then through extraction-synthesis, the researcher took the central ideas from the participants' essences up to the researcher's more abstract language. The essences, from each participant, in the language of the researcher, were joined to formulate a proposition. This proposition is a nondirectional statement that joins the central ideas of the participant's dialogue in the language of science. Core concepts were drawn from the propositions and specified the central meaning of the formulated propositions. The core concepts were joined to create the structure of the lived experience. This constituted the answer to the research question (Parse, 1987).

Heuristic Interpretation

The process of heuristic interpretation takes place as the structure of the lived experience is blended with the human becoming theory through structural integration and conceptual interpretation (Parse, 1987, 1992). The findings of the study were linked with concepts from the theory. The phenomenon under study was illuminated, in light of the theory, as the theory was expanded and taken to new levels of specification (Mitchell and Cody, 1993). In this
manner ideas for further research and practice were also generated.

**Rigor and Credibility**

To ensure scientific rigor, Burns (1989) described five standards for qualitative research: a) descriptive vividness, b) methodological congruence, c) analytic preciseness, d) theoretical connectedness, and e) heuristic relevance.

**Descriptive vividness**: a description so thorough and clear the reader has a sense of personally experiencing the event (Burns, 1989). Descriptive vividness was accomplished by staying close to the words of the participant in stating the essences as the process of extraction-synthesis emerged.

**Methodological congruence**: a congruence between the metatheory and methodology of the research. Burns (1989) contends the research reviewer must have knowledge of the methodology and theory used for the research to ensure methodological congruence. This researcher addressed this issue by forming a dissertation committee to review all dialogical engagements, extraction-syntheses, and heuristic interpretations. The committee consisted of an expert in women's health and manuscript writing, an expert in oncology, manuscript writing, and editing, and the nurse who developed the human becoming theory of
nursing and the Parse research methodology.

Burns (1989) addresses four dimensions within methodological congruence: (a) rigor in documentation, (b) procedural rigor, (c) ethical rigor, and (d) auditability. **Rigor in documentation** requires the researcher to document all the elements of the research, including: "phenomenon; purpose; research question; justification of the significance of the phenomenon; identification of assumptions; identification of metatheories; researcher credentials; the context; role of the researcher; ethical implications; sampling and subjects; data-gathering strategies; data analysis strategies; theoretical development; conclusions; implications and suggestions for further study and practice; and a literature review," (p.48). These were all addressed in the written reports of this research.

For **procedural rigor** the researcher carefully followed the processes of the method and clearly indicated the steps taken to ensure that all information was accurately recorded. This was accomplished by retaining audio tapes until the research was completed and comparing the audio tapes to the transcribed text for accuracy.

**Ethical rigor** was addressed by requesting review and receiving approval from the university
Institutional Review Board prior to initiation of this research. All participants signed a consent form prior to their participation. The consent form included: (a) the procedures to be followed, and their purposes; (b) the participant’s right to receive an answer to all questions or concerns about the procedures; and (c) the participant’s freedom to withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice. Participants were assured that their participation would be kept confidential and their names or personal identifying information would not appear on any written material generated from this research.

For auditability a "researcher must report all of the decisions involved in the transformation of data to the theoretical schema," (Burns, 1989, p.49). This documentation must be thorough enough so that a reviewer or other researcher can come to the same conclusions using the original data and the written decision trail. Rodgers and Cowles (1993) also stress the importance of documenting methodological decisions. The "researcher’s records of the impetus and rationale for all ongoing methodological decisions are an integral part of the audit trail in insuring, and later substantiating, the rigor of the investigation," (p.221). To support auditability, detailed methodological notes were kept by the researcher.
**Analytical preciseness:** a detailed, analytic documentation regarding all phases of extraction-synthesis. Rodgers and Cowles (1993) state: "all analysis sessions and their outcomes, each analytic or theoretical insight, and every speculation, regardless of how trivial or even completely unrelated it may seem at the time, should be immediately and comprehensively recorded in order to insure a rigorous analysis," (p.222). This researcher diligently and conscientiously recorded notes throughout the extraction-synthesis process as thoughts, insights, and speculations surfaced. Analytical preciseness was also ensured by the three member dissertation committee review of the extraction-synthesis process as first reported by the researcher.

**Theoretical connectedness:** "requires that the theoretical schema developed from the study be clearly expressed, logically consistent, reflective of the data, and compatible with the knowledge base of nursing," (Burns, 1989, p.50). Again, adherence to this standard was ensured by meticulous review by the three member dissertation committee.

**Heuristic relevance:** a reader must be able to identify the "phenomenon described in the study, its theoretical significance, its applicability to nursing practice situations, and its influence in future
research activities," (Burns, 1989, p.51). Intuitive recognition, relationship to the existing body of nursing knowledge, and applicability are the three dimensions of heuristic relevance.

**Intuitive recognition** comes when readers confront the theoretical schema derived from the data and it has meaning in their personal knowledge base. To help ensure this recognition, the researcher clearly defined and described the phenomenon under study and its connection to the human becoming theory of nursing and the research methodology. The findings were discussed in relation to the existing body of knowledge on the phenomenon later in this document.

**Applicability** occurs when the findings from the research are applicable to nursing practice, contribute to nursing theory development, and guide the development of further nursing research (Burns, 1989). This study added to nursing science by contributing to nursing theory development, offering opportunities for future nursing research by giving insight into the universal lived experience of persevering through a difficult time and by adding to the knowledge repertoire of the nurse in practice.

**Summary**

This chapter focused on the methodology used in this research. A short background description of the
Parse method of research was given. The processes of the research method have been described. Standards and ways to ensure rigor and credibility have been furnished and ethical considerations assured.
Chapter IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Eight women volunteered to dialogue with the researcher about persevering through a difficult time in their lives. This chapter presents the extraction-synthesis of these dialogues.

Using the Parse research method, the audio-taped dialogical engagements were transcribed verbatim. The researcher then dwelled with the transcripts and the audio tapes to discover the meanings the participants had given to the phenomenon. Through extraction-synthesis, essences from the dialogue were composed, first in the participants', then in the researcher's, language. Propositions were generated from the essences. Core concepts were then drawn from the propositions and constitute the central meaning of the propositions. The core concepts were joined to create the structure of the lived experience which answers the research question (Parse, 1987). Lastly, heuristic interpretation occurred. This placed the findings of the research in the language of the human becoming theory (Parse 1987, 1992).

The remainder of this chapter presents each participant's essences and proposition. This is followed by the core concepts, the structural integration, and the conceptual interpretation for this research.
Participant One

Essences: The Participant's Language

1. Persevering through a difficult time for the participant is never giving up "when you just keep going and going" with the support of family and faith in God. Working to develop a positive attitude and reading self-help books helped a great deal.

2. The participant was able to accept her cancer more easily, which she thought of as a battle, because she felt grateful that the cancer happened to her and not other family members and she felt fortunate in her treatment and disease course when compared to others with cancer.

3. At first the participant did not attend support groups, but later did so, feeling God may have let her survive this difficult time, while He has let others die, so she could give support to those who were just beginning their journey through their difficult time.

Essences: The Researcher's Language

1. Weathering a storm emerges in the presence of the treasured and sought after strength.

2. Graceful dwelling arises with the willing assumption of an awesome burden.

3. The dawning awareness of a calling emerges innovative ways with nurturing engagements.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time emerges in the presence of the treasured and sought after strength as the dawning awareness of a calling emerges innovative ways with nurturing engagements while willing assumption of an awesome burden propels graceful dwelling.
Participant Two

Essences: The Participant's Language

1. For the participant persevering through a difficult time happened with reexamining and taking control of her life. She took responsibility for herself, including her health care, and concentrated, for the first time, on putting her needs first, not dealing with things she did not want to, and working toward the goal of getting well.

2. The participant was able to persevere by putting her belief and faith in God, wanting to see her young son grow up, seeking information about her cancer when she was ready, and with the help of her parents and friends.

Essences: The Researcher's Language

1. Altering life patterns arise with careful appraisal.

2. Weathering a storm emerges while deliberately pursuing significant engagements.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time is deliberately pursuing significant engagements while altering life patterns arise with careful appraisal.
Participant Three

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. The participant persevered through a difficult time with the help of friends, coworkers, self-help books, and support groups.

2. Persevering through a difficult time for the participant was when she just kept on going by being hard-headed and stubborn as she continued to work and live her life, even though the experience changed her a lot.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. The weathering of a storm emerges while pursuing nurturing engagements.

2. Shifting life patterns emerge with forging the usual.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time emerges while pursuing nurturing engagements as shifting life patterns arise with forging the usual.
Participant Four

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. The participant persevered through a difficult time by having people to talk with, seeking information when she was ready, and keeping busy or being alone when she wanted.

2. The participant knew her life had changed dramatically and chose to continue living with the changes rather than giving up and dying because she had a strong will to live and saw herself living in the future.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Weathering a storm emerges with the deliberate nurturing of significant engagements.

2. Altering life plans awaken a resolve to carry on.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time emerges with the deliberate nurturing of significant engagements as altering life plans awaken a resolve to carry on.
Participant Five

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. The participant was able to persevere through a difficult time by searching for appropriate medical attention, with her faith and trust in God, the love and support of her husband and friends, and past experiences that gave her strength.

2. The participant had been through a challenging time of one thing after another with many ups and downs but knew that given time, everything would change. Knowing this, she now chooses to take one day at a time.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Weathering a storm emerges while pursuing significant engagements as the former fosters courage in the now.

2. The vicissitudes of life give way to new perspectives.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time emerges while pursuing significant engagements as the former fosters courage in the now as the vicissitudes of life give way to new perspectives.
Participant Six

Essences: The Participant's Language

1. The participant persevered through a difficult time by leaning on her family, letting them know what she needed during her treatments, and by finding comfort in her church.

2. For the participant, persevering is a "feeling of not giving up even when the odds are against you" and living like the cancer is not coming back. She continued as normal a life as possible by not acting sick and by being the best cancer patient she could be. She now makes the best of every day not letting the cancer take over her life completely.

Essences: The Researcher's Language

1. Weathering the storm emerges with the diligent bolstering of indispensable engagements.

2. Shifting life patterns emerge as tenacious forging of the usual prevails with the desired.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time emerges with the diligent bolstering of indispensable engagements while shifting life patterns arise in tenacious forging as the usual prevails with the desired.
Participant Seven

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. The participant persevered through a difficult time by leaning on the Lord, having the support and help of her family, which was her biggest support, friends, the Church, and by having trust in her surgeon knowing she was in his good hands.

2. Shocking news, when "you don’t have the answers, that’s hard," but taking care of herself, listening to the doctors, especially for her family, is important for the participant as she now lives one day at a time and is thankful she is doing so well.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Weathering a storm emerges with deliberately nurturing significant affiliations.

2. Burdens of an uncertain surprise surface with shifting life patterns in grateful relief.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time emerges with deliberately nurturing significant affiliations as burdens of an uncertain surprise surface with shifting life patterns in grateful relief.
Participant Eight

Essences: The Participant's Language

1. The participant persevered through a difficult time by seeking information, reading popular books related to her difficult time, having the love, support, and prayers of many friends, and having a supportive husband.

2. The participant felt very depressed and as though she was digging her own grave, but as she persevered she realized life goes on even though she still gets scared and "down" at times. She knows each day is a treat, and she no longer takes things for granted, but does special things with her children, and actively participates in her own wellness.

Essences: The Researcher's Language

1. Weathering a storm emerges while deliberately pursuing significant engagements.

2. Despair gives way as shifting life patterns surface with an appreciation of the moment.

Proposition

Persevering through a difficult time emerges while deliberately pursuing significant engagements as despair gives way to shifting life patterns with an appreciation of the moment.
1. Persevering through a difficult time emerges in the presence of the treasured and sought after strength as the dawning awareness of a calling emerges innovative ways with nurturing engagements while willing assumption of an awesome burden propels graceful dwelling.

2. Persevering through a difficult time is deliberately pursuing significant engagements while altering life patterns arise with careful appraisal.

3. Persevering through a difficult time emerges while pursuing nurturing engagements as shifting life patterns arise with forging the usual.

4. Persevering through a difficult time emerges with the deliberate nurturing of significant engagements as altering life plans awaken a resolve to carry on.

5. Persevering through a difficult time emerges while pursuing significant engagements as the former fosters courage in the now as the vicissitudes of life give way to new perspectives.

6. Persevering through a difficult time emerges with the diligent bolstering of indispensable engagements while shifting life patterns arise in tenacious forging as the usual prevails with the desired.

7. Persevering through a difficult time emerges with deliberately nurturing significant affiliations as burdens of an uncertain surprise surface with shifting life patterns in grateful relief.

8. Persevering through a difficult time emerges while deliberately pursuing significant engagements as despair gives way to shifting life patterns with an appreciation of the moment.
Core Concepts

Three core concepts are evident in the eight propositions. The core concepts are: deliberately persisting, significant engagements, and shifting life patterns. Deliberately persisting can be viewed as an active seeking out of significant engagements, the second core concept. Significant engagements occur with a variety of people, places, things, or ways of being that are uniquely important to the individual participant. Finally, shifting life patterns signify the changing ways of living as the difficult time is persevered. All three core concepts are evident in each participant's proposition. The concept is stated uniquely for each participant as follows.

Deliberately Persisting

Participant:

1. sought after [strength]...willing assumption of an awesome burden
2. deliberately pursuing
3. [while] pursuing...forging the usual
4. deliberate...resolve to carry on
5. [while] pursuing...former fosters courage in the now
6. tenacious forging of the usual
7. deliberately nurturing...burdens of an uncertain surprise
8. deliberately pursuing...despair gives way to
appreciation

**Significant Engagements**

Participant:
1. presence of the treasured...nurturing engagements
2. significant engagements
3. nurturing engagements
4. significant engagements
5. significant engagements...vicissitudes of life
6. diligent bolstering of indispensable engagements
7. significant affiliations
8. significant engagements

**Shifting Life Patterns**

Participant:
1. emerges innovative ways
2. altering life patterns
3. shifting life patterns
4. altering life plans
5. new perspectives
6. shifting life patterns
7. shifting life patterns
8. shifting life patterns
Structure of the Lived Experience

Persevering through a difficult time is deliberately persisting with significant engagements while shifting life patterns.

**Heuristic Interpretation**

**Core Concepts**

| Deliberately Persisting | Significant Engagements | Shifting Life Patterns |

**Structural Integration**

| Propelling Fortitude | Pivotal Involvements | New Ways of Abiding |

**Conceptual Interpretation**

| Powering Valuing | Connecting-Separating | Originating |

**Propositions**

Structural Integration. Persevering through a difficult time is a propelling fortitude arising with pivotal involvements surfacing new ways of abiding.

Conceptual Interpretation. Persevering through a difficult time is powering valuing in the connecting-separating of originating.
Chapter V
DICUSSION OF FINDINGS

The phenomenon studied in this research was persevering through a difficult time. The research question was "What is the structure of the lived experience of persevering through a difficult time?" The structure that surfaced from the eight researcher-participant dialogical engagements was: persevering through a difficult time is deliberately persisting with significant engagements while shifting life patterns. Three core concepts emerged from the extraction-synthesis process of the eight dialogical engagements. These core concepts were deliberately persisting, significant engagements, and shifting life patterns. Each concept appears uniquely in all of the dialogues. The core concepts will be discussed individually, first in relation to the human becoming theory (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1995) and then in relation to the related literature.

Deliberately Persisting

The first concept, deliberately persisting, arises with the concerted effort of participants to continue on through their difficult time. This concept involved thoughtful attention to the was, the now, and the will be. Deliberately persisting can be viewed as an active pursuit of the valued, a forging onward toward possibles. It is an attempt to live
a life with meaning as changes or surprises arise and live a life in the now as the will be is envisioned. This was evident in the dialogues with all participants.

As participants forged onward, they deliberately persisted as they persevered through their difficult time. Participants frequently spoke about moving ahead to the will be. One said "...planning a big trip [at the end of the chemotherapy] so that helped get us through." Another thought cancer "makes you think about your life and what you’re going to do with what you’ve got left." She also stated "I started examining who I am and what I would like, how I want to be." Another one stated succinctly "I see myself in the future," and one considered her future when she stated "there was never a time when I felt I was going to die." After two relapses, not knowing what her future would hold, one participant says "I had to make the best of every day and let what happens, happen, because I don’t know what’s going to happen." Another considered her future as she stated "...I just have this in the back of my mind, is it going to come back?"

Participants spoke about valuing in the choosing, prizing, and acting of their choices to go on. They talked about considering the future. As they spoke their values became clear. One participant simply stated "I took control of my life," another spoke about what was important for her "...wanting to do and be with the family...go to every
game...go to everything the children are in because...that is special." Another, the youngest participant, pampered herself during her difficult time with massages, shopping, movies, and said "I just do whatever I feel like doing about how I feel." Yet another participant also made a point of doing what she felt she needed most, "I started my own quest" she stated. It was a quest for information about her cancer and treatments. Another participant, even after two relapses, chooses to "...live like it's [the cancer] not going to come back."

In the human becoming theory (Parse 1981, 1992, 1995), the core concept deliberately persisting was conceptually interpreted as powering valuing. Powering valuing is the process of forging onward confirming treasured beliefs. The key activities of valuing are choosing, prizing, and acting (Raths et al, 1966). This happens as individuals are simultaneously living reflectively and prereflectively (Parse, 1981). The participants ascribed meaning by choosing how they would be with their difficult time and how they would stay with it and move beyond it. As one anticipates what will be s/he chooses among options and the choices are woven into the system that guides one's life. One chooses what one prizes or values and meaning is created by the individual for the individual. In this research, the deliberate persisting or concerted effort to continue on through a difficult time tells of the participants'
propelling with certain values. As each participant persevered, her values became evident in the pushing-resistant movements of transcending toward the not-yet.

In general, literature on the phenomenon of perseverance describes the core concept of deliberately persisting as illustrated in this research. The deliberate, calculated, willful movement toward a goal is evident. Distinctly, the varied literature describes persistence toward a goal even when obstacles are evident or time to accomplish the goal is protracted. Perhaps the areas of reviewed literature that best address the deliberate persistence of perseverance are poetry, literature, and Christian theology.

Each of the 16 poems reviewed for this research addresses the deliberate persistence of the phenomenon of perseverance. Each poem uniquely captures the studied or intentional forethought of deliberate continuance in an action or thought, even though hazards or hindrances reveal themselves. For example, "Carry On!" (Service, 1940) instructs:

Buck up, little soldier, and chortle:

Carry on! Carry on! (p.97)

"Pluck Wins" (Watson, 1986) starts with:

Pluck wins! It always wins! (p.124)

According to the American Heritage Dictionary (1994), pluck can be defined as resourceful courage (p. 637). The
following lines appear in "Plug" (Watson, 1986):

No matter who or what you are, or where you are,
the how

Is plug. (p.124)

Again, the American Heritage Dictionary (1994), defines plug as to work doggedly and persistently (p. 637). The theme of deliberately persisting is repeated uniquely in each of the poems.

The concept of deliberately persisting is demonstrated in the books and stories reviewed for this research in the literature portion of the literature review. William Weston, or the Reward of Perseverance (Anonymous, 1832), Wizard's Hall (Yolen, 1991), and Hough Can Do (Armstrong, 1992) all describe different tails of perseverance. However, in each story though, a main character, when faced with difficulty and obstacles in his path, never yields, really tries, or tries hard to reach his goal. Over a prolonged time of difficulty, each character, by forging ahead, through deliberate persistence, reaches his goal.

The Christian theology literature also describes the concept of deliberately persisting. McElligott (1963) states "perseverance is...continuance in action despite difficulties extending over a long time" (p.161-162). Perseverance, that is the theme of continued effort or a striving forward, in general, is present throughout Christian writings.
Other disciplines within the review of literature do address the deliberate persistence of perseverance also. The legal literature, though minimal, does speak to perseverance to reach a goal and in so doing, describes deliberately persisting. Pappas (1994), for example, describes the deliberate, continued, protracted effort of a sheriff to change a policy in his jail.

Literature from the field of business also describes the necessity to stick to a task until the goal is reached. Rocklin (1990) says this characteristic is vital for all entrepreneurs. Garfield (1987) discusses the willingness to change and grow while following a plan for success. He describes this willingness as a concerted, deliberate effort to continue with a plan of business success.

The psychology literature basically discusses belief perseverance which is the tendency to maintain established beliefs even in the face of evidence that should weaken or reverse those beliefs (Nisbett and Ross, 1980). This continued belief pattern is willful and chosen. It is a deliberate persistence in thoughts or views despite evidence to the contrary.

From the field of education, Walberg et al (1981) found 91% of the eminent adults they reviewed to be described as persevering. Persevering was defined as "desired to excel, hard working, strong need to achieve, strove for distant goals, persistent and serious" (p. 104). The concept of
deliberately persisting is described using the words hard working, strong need, strove for, and persistent. Shigaki (1983) identifies the concept of deliberately persisting in a group of Japanese pre-school children. She contends that perseverance is a value in the Japanese culture and young children are continuously instructed in how to persevere. The children are praised when they demonstrate the ability to continue on with a task even when faced with deterrents. They are praised when they deliberately persist.

The non-nursing health care literature also describes the concept of deliberately persisting in the phenomenon of perseverance. For example, Kirk, Koeske, and Koeske (1993) report on case managers who overcome job pressures to reach their professional work goals. The case managers persevered even when faced with job stress and emotional exhaustion. Kent (1983) describes how she deliberately persisted, throughout her life, toward her goal of becoming a published author, even though blind and discouraged by numerous outsiders.

The nursing literature from the totality paradigm describes the concept of deliberately persisting in reporting on the phenomenon of perseverance. Several nurses wrote about persisting to reach a goal. Saunders (1992), for example, writes "we will persevere until we are successful," (p.191). Leuning (1994) describes how women, to achieve health care for all women, must "draw upon collective
strength and wisdom to overcome enormous obstacles," (p.2), in essence, women must forge ahead despite obstacles, they must deliberately persist to reach their goal. In McBride's (1993) study about control and COPD with 32 participants, one theme identified by patients was determination/perseverance. Here, McBride defines this theme as "a fighting spirit, a seemingly more proactive response than acceptance," (p.460). She supports this theme with participant statements from her research such as "you just have to make yourself keep at it" (p.461), "you have to help yourself" (p.461), and "you have to do the rest and help yourself" (p.461). The concept of deliberately persisting is evident within these statements, though the meaning is not exactly the same as expressed by participants in this study.

Two studies from the simultaneity paradigm were reviewed for this research. Kraynie's (1985) study about persisting even though it is difficult does report on the concept of deliberately persisting in a situation even though it is difficult. Kraynie's conceptual interpretation of her research findings was "persisting even though it is difficult is a way of powering the enabling-limiting of valuing" (p.40). The conceptual interpretation of this current research is persevering through a difficult time is powering valuing in the connecting-separating of originating. Participants in both studies described tenacious forging through obstacles, thus, powering appears
in both interpretations and surfaces the deliberate, willful nature of the phenomenon of perseverance.

The second study reviewed in the simultaneity paradigm, by Smith (1990), focused on the lived experience of struggling through a difficult time for unemployed persons. The conceptual interpretation was "struggling through a difficult time is powering in the enabling-limiting of valuing" (p.23). Again, powering is identified, through heuristic interpretation, from Smith's core concepts. Smith states "the individual struggling through a difficult time uncovers a new path, direction, or way of being within the rhythms of change through surrendering in faith to the flow of events," (p. 23). While Smith labels this powering, "surrendering in faith to the flow of events" may be viewed more as endurance, which may or may not have a core concept of deliberately persisting, and powering then may not be the appropriate conceptual interpretation. Powering, in the current research, is viewed as a more forceful, propelling force, a deliberate choice to move onward and surrendering is not associated with this view of powering which is deliberate and persistent.

**Significant Engagements**

Each participant, in talking about persevering through a difficult time, spoke about personal significant engagements, the second core concept. Each participant told of her own unique significant engagements but, all
participants volunteered information about people, places, or things that, for one reason or another, had special value or meaning for them in persevering. Participants talked of both new and continued associations with some important other, idea, object, or event while detaching themselves from others. The engagements were significant because of what the participant received from and gave to the relationship.

Many participants were explicit in talking about nurturing engagements that enabled them to persevere through a difficult time. Family support was important for many. One participant said "I have a lot of support from my family." Another said "...my husband was real supportive" and "...my family has supported me." Family was also very important to another who said "...my family was probably the most important support mechanism...I had them to lean on."

Friends and coworkers were important too. One participant said "...luckily I had support, where I did have people to talk to." Another said "Everyone at work was really supportive, except my boss, but everyone else was really good, so that kept me going."

Faith was mentioned by many of the participants as a means of persevering. Participants said "I persevered really by leaning on the Lord...," and "I think the main thing that really got me through...was to put my belief in God," and "Church has been wonderful to me. I always felt I was never
alone." Another participant talking of her strong faith said "So I feel that God was part of it, and, you know, He's carried me through."

Some participants spoke of family, others of friends and faith. Seeking information, when ready, was also a significant engagement mentioned by several participants when they said things like "I started my own quest to find all kinds of literature...." and I was "very involved in finding out about my cancer." Another participant also sought out information, "but as time went on, I...little by little tried to learn more, you know, got more knowledge about it. It's come to the point now where I'm very hungry for, you know, to learn as much as I can about it [the cancer]."

Two participants specifically spoke about removing people or events from their lives now that they had cancer. One said "...I didn't have time to deal with people I didn't like....[I would] turn on the phone answering machine and screen calls," and another said having cancer "...has made me want to use my time more wisely, and I don't want to spend it on, waste it on situations or people that are not what I want."

With the human becoming theory (Parse 1981, 1992, 1995), the conceptual interpretation of the core concept significant engagements is connecting-separating. Connecting-separating is a rhythmical pattern of moving
with, while simultaneously moving away from, specific phenomena. As one travels through life, one constantly and continuously chooses to move with certain phenomena. This naturally means moving away from certain other phenomena simultaneously. The participants in this research often spoke of the phenomena they chose to connect with (family, friends, faith) but several did address phenomena they separated from.

In general, the literature reviewed for this research about the phenomenon of perseverance did not address the core concept of significant engagements. Only in the nursing study conducted by Wagnild and Young (1990), which is from the totality paradigm, is a similar concept reported. When participants in their study were asked "what gets them through difficult times in general," (p.253), responses were identified as either internal or external sources of strength. Internal sources included belief in self, determination, a sense of humor, and faith in God. External sources of strength included meaningful work and activities, family, and friends. The simultaneity paradigm would not view these participant responses as internal or external, but as cocreated significant engagements of the human-universe process.

Smith (1990), in her nursing study based in the simultaneity paradigm about struggling through a difficult time for unemployed persons, does not specifically mention
significant engagements in her core concepts. She does, however, site selections from participant-researcher dialogues indicating that at least some of her participants did indeed have significant engagements while struggling through their difficult time. For example, Smith writes participants remarked "...I did it by going back to home base: to relatives, friends, family..." (p. 21) and "the pain made me turn to God...", (p. 21). Smith's participants spoke of similar kinds of significant engagements that the participants in this study spoke of, but Smith did not identify this as a core concept for her study.

**Shifting Life Patterns**

The last core concept, shifting life patterns, encompasses the prospect of incorporating the will be with the now, thus living new ways. Uniquely, each participant spoke of living new ways as they persevered through a difficult time. The new ways did not negate the old familiar ways of living but added to them so that innovative life patterns emerged through the experience.

Examples of shifting life patterns surfaced in each participant's dialogue. One participant said "...maybe God let me survive so I can help these young people.... I think that's my role in this is to help them and show them there are survivors." Several participants spoke of reevaluating their life and living new ways. They said things like "...it makes you think about your life and what you're going to do
with what you’ve got left...,” and the cancer "...changed my life around," and "this has made me want to use my time more wisely...." Another participant said "...you do reevaluate everything, obviously, you’re faced with life and death here." One spoke of "...the little things I took for granted," and now "every day I wake up and it’s just another treat and that’s the way I’m going to do it the rest of my life."

Several participants decided to live one day at a time, focusing on the now, not the will be. One participant said "And I just take one day at a time." Another said "For me, mostly carrying on, trying to get through each day, make the most of each day that I can," and another stated "...I think you just have to live one day at a time...." Finally, one participant said "So I knew I had to face it [the cancer] and deal with it."

With the human becoming theory (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1995), the conceptual interpretation of the core concept shifting life patterns is originating. Originating is the process of unfolding, of creating new ways of living. Two paradoxes coexist within originating, conformity-nonconformity and certainty-uncertainty. The former exists as individuals seek to be similar and at the same time unique from others. Participants achieved their original way of being as they distinctively transformed their life by the valued choices they made. Similarity occurred as shifting
life patterns arose, although uniquely, for each participant. In certainty-uncertainty individuals make clear their intentions in the situations while simultaneously living the ambiguity of unknown outcomes. Participants lived their valued choices, often certain of their values but uncertain of what their valued choice would entail in the will be. In this research, originating is expressed by participants in the choices they make to live new, unique ways as they view the possibilities of the will be in light of their difficult time.

Shifting life patterns is not a concept addressed in the perseverance literature, except in one instance. Smith (1990), in her study on struggling through a difficult time for unemployed persons identifies one of her core concepts as "sculpting new lifeways in turbulent change through affirming self," (p. 23). Smith says the uncovering of the new lifeways "is cocreated through affirming personal worth, strengths, and talents as the person forges new ways of becoming with the ambiguity," (p.23-24). Smith interprets this concept as powering which is different than the current research which interprets shifting life patterns as originating. However, both interpretations arise from the third principle of the human becoming theory (Parse 1981, 1987, 1995) which states "cotranscending with the possibles is powering unique ways of originating in the process of transforming," (1981 p.55). Both interpretations describe
transcendence. Sculpting can be defined as the art or practice of fashioning or shaping (American Heritage Dictionary, 1994). In this sense, sculpting new lifeways is powering and shifting life patterns is originating when shifting is defined as moving or transferring from one place, position, or direction to another (American Heritage Dictionary, 1994).

**Methodological Considerations**

The qualitative research method developed by Parse (1981, 1987, 1995) was used in this research. This method was effective as the research question was answered. However, the research process was an arduous process for this novice qualitative researcher. The phenomenon of persevering through a difficult time is believed to be a human-universe process lived, at one time or another, by all. This researcher narrowed the possible participants to individuals with ovarian cancer because of a personal interest in this group of women. The participants were further limited to those whose primary surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation therapy had been completed. It took six months to accrue eight participants and complete the dialogues. In retrospect, participant selection did not have to be this restricted. For example, participants could have had ovarian cancer but have been anywhere in their treatment process, or participants could have been any individual with a gynecologic malignancy. This would have
increased the number of potential participants and possibly even shortened the total data gathering time.

In the data analysis process of extraction-synthesis, many of the essences and propositions are profoundly similar. This may be in part due to the narrow restrictions placed on participant selection. Participants were very much alike in their backgrounds.

The essences and propositions may also have been so similar because each participant chose to talk about their experience of ovarian cancer as an example of persevering through a difficult time. This researcher emphasized the fact that they could talk about any situation in their life, but all chose to talk about their cancer experience. That all participants chose to speak about their cancer may be due to the fact that most participants were approached through ovarian cancer support groups. Because of the cancer support group connection, participants may have felt a necessity to talk about persevering through their cancer experience as their difficult time. In future studies, this narrow approach to participant selection should be avoided.
Chapter VI
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, REFLECTIONS

Conclusions

Persevering through a difficult time is viewed as a cocreation of the human-universe process. It is regarded as a universal phenomenon that may be lived by all individuals, at one time or another. The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of how individuals persevere through their difficult time. The human becoming theory (Parse 1981, 1987, 1992, 1995), from the simultaneity paradigm, was used as a nursing framework to guide this research. Eight women with ovarian cancer dialogued with the researcher about persevering through a difficult time. Participants were encouraged to speak about any difficult time. Through the extraction-synthesis process, essences, then core concepts were identified from each dialogical engagement. Three core concepts emerged: deliberately persisting, significant engagements, and shifting life patterns. Through heuristic interpretation, the concepts were abstracted to the level of the theory. This conceptual interpretation is: persevering through a difficult time is powering valuing in the connecting-separating of originating.

Within the human becoming theory (Parse 1981, 1987, 1992, 1995) powering is viewed as a way of transforming. It
is "a process in all change and transformation from what one is to what one is not-yet," (Parse, 1981, p.58). Valuing is the process of selecting what is prized from the range of possibles and living those values. Connecting-separating is the rhythmical process of moving with and away from phenomenon all at one. Finally, originating is the process of inventing new ways of being as one transforms from the was and is to the not-yet.

Reviewed literature about the phenomenon of perseverance addresses the core concept of deliberately persisting as identified in this research. Virtually all the literature identifies the reflective action of perseverance to either reach a goal or continue in a belief.

The literature does not, however, address the concept of significant engagements with the same depth or clarity. Only briefly do two authors say anything about what may be viewed as significant engagements. There are large bodies of literature related to the similar concepts of significant others and social support in both nursing and non-nursing disciplines. Nevertheless, neither of these concepts capture the essence of significant engagements and both are rooted within the totality paradigm. A significant other is an important 'other person while a significant engagement is an esteemed relationship between an individual and anything that individual identifies as cherished, be it a person, place, thing, or way of being. Similarly, social support
refers to important other people one can depend on.

The third core concept identified in this research about perseverance is shifting life patterns. It is not addressed in the reviewed literature on perseverance.

This research substantiates the literature on the concept of deliberately persisting and clarifies the concept of significant engagements within the current perseverance literature. This research surfaces a new concept, shifting life patterns, not previously found in the perseverance literature. Further research directed toward these concepts will help to affirm or contradict these findings and facilitate a better understanding of the omnipresent human-universe process of persevering through a difficult time.

This research enhanced and added to the basic science of nursing by contributing knowledge to the human becoming theory of nursing and the Parse research method, both developed by Parse (1981, 1987, 1990, 1995). This research demonstrated the effectiveness with which the human becoming theory, based in the simultaneity paradigm, can be used as a framework to guide nursing research to substantiate and generate knowledge. The Parse research method was effective in uncovering the lived experience of persevering through a difficult time as lived by eight participants.

The ability of this theory-driven research to generate knowledge is seen with the clarification and emergence of the core concepts of significant engagements and shifting
life patterns. The concept of significant engagements was only minimally identified and the concept of shifting life patterns was not previously identified in any of the reviewed perseverance literature. While the findings of this research are not generalizable, the newly specified concepts shed light on the meaning of the lived experience of persevering through difficult times. With these three concepts identified, the meaning of perseverance is expanded and specified from a different perspective. Persevering through difficult times, as viewed from the human becoming theory of nursing, is more than deliberate persistence to reach a goal or continue on in a belief. Perseverance is also a myriad of significant engagements, as only the individual can identify them. Perseverance is also the shifting of life patterns as individuals experience a metamorphosis as they persevere through difficult times. Perseverance, and especially persevering through difficult times, is not a unidimensional construct. This research illuminates persevering through difficult times as a multidimensional phenomenon of the human-universe-health process.

Persevering Through a Difficult Time, Health, and Quality of Life

The human becoming theory of nursing (Parse 1981, 1987, 1992, 1995) is unique in its definition of health as a "process of becoming as experienced and described by the
person" (Parse, 1992, p. 36). Traditionally, in the totality paradigm, nursing has defined health as a bio-psycho-social-spiritual well-being that has pre-defined norms based on standards set by experts. Health, however, in the human becoming theory is a process of emerging where humans cocreate their health in the human-universe process and accept responsibility for their own health (Parse, 1990). Health is not viewed as something an individual has or does not have, but simply as the way an individual is, how that individual is experiencing in the human-universe process.

Participants in this research on persevering through a difficult time each experienced their health uniquely, but core concepts emerged as the dialogical engagements were synthesized. Deliberately persisting, significant engagements, and shifting life patterns surfaced as ways the participants lived their health. As a core concept, deliberately persisting confirmed the forging onward even though obstacles were in the way that was identified in the reviewed perseverance literature. Participants lived their health as they forged ahead by freely making choices from the possibles as they saw them. In choosing, participants' values were illuminated and confirmed. Significant engagements, the second core concept, surfaced a new way of living health for persons persevering through a difficult time. This core concept was not substantially identified in the reviewed perseverance literature and therefore
constitutes new knowledge about how individuals live their health. Participants in this research told of connecting with and separating from significant engagements as they persevered through their difficult time. In connecting and separating, participants chose what had value to them and then lived those values, uniting and disengaging from others, ideas, objects, or events. Shifting life patterns surfaced as the third core concept. This concept represents new knowledge about how individuals live their health as the concept is not identified in the reviewed perseverance literature. Participants cocreated their health anew as they chose to live the value priorities surfacing with the shifting patterns. The new ways of living health were unique for each participant, but each participant was cognizant that her lived pattern was shifting as she persevered through her difficult time.

As each participant lived her health, she alone determined her quality of life. In the human becoming theory of nursing (Parse 1981, 1987, 1992, 1995) the focus of nursing is quality of life as determined and lived by the person (Parse 1987, 1990, 1992, 1994). Participants in this research defined and lived their own quality of life by deliberately choosing to continue onward through their difficult times. They also did this by choosing to connect with and separate from significant relationships. Each participant chose to live anew by cocreating from the
possibles new ways of becoming and in doing so, shared the meaning of her personal quality of life.

**Recommendations**

This research surfaced a structure of the lived experience of persevering through a difficult time for eight women with ovarian cancer. Subsequent research about perseverance is needed to expand the knowledge base of this phenomenon and identified core concepts. Research with different populations will enhance the understanding of perseverance and lead to new knowledge. For example, one may study perseverance in other groups of women, with or without cancer. Research may be conducted about persevering through a difficult time with differing age groups as well. Further, it may be of interest to study men and how they persevere through a difficult time. What is important is the knowledge and insight gained from studying differing populations and how that will help nurses to better be with persons who are persevering through difficult times.

Research on the individual core concepts will also enhance understanding and broaden the knowledge base of deliberately persisting, significant engagements, and shifting life patterns. Studies to augment the understanding of deliberately persisting may be done with differing populations. This research was conducted with a population faced with a life threatening illness. Perhaps another study with individuals faced with other losses, such as the loss
of a loved one, or the loss of property through a natural disaster, will further clarify this concept.

The core concept of significant engagements may also be clarified and substantiated by conducting research with other populations. The study of this concept in individuals going through major life transitions (graduation, marriage, moving, child birth, retirement) may lead to a better understanding of significant engagements and their position within the human-universe-health process. Research about individual’s values may also surface understanding about significant engagements.

As a newly identified concept of persevering, shifting life patterns, the third core concept, needs further research also. A better understanding of this concept may be possible with research in populations who are, by happenstance or necessity, finding new ways of becoming. Individuals who are experiencing transitions (divorce, a new job, becoming a care giver for an elderly parent, going blind) may help to surface new understandings and meanings of this concept.

**Reflections**

Dwelling with human becoming, perseverance, and the emergent core concepts of deliberately persisting, significant engagements, and shifting life patterns, this researcher wrote the following.
A Storm Is Weathered

A seascape in cocreation.
Ocean, sand dunes, plants, and creatures: a coexistence.
Storms arise and mist or drench.
Sea oats choosing to deliberately persist.
The choice to reach beyond.
Powering in their existence.
Valuing the chosen course.
Relationships unfolding,
Sand, wind, water, time.
The rhythms of connecting-separating.
Significant engagements embraced or rejected.
Raining skies, blowing winds, drifting sands.
The sea oats bend but do not break.
Shifting patterns cocreating life anew.
The originating of becoming.
A storm is weathered.

Weathering a storm has been used as a metaphor for persevering through a difficult time. For the participants in this research, storms were weathered by deliberately persisting with significant engagements while shifting life patterns. Uniquely, each participant weathered her storm by intentionally continuing with important relationships while her life transformed from the now to the not-yet. Just as
sea oats in a ragging storm bend with the tumult but choose not to break, the participants chose to weather their storm rather than succumb to it.

By using a nursing framework and a research methodology specific to nursing to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of perseverance, knowledge distinct to the discipline of nursing has been generated. The concern was, how can nurses better be with persons who are experiencing the universal phenomenon of persevering through a difficult time. This research begins to surface an understanding of this human-universe-health process for nurses and others.
APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
RESEARCH SERVICES OFFICE
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
6525 NORTH SHERIDAN ROAD
CHICAGO IL 60626

Tel: (312) 508-2471 Matthew Creighton, SJ, Chair
August 5, 1994

Investigator: Lynn Allchin Petardi
Home Address: 5445 North Mobile Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60630
Home Telephone: 774-7074 [Area Code: 312]—

Please check the above information for accuracy
and call in any corrections to 508-2471

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for submitting the following research project for review by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects:

Project Title: Weathering the Storm: Persevering Through Difficult Times

After careful examination of the materials you submitted, we have approved this project as described for a period of one year from the date of this letter.

Approximately eleven months from today, you will receive from the IRB a letter which will ask whether you wish to apply for renewal of IRB approval of your project. You will be asked whether there have been any changes in the nature of the involvement of human subjects in your project since it was first approved, and whether you foresee any such changes in the near future. If your responses to these questions are timely and sufficiently explicit, the IRB will at that time renew your approval for a further twelve-month period. If you do not return that form by August 5, 1995, however, your approval will automatically lapse.

This review procedure, administered by the IRB itself, in no way absolves you personally from your obligation to

***PLEASE REMOVE STATEMENT CONCERNING: "No known risks or benefits" from proposal and consent form.
Should you have any questions regarding this matter please feel free to contact me at the telephone number listed above.
This review procedure, administered by the IRB itself, in no way absolves you personally from your obligation to inform the IRB in writing immediately if you propose to make any changes in aspects of your work that involve the participation of human subjects. The sole exception to this requirement is in the case of a decision not to pursue the project—that is, not to use the research instruments, procedures or populations originally approved. Researchers are respectfully reminded that the University's willingness to support or to defend its employees in legal cases that may arise from their use of human subjects is dependent upon those employees' conformity with University policies regarding IRB approval for their work.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter or the procedures of the IRB in general, I invite you to contact me at the address or the telephone number shown on the letterhead. If your question has directly to do with the project we have just approved for you, please quote file number 1236.

With best wishes for your work,

Sincerely,

Matthew Creighton, SJ
APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT EXPLANATION

PERSEVERING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Lynn Petardi, doctoral candidate, Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago.

This research project focuses on investigating persevering through a difficult time.

The research will consist of one tape recorded discussion between you and the researcher, Ms. Petardi. The focus of this discussion will be how you have persevered through a difficult time in your life. This discussion will be scheduled at your convenience at a mutually agreed upon location and will last for approximately 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what you want to share.

The information you share will remain confidential and the tape will be erased after the research is completed. Your name will not appear in the transcription of the tape or on any other written report of the research.

You may stop the discussion and may withdraw from participation in this research at any time, for any reason, without penalty.

You may find it helpful to discuss your situation and how you have gotten through your difficult time and you will be contributing to nursing science. If you become uncomfortable about some aspect of the discussion, you may talk with Ms. Petardi at (312) 774-7074, or seek referral from Ms. Petardi for support services.

You are free to talk with Ms. Petardi, at any time, about any concerns or questions you may have regarding this research project.

Thank you for considering participating in this project.
APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

PERSEVERING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

I, ____________________________, am 18 years of age or older and wish to participate in this research project being conducted by Lynn Petardi, doctoral candidate, Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago.

I acknowledge that Lynn Petardi has fully explained to me the purpose of this research and the fact that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

I understand I will be talking with Ms. Petardi once for approximately 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what I want to share. This discussion will be tape recorded and this recording will be erased once the research is completed. I also understand my name will not appear on written transcripts, reports, or published papers and all tapes and written materials will be kept in a locked cabinet in Ms. Petardi's home.

I understand I am free not to answer any question(s). If during the course of our discussion I become uncomfortable I have the option to stop and withdraw from the study, stop and reschedule with Ms. Petardi, or stop, rest, and then continue. I may also ask for referral to support services.

I understand I may call Ms. Petardi at (312) 774-7074 at any time prior to or after our discussion to talk about any concerns or questions regarding my participation.

I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in this research project and will be given a copy of this consent form.

_________________________________  _________________
Signature of Participant Date

_________________________________  _________________
Signature of Investigator Date
REFERENCES


Azuma, S.D., & Chasnoff, I.J. (1993). Outcome of children prenatally exposed to cocaine and other drugs: A


in qualitative research. *Nursing Science Quarterly, 6*, 170-178.


VITA

The author, Lynn Allchin-Petardi, was born in Euclid, Ohio. In September, 1971, Ms. Allchin-Petardi entered the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing in June, 1975.

During the 1977 to 1978 academic year, Ms. Allchin-Petardi attended the State University of New York at Buffalo, Roswell Park Memorial Institute Division graduating in September, 1978 with the degree of Master of Science in Natural Science with a specialization in oncology for nurses.

In January, 1981, Ms. Allchin-Petardi entered Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, receiving the degree of Master of Science in Nursing with an administration specialty and an oncology sub-specialty, in August, 1983. During 1982, Ms. Allchin-Petardi became a member of Sigma Theta Tau.

Ms. Allchin-Petardi entered Loyola University Chicago in August, 1990, was granted two research assistantships, and completed the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the Niehoff School of Nursing in January, 1996.
The dissertation submitted by Lynn Allchin-Petardi, RN; MSN has been read and approved by the following committee:

Esther Matassarin-Jacobs, RN; PhD; OCN, Director
Associate Dean, Director Undergraduate Program
Associate Professor, Medical-Surgical Nursing
Niehoff School of Nursing
Loyola University Chicago

Rosemarie Rizzo Parse, RN; PhD; FAAN
Professor, Niehoff Chair
Niehoff School of Nursing
Loyola University Chicago

Marybeth Young, RN; PhD
Chairperson, Department of Maternal-Child Nursing
Associate Professor, Maternal-Child Nursing
Niehoff School of Nursing
Loyola University Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the committee and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy.

10/18/95
Date
Esther Matassarin-Jacobs
Director's Signature