Persisting While Wanting to Change: Research Guided by Parse's Theory

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A special acknowledgement is owed to the generous women and men who freely shared with me their lived experiences of persisting while wanting to change, thus providing the substance of this dissertation research.
DEDICATION

To my father, Charles Pilkington, and in loving memory of my mother, Lois Mary Pilkington, in gratitude for their loyal, loving support; and also, to other family and dear friends who have encouraged me as this work unfolded; and to Rosemarie Rizzo Parse, whose theory has inspired the project, and whose commitment has made it possible.
ABSTRACT

PERSISTING WHILE WANTING TO CHANGE:
RESEARCH GUIDED BY PARSE'S THEORY

The purpose of this study was to explore the meaning of persisting while wanting to change. This paradoxical lived experience had not been previously investigated in the literature. It was conceptualized from the perspective of Parse's human becoming theory as a way of living health and a chosen way of becoming. Parse's phenomenologic-hermeneutic research methodology, which flows from the ontology of her theory, was used to generate the structure of the lived experience. Through dialogical engagement with the researcher, eight women and two men described their experience of persisting while wanting to change. All eight women discussed relationships with men, while one man spoke about an eating habit, and the other described continuing in a job he didn't enjoy. Through the process of extraction-synthesis, the researcher identified three core concepts present in all ten participants' descriptions. These concepts were linked to form the structure, the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, as engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new. Through heuristic interpretation, this structure was woven with the human becoming theory as valuing
the connecting-separating of imaging originating, thus expanding the theory and adding to nursing knowledge about the human-universe-health process.

Findings were discussed in relation to participants’ descriptions, the principles of Parse’s theory, health, quality of life, and relevant literature. Recommendations for further research included additional studies with other groups of persons, and studies on related lived experiences connected with the core concepts. The significance of new understandings for nursing practice guided by the human becoming theory was discussed.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research is an inquiry into the health-related phenomenon of *persisting while wanting to change*, which the author believes is a universal lived experience. The contexts in which the phenomenon is experienced are varied, reflecting the uniqueness of individuals, and could include, for example, persisting in certain habits while wanting to change them, persisting in an unsatisfactory relationship while wanting to change it, or persisting with an unfulfilling project while wanting to be doing something else. Also, the phenomenon may ebb and flow in one's life, sometimes surfacing as a central theme or rhythm, and then subsiding. The author's interest in this phenomenon germinated while working with emergency department nursing staff who were responsible for providing care to women in abusive relationships. For these women, persisting while wanting to change appeared to be a central theme in life. Simultaneously, the author noticed the same theme emerging in conversations with others. Being familiar with Parse's (1981, 1992, 1995b) theory of human becoming, the author recognized this theme as a paradoxical pattern of health, and named it *persisting while wanting to change*. Although persisting or changing might have been considered alone, the author was particularly interested in the
paradox inherent in this phenomenon. Little research to date has specifically addressed paradoxical rhythms as a feature of humanly lived experiences; thus, there is much to be learned in research of this kind.

The contents of this dissertation are organized as follows: Chapter I is an introduction to the phenomenon of interest, beginning with the author's definition, followed by an explication of the theoretical background and the nursing perspective. Next, the purpose of the study, its significance for nursing, and the research question are presented. Chapter II is a review of the theoretical and research literature related to the phenomenon of interest, with a view to enhancing the author's conceptualization. Chapter III is a description of the research methodology, Chapter IV contains the presentation of findings, and Chapter V is a discussion of the findings. Finally, Chapter VI includes the conclusions, recommendations, and the author's reflections.

**Persisting while Wanting to Change:**

**A Conceptual Definition**

The author believes that persisting while wanting to change is an intrinsically paradoxical lived experience, a viewpoint that is rooted in Parse's (1981, 1992, 1995b) theory of human becoming. From this perspective, the author has conceptually defined persisting while wanting to change as *ambiguous yielding amidst the comfort-discomfort of opposing*
intentions. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) includes the following definitions of ambiguous: (a) (of persons) wavering or uncertain as to course or conduct; (b) (of words or other significant indications) of several possible meanings. The definitions of yielding include the following: giving way, as to persuasion or the like; concession, consent. Correspondingly, the author's definition of ambiguous yielding is: a sure-unsure relinquishing in moving toward and away from the known and the unknown all-at-once, with respect to persons, ideas, objects, or situations. Sure-unsure relinquishing suggests an irresolute persisting in some way, when other options are available and even desired. The author views persisting and changing as options which may be chosen. Thus, yielding to the option to persist in a particular way is choosing not to change in the desired, alternative ways; in other words, it is prioritizing the option of persisting over that of changing. Ambiguous yielding means that in persisting while wanting to change, one lives with the uncertainty of outcomes both known and unknown, giving rise to comfort-discomfort.

Comfort-discomfort, while not a concept in general use, has meaning in the context of Parse's theory. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1985) provides the following definitions of comfort: consolation in time of trouble or worry, a feeling of relief or encouragement, contented well-being, a satisfying or enjoyable experience. For discomfort, the definitions are: to make uncomfortable or uneasy; distress, grief. These meanings are implicit
in the author's usage of the term, *comfort-discomfort*, which is defined as an all-at-once rhythm of contentment mingling with discontentment in light of the possibilities chosen and not chosen in life situations. Comfort-discomfort is inherent in the multidimensional experience of persisting while wanting to change; however, one dimension of the rhythm may be more manifest at any one time. Comfort-discomfort arises with ambiguous yielding amidst the pushing-pulling of opposing intentions.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1985) defines *intention* as "a determination to act in a certain way", or "what one has in mind to do or bring about". In persisting while wanting to change, *opposing intentions* are incompatible desires or purposes that are contending for priority, because they cannot be actualized all-at-once. The incompatible desires or purposes relate to different possible ways of being with persons, ideas, objects, or situations. Opposing intentions, therefore, pull one toward disparate purposes or desires, each presenting possibilities which are at once both opportunities and limitations for ways of becoming. Moving with one intention means moving away from others, since one cannot move in different directions simultaneously. The pushing-resisting of opposing intentions emerges as ambiguous yielding amidst comfort-discomfort.
Theoretical Background

The author’s perspective of *persisting while wanting to change* arises from a human science foundation in nursing. Currently, the term *human science* is often used to indicate any field of study having to do with human beings, regardless of its philosophical underpinnings and attendant methodologies. However, the human science tradition differs in essential ways from mainstream, post-positivist science. In order to place this author’s nursing perspective in its larger context within science, the origins and the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the human science tradition will be discussed.

The Human Science Tradition

The term *human science* arose with the German philosopher, Wilhelm Dilthey (1883/1989), in his *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (Polkinghorne, 1983). As used in anti-positivist discourse between 1880 and 1920, the expression referred to an approach to knowledge development about human beings which differed from that of the natural sciences (Polkinghorne, 1983). According to Polkinghorne, industrial age philosophers and scientists were impressed by the progress of the natural sciences in describing and explaining natural phenomena, and were optimistic about the potential of employing such methods to study human phenomena. By the 1860s, most researchers had eagerly adopted natural science approaches
to study both human phenomena and the natural world. However, Dilthey contended that natural science methods, when applied to human behavior and culture, divested human life of meaning and purpose; thus, he advocated that the human sciences develop fundamentally different methods (Dilthey, 1883/1989, 1961, 1976; Ermarth, 1978). The exposition of human science continued with Gadamer (1960/1994; 1976), Heidegger (1926/1962), Husserl (1965), van Kaam (1966), Giorgi (1970; 1985), and others. Nevertheless, the natural science tradition continues to dominate the behavioral and social sciences (Polkinghorne, 1983).

Various scholars (Giorgi, 1970; Giorgi, Fischer, & von Ekartsberg, 1971; Guba, 1990; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Munhall, 1989; Parse, 1981, 1987; Parse, Coyne, & Smith, 1985; Polkinghorne, 1983) have described the natural science and human science traditions as distinct paradigms with different ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies. Ontology is concerned with the nature of being or the kinds of existents, whereas epistemology is the search for the methods and foundations of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity (Audi, 1995; Webster’s Dictionary, 1985). Methodology refers to the approaches that science employs in order to discover knowledge (Polkinghorne, 1983). In the following discussion, the human science and natural science paradigms are compared and contrasted on the basis of their foundational ontologies, and the epistemologicál and methodological ramifications thereof.
A Comparison of the Human Science and Natural Science Paradigms

Basic to the ontology of the human science paradigm is the assumption that humans are unitary beings in dynamic interrelationship with their temporal, historical, cultural worlds (Heidegger, 1926/1962; Dilthey, 1976, 1883/1989; Gadamer, 1960/1994; Giorgi, 1970, 1985; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1995; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Munhall, 1989; Parse, 1981, 1994). Unitary human beings are more than and different from the sum of parts (Heidegger, 1926/1962; Parse, 1981; Rogers, 1970). As Heidegger (1926/1962) asserts, "[the human's] Being...is not something we can simply compute by adding together those kinds of Being which body, soul, and spirit respectively possess....Some idea of the Being of the whole must be presupposed" (p. 74). The implication of this assumption is that research focuses on indivisible human experiences within the lived context. The research approach is necessarily qualitative, and the goal is to enhance understanding by explicating the meanings, patterns, and themes of human experience (Gadamer, 1960/1994; Giorgi, 1970, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Munhall, 1989; Parse, 1987, 1994; Parse et al., 1985; van Manen, 1990).

In contrast, the natural science paradigm views human beings as composites of biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual attributes. Nonetheless, it is believed that human beings can be known "holistically" by
assembling knowledge about their various attributes (Parse et al., 1985; Parse, 1987). Human beings are viewed as interacting with their environment, yet separate from it. This view leads to research which focuses on the constitutive attributes of humans and the environment, which are operationalized as variables. Quantitative approaches are most often used, with the aim of mathematically representing the variables under investigation. It is believed that the human's component parts can be studied out of context, and attempts are made to identify extraneous variables, in order to prevent bias (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Kerlinger, 1973; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991).

A second ontological underpinning of the human science paradigm is the belief that humans are intentional beings who are actively involved in creating their worlds; therefore, human experience is the paramount reality (Dilthey, 1976, 1883/1989; Giorgi, 1970, 1985; Heidegger, 1926/1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1995; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Munhall, 1989; Parse, 1981). Epistemologically, this assumption leads to the focus on participants' descriptions of lived experience as the primary data (Giorgi, 1970, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Munhall, 1989; Parse, 1981, 1987, 1992, 1995a). Qualitative research approaches assume that persons are able to accurately represent their personal experience, and methodologies are designed to elicit rich, in-depth descriptions of individual, subjective experience. Research participants' descriptions are considered to
be credible, without appeal to a more objective source (Giorgi, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Munhall, 1989; Parse, 1996a; Parse et al., 1985).

The natural science paradigm is also concerned with human experience, but only in so far as it can be observed or measured. Reality is thought to exist independent of humans, and to be objectively verifiable. Human beings are believed to interact predictably with the environment in stimulus-response patterns, or through adaptive behavior. Human nature, like the rest of nature, is conceived of as orderly, regular, and consistent. The goal of science, in this view, is to discover causal laws governing human nature, in order to explain, predict, and control human phenomena. An important aim, therefore, is to generalize research findings to populations. Quantitative approaches utilize as basic empirical data, variables that are isolated, operationalized, quantitatively measured, and compared to population norms (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Kerlinger, 1973; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). Subjective data are considered to be unreliable, as research subjects are deemed to be potentially unaware of, unwilling, or unable to accurately represent truth.

A third ontological assumption of the human science paradigm is that the researcher is involved with the phenomenon being investigated (Gadamer, 1960/1994; Giorgi, 1970, 1985; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1995; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Parse, 1987; Parse et al., 1985; van Kaam, 1966;
van Manen, 1990). Hence, qualitative research is considered to be an intersubjective process between researcher and participant, in which the researcher seeks understanding of persons' reality as lived (Giorgi, 1970; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mitchell & Cody, 1992; Munhall, 1989; Parse, 1987, 1990b, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1996a). In contrast, researchers in the natural science paradigm strive for objectivity, on the assumption that "true" reality can only be ascertained by following rigorous procedures designed to avoid influencing or being influenced by the objectified "subject" of research.

Notwithstanding the ideal of objectivity that characterizes the natural science paradigm, this author believes that both natural science and human science traditions are intrinsically theory and value-laden. The scientist's values and prejudices are revealed in the phenomena that are chosen for study, the research question, the approach selected to answer the question, and the interpretation of the research findings (Bunkers, Petardi, Pilkington, & Walls, 1996; Gadamer, 1960/1994; Giorgi, 1970, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mitchell & Cody, 1992, 1993; Parse, 1981, 1987, 1996a; Parse et al., 1985; van Kaam, 1966). Moreover, inquiry which is guided by a nursing theoretical perspective contributes directly to establishing the knowledge base of the discipline (Parse, 1987; Mitchell, 1994; Smith, 1992). This overview of the natural science and human science paradigms provides the background for considering two paradigms specific to nursing.
Nursing's Paradigms

Parse (1981, 1987; Parse et al., 1985) was perhaps the first nurse scholar to write about nursing as a human science, although other nurse scholars, including Paterson and Zderad (1988), and Watson (1985) have also advocated a human science of nursing (Mitchell & Cody, 1992). Noting the differences between a natural science and a human science approach to nursing, Parse (1981) observed that nursing founded in natural science has traditionally focused on "the quantification of man and his illness rather than the qualification of man's total experience with health" (pp. 3-4). She envisioned a human science of nursing that would be concerned with the quality of human beings' experience of health, rather than causal relationships and quantification. Parse (1981, 1987; Parse et al., 1985) delineated two worldviews within nursing, the simultaneity and totality paradigms. These paradigms are roughly analogous with the human science and natural science traditions, respectively, but are specific to nursing.

According to Parse (1992, 1995b), the central phenomenon of concern to the discipline of nursing is the human-universe-health process. This view is not totally consonant with that of other nurse scholars, most of whom prefer to utilize Fawcett’s (1984, 1989) more static designation of a nursing metaparadigm consisting of person, environment, health, and nursing. Parse (1987) distinguishes between the totality and simultaneity paradigms with respect to: (a) assumptions about humans and health, (b)
the goals of nursing, and (c) implications for research and practice (p. 31).
The totality paradigm views humans as biopsychosocial spiritual beings whose interrelationship with the environment is linear and causal in nature. Health is viewed as the state and process of well-being within the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual domains, and exists on a normalized continuum. Moreover, health is believed to be responsive to intervention through manipulation of environmental variables. The goals of nursing research and practice include health promotion, disease prevention, and the care of the sick. Totality paradigm research is consistent with the natural science tradition (Parse, 1987).

The simultaneity paradigm differs from the totality paradigm, in that humans are viewed as unitary beings in simultaneous, mutual process with the universe (Parse, 1987). Health is not something to be restored, maintained, or promoted; for Parse (1990a, 1994), it is simply the quality of life from the person’s perspective. Accordingly, quality of life is the goal of nursing. Research aims to enhance understanding of the meaning of the unitary human being’s quality of life as it is incarnated at the moment (Parse, 1994, p. 19), rather than to describe, explain, and predict human phenomena according to constitutive attributes, reduced to variables. Therefore, the approach is necessarily qualitative, rather than quantitative (Parse, 1987, 1996a; Parse et al., 1985). The aim of practice is true

The Nursing Perspective

The author's nursing perspective is the theory of human becoming, a nursing theory rooted in the human sciences and belonging to the simultaneity paradigm of nursing (Parse, 1981, 1987, 1990a, 1992, 1994, 1995b; Parse et al., 1985). In creating the theory, Parse (1981) deliberately departed from the traditional totality paradigm of nursing, which she describes as a legacy of nursing's historical connection with medical science. The human becoming theory provides a coherent framework of principles and concepts which can bring understanding to the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change.

Parse (1981) synthesized principles and concepts from Martha Rogers' (1970) science of unitary human beings with major tenets and concepts from existential-phenomenology, to create the unique, new theory of human becoming. From Rogers, Parse drew upon the principles of helicy, complementarity (now integrality), and resonancy; and the concepts of energy field, openness, pattern and organization (now pattern), and four-dimensionality (now pandimensionality). Major influential authors from existential-phenomenology were Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, from whom were garnered the fundamental tenets of intentionality and human

The construct, human becoming, refers to the human-universe-health process (Parse, 1992, 1995b). The human becoming theory is concerned with the unitary human being's lived experience of health, which is the quality of life. In this view, only the person living the life can describe its quality (Parse, 1994, p. 17). The concept of persisting while wanting to change is ontologically congruent with the human becoming theory. It is viewed as a human-universe pattern of relating, a way of living health that shapes quality of life.

Parse (1987, 1992, 1996b) composed three philosophical assumptions about human becoming which synthesize the nine assumptions set forth in her original work (1981). The first assumption is: "Human becoming is freely choosing personal meaning in situations in the intersubjective process of relating value priorities" (Parse, 1992, p. 38). In persisting while wanting to change, one freely chooses the meaning of one's situation, which is expressed in the way one interrelates with others and the universe. Choosing to persist relates one's value priorities at the moment, as it takes precedence over the desire to change. Parse (1990a) describes health as the intersubjective process of living one's value priorities, which is a personal commitment. One can stay with the commitment to persist, or one can "change the commitment by changing the
meaning of the situation, thus, changing health" (Parse, 1990a, p. 138).
Thus, persisting while wanting to change is living one's value priorities, and
is a way of living health.

The second assumption is: "Human becoming is cocreating
rhythmical patterns of relating in mutual process with the universe"
(Parse, 1996b, p. 56). Persisting-wanting to change is a paradoxical pattern,
in that both dimensions of the rhythm are present all-at-once, although one
dimension may be more apparent at a given time. It is a unique,
distinguishing pattern of health cocreated in the human-universe mutual
process.

The third assumption states: "Human becoming is cotranscending
multidimensionally with the emerging possibles" (Parse, 1996b, p. 56). Persisting while wanting to change is moving beyond with the was, is, and
will be as it is appearing now, toward the emerging possibles cocreated with
the universe. The possibles are in the meanings given to persisting while
wanting to change. These meanings incarnate the choices that arise in the
many realms of the universe, lived all-at-once.

From these assumptions arise three major themes of meaning,
rhythmicity, and cotranscendence, and each theme leads to a principle.
The three principles and their related concepts provide a theoretical basis
for understanding the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change.
The first principle is: "Structuring meaning multidimensionally is
cocreating reality through the languaging of valuing and imaging” (Parse, 1981, p. 41). Persisting while wanting to change is cocreating reality at many realms. The author has defined it as ambiguous yielding amidst the comfort-discomfort of opposing intentions, which can be specified with the concepts of languaging, valuing, and imaging.

Languaging is expressing meaning through speaking-being silent and moving-being still (Parse, 1981, 1994, 1995b, 1996b). The comfort-discomfort of ambiguous yielding amidst opposing intentions is languaged in the way one speaks and moves in the world. Valuing is the process of confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs through choosing and acting (Parse, 1981, 1994, 1995b, 1996b). "The confirming-not confirming of valuing is the persistent living of what is treasured and not treasured simultaneously" (Parse, 1994, p. 18). In Parse's (1994) view, given that humans are intentional beings, "all that is confirmed-disconfirmed is explicitly-tacitly intended" (p. 18). Ambiguous yielding amidst opposing intentions is an explicit-tacit commitment to persist, rather than change.

Thus, ambiguous yielding to the option to persist rather than change is confirming-disconfirming one's values: It is a way of living health. Imaging is cocreating reality "explicitly and tacitly all-at-once" (Parse, 1981, p. 43). Opposing intentions incarnate personal reality cocreated through reflective and prereflective imaging of purposes and desires. The imaging of opposing
intentions structures the multidimensional meaning of persisting while wanting to change.

The second principle is: "Cocreating rhythmical patterns of relating is living the paradoxical unity of revealing-concealing and enabling-limiting while connecting-separating" (Parse, 1992, p. 38). Parse (1981, 1987, 1990a, 1992, 1994, 1995b) has explicated the paradoxical nature of rhythmical patterns of relating. Paradoxes are not dichotomous opposites, but rather, unitary, multidimensional rhythms (Parse, 1994). Living paradox, from Parse’s view, is an inherent aspect of everyday life (Mitchell, 1993; Parse, 1995b). Paradoxical unity is implicit in the concepts of all three principles, but is most explicit in the concepts of revealing-concealing, enabling-limiting, and connecting-separating (Parse, 1994). Persisting while wanting to change is an intrinsically paradoxical pattern of relating, and the defining subconcepts are also paradoxical. For example, ambiguous yielding is sure-unsure relinquishing, comfort-discomfort is a pattern of contentment mingling with discontentment, and opposing intentions are pushing-resisting desires struggling for priority. These subconcepts can be linked with the concepts of the second principle. Revealing-concealing is disclosing some aspects of self while hiding others (Parse, 1981, p. 52). Ambiguous yielding amidst comfort-discomfort discloses and hides opposing intentions to persist and change, all-at-once. Enabling-limiting is manifested as human beings choose their ways within situations, and in choosing, are enabled to move in
one direction and limited from moving in other directions (Parse, 1981, p. 53). Opposing intentions present different possibilities which cannot be chosen all-at-once, so one way is chosen and other ways are not, which both enables and limits ways of becoming. Connecting-separating is connecting with one phenomenon while separating from others: "In each connecting there is inherent separating and in each separating, inherent connecting" (Parse, 1994, p. 18). Ambiguous yielding is connecting-separating with the options of persisting or changing: As one moves with persisting, one simultaneously moves away from the possibilities in choosing to change.

The third principle is "Cotranscending with the possibles is powering unique ways of originating in the process of transforming" (Parse, 1981, p. 55). Persisting while wanting to change is contranscending with the possibles while moving beyond the moment. Ambiguous yielding, comfort-discomfort, and opposing intentions can be specified with the concepts of powering, originating, and transforming. Powering is a pushing-resisting process of the human-universe process "recognized in the continuous affirming of self in light of the possibility of non-being" (Parse, 1981, p. 57). Persisting while wanting to change is a continuous affirmation of self, while ambiguously yielding amidst the comfort-discomfort of opposing intentions. The opposing intentions to persist and change are possible ways of becoming in a pushing-resisting struggle, which is
powering. Persisting affirms what is, while wanting to change affirms other valued possibles that are not-yet priorities. **Originating** is "choosing a particular way of self-emergence through inventing unique ways of living" (Parse, 1981, p. 60). Certainty-uncertainty is a paradoxical rhythm of originating: "[It] is the all-at-once being sure and unsure of the outcome of decisions" (Parse, 1994, p. 18). Ambiguous yielding is a certain-uncertain choosing in situation and living the ambiguity of the unknown outcomes, emerging as comfort-discomfort. **Transforming** is "coconstituting anew in a deliberate way...[while] continuously becoming the not yet" (Parse, 1981, pp. 62, 63). Persisting while wanting to change involves struggling with opposing intentions concerning possible invented ways of becoming. Transforming happens in deliberately coconstituting anew while ambiguously yielding to the option of persisting in the process of becoming.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to uncover the structure of the experience of persisting while wanting to change, as it is humanly lived. The researcher investigated the phenomenon within the perspective of Parse's (1981, 1987, 1992, 1995b, 1996b) theory of human becoming, with the aim of adding to the knowledge base of nursing by expanding and further specifying the theory. A further aim was to enhance understanding of the meaning of this paradoxical pattern of health. Finally, the research aimed to
generate ideas for further inquiry, and to contribute new understanding for nursing practice guided by the theory.

**Significance For Nursing**

This research contributes to the unique knowledge base of nursing science in the areas of theory, research, and practice. Knowledge that is generated within a nursing theoretical perspective contributes specifically to the knowledge base of the discipline (Mitchell, 1994; Mitchell & Cody, 1993; Parse, 1981; Smith, 1989, 1992; Rogers, 1970). Phenomena of concern to the discipline of nursing are health-related experiences surfacing in the human-universe process (Parse, 1987). The phenomenon of *persisting while wanting to change* was conceptualized from the perspective of the human becoming theory (Parse, 1981, 1987, 1992, 1995a, 1996b). In this perspective, health is a synthesis of values and the quality of life (Parse, 1981, 1990a, 1994); thus, health-related experiences are those which reflect being-becoming, value priorities, and quality of life (Parse, 1987, p. 174). Persisting while wanting to change is a pattern of living one's values which shapes the quality of life, and is thus a health phenomenon of significance to nursing. This research contributes new knowledge about a previously unexplored phenomenon; specifically, it generates a structure of *persisting while wanting to change* within the framework of the human becoming theory. In addition, it adds to the growing knowledge about inherently
paradoxical patterns in human health experiences (Mitchell, 1992, 1995; Parse, in press). This research also further evaluates and confirms the value of Parse's research method for elucidating the multidimensionality of lived experiences of health (Cody, 1991, 1995; Mitchell, 1995; Parse, 1990b; Pilkington, 1993; Smith, 1990).

Nurses in practice often meet persons who are persisting while wanting to change, whether in relation to a habit, relationship, or situation. The new knowledge obtained through this research enhances nurses' understanding of what it means to live this health phenomenon. True presence is the fundamental mode of practice guided by the human becoming theory (Parse, 1987, 1992, 1995a), and new understanding may change the way nurses are present with persons experiencing this paradoxical pattern of becoming. Enhanced understanding provides nurses with insights for creative ways of being truly present, thus contributing to persons' quality of life.

**Research Question**

The question was: What is the structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change?

**Summary**

This chapter has introduced the phenomenon of interest in this study, *persisting while wanting to change*, which the researcher has conceptually
defined as ambiguous yielding amidst the comfort-discomfort of opposing intentions. The human science tradition and the simultaneity paradigm of nursing were discussed to provide the theoretical background for the researcher's nursing perspective, which is Parse’s human becoming theory. In this perspective, persisting while wanting to change is a universal lived experience of health: It is a way of living one's value priorities and is related to quality of life. This research contributes to nursing science by expanding the knowledge base of nursing through enhancement of Parse’s human becoming theory; specifically, it explicates the structure of persisting while wanting to change, a paradoxical pattern of health which has not been previously explored. New understanding of the way this experience is humanly lived will contribute to practice guided by the human becoming theory, which has as its goal quality of life from the person's perspective.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Persisting while wanting to change is a concept named by the researcher, and does not appear in the literature, although persisting and change are addressed, most often separately, but occasionally, together. A broad, cross-disciplinary literature review was conducted on persisting and change, and the subconcepts of the created conceptual definition, using the following terms: persisting, change, ambiguity, comfort-discomfort, intentions, and intentionality. The search included the fields of nursing, the sciences, and the humanities, and used the following computerized databases: Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature, Dissertation Abstracts, INDY (general, English periodical citations), LMED (medical index), Loyola University User Information Services, Philosopher's Index, PSYC (psychology index), and Social Sciences Citations Index. All works since 1990 were reviewed, as well as those prior to 1990 that were classics, or particularly germane. Most of the relevant literature was found in philosophy, psychology, the social sciences, and nursing; a lesser amount came from general literary works.
The literature review is organized under the major concepts, persisting and change, and the subconcepts: ambiguous yielding, comfort-discomfort, and opposing intentions. Under each concept, the nursing and general (non-nursing) literature are presented separately, and each section is further divided into theoretical and research literature. Also, the nursing literature is subdivided into totality paradigm and simultaneity paradigm literature, and the general literature is subdivided into broad, disciplinary areas. The chapter concludes with a summary which includes a synthesis of the literature congruent with the researcher's conceptualization of persisting while wanting to change.

Persisting and Change

General Literature

Theoretical

Philosophy and religion. Change and persisting, or nonchange, often appear as a paradox in the philosophical and religious literature. For example, Paul's epistle to the Romans (New Scofield Study Bible: Holy Bible, 1967) contains an early account of a paradoxical lived experience (Mitchell, 1993), that is evocative of persisting while wanting to change. Paul describes the battle between the Christian believer's fleshly and spiritual natures as follows:

For that which I do I understand not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If, then, I do that which I would not, I
consent unto the law that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do....Oh, wretched man that I am! (Romans 7: 15-19, 24)

In this passage, Paul speaks of persisting in doing that which he would not, and in not doing that which he would. He presents this experience as a struggle between mind and flesh, or between the will to do good and the desire to do evil. It is paradoxical, in that apparently opposite purposes coexist all-at-once within the experience.

Eastern philosophies assume that change is fundamental to existence (Jacobson, 1983; Lee, 1994; Rawson & Legeza, 1973; Wilhelm, 1973). In Taoism, the essence of reality "is never ceasing, perpetual, seamless process" (Rawson & Legeza, 1973, p. 11). Two essential beliefs of Taoism are that nothing ever repeats itself exactly, and that change itself does not change: Change is the "matrix of time, including both 'being' and 'not being', the present, future and vanished past--the Great Whole of continuous duration, infinite space and infinite change" (Rawson & Legeza, 1973, p. 11). One of the oldest books in the world is I Ching, "the book of change" (Lee, 1994; Wilhelm, 1973). This ancient Chinese book is important to Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and other eastern religions and philosophies (Lee, 1994). In the I Ching, change has three meanings: easiness, transformation, and constancy (Lee, 1994; Wilhelm, 1973).
Easiness means the simple and natural. Transformation refers to the
primacy of the experience that phenomena constantly change: "Everything is
changing, and nothing is without change" (Lee, 1994, p. 45). Constancy
means that change is unchanging; hence, the paradox of change is that it
"contains within itself its own opposite meaning: fixedness or unchanging
nature" (Lee, 1994, p. 44; Wilhelm, 1973).

According to Lee (1994), the ancients discovered the idea of change
by observing the natural world and human beings. They noticed that change
occurred through the interaction of bipolar opposites; for example, day and
night bring light and darkness, and winter and summer bring cold and heat.
In human experience, there is love and hate, attraction and repulsion, faith
and reason, pain and pleasure, goodness and evil. The ancients surmised
that "nothing can exist without its counterpart" (Lee, 1994, p. 49). This
thinking was the origin of the notion of yin and yang, which is fundamental
to the Tao and other eastern philosophies. Yin and yang are alternating
forms of the same power of the cosmos, whose fluctuation underlies
continuous change (Cooper, 1981; Lee, 1994; Rawson & Legeza, 1973). As
Lee (1994) explains, the idea of yin and yang is different from the Western
idea of "the conflicting relationship of opposites" (p. 53). The polarity of yin
and yang is only possible because of their unity. They are complementary
and mutually inclusive, and this relationship is the basis for all change (Lee,
1994). This idea of change is different from the Western notion of progress
(Cooper, 1981; Wilhelm, 1973). In Eastern philosophies, change is not thought of as progressive advancement, nor is the new valued over the old. Rather, change is envisaged as cyclic, although not in a rigid sense (Wilhelm, 1973, p. 19).

In Buddhism, too, change is viewed as "one of the ontological realities of life", and is one of three central concerns: change, nonself, and suffering (Jacobson, 1983, pp. 6, 7). In Jacobson's view, Buddhist philosophy is quite unlike traditional Western thought, which is dualistic, hence destroying the unity of the stream of experience. Instead, Buddhism views the world as an "organic unity" (p. 7). Its paramount goal is to seek understanding of "what is really real in each fleeting, momentary now" (p. 38). The "really real" is process; therefore, Buddhism rejects the Western notions of absolute entities or laws (p. 42). Also basic to the Buddhist conception of change is the concept of "relational origination", which means that everything is interrelated. Hence, "every moment...depends upon every preceding moment for its emergence, and the passing moment with its new choices and possibilities 'originates' the next" (p. 43). Living in the moment, for the Buddhist, involves risk and uncertainty, as well as creativity: "Working in the medium of the passing now, we are the artists of our lives" (Jacobson, 1983, p. 63).

**Psychology and the social sciences.** Change and persistence have also been of central concern in psychology and the social sciences, as
attested by a voluminous literature. Although many theories of persistence and change have been posited in the history of Western thought, these theories have generally focused on one or the other concept, but not both at once (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). And yet, societal views of change are paradoxical: On the one hand, it is widely believed that people can and do change, yet on the other hand, there is a general scepticism that personal change can occur (Silka, 1992). A colloquial expression of the latter view is: "A tiger cannot change its stripes".

Several authors (Giorgi 1968; Mahoney, 1991; Watzlawick et al. 1974) consider change and persistence to be different aspects of the same phenomenon. Giorgi (1968) addressed the paradox contained in the notion of a changing human nature, at a symposium on this theme. In synchrony with the Eastern philosophies discussed earlier, Giorgi asserts: "I would argue the position that to speak of the phenomenon of change necessarily involves one in the problem of constancy and vice versa" (p. 6). In Giorgi’s opinion, the phenomena of change and constancy pervade the whole field of psychology, "in a hidden way" (p. 6). Giorgi argues that constancy and change are in "reciprocal relationship", and that the constancy in change relates to the continuing identity of phenomena (p. 15). He emphasizes that it is human beings who "constitute the existence of a phenomenon based upon the appearance of change in the light of some idea of constancy" (p. 16). Watzlawick et al. (1974) deal with "the age old problem of persistence
and change in human affairs [in relation to] problem formation and resolution" (p. xiii). In their view, there is a "paradoxical relationship between persistence and change...[thus they] need to be considered together, in spite of their apparently opposite nature" (p. 1). In the same vein, Mahoney (1991) asserts that "change is only change relative to what remains familiar" (p. 344), and what is familiar is not unchanging, but rather, continually "regenerating".

Giorgi (1968) and May (1981) suggest notions similar to the researcher's phenomena of interest, *persisting while wanting to change*. Elaborating on his observation that "man can be ahead of himself", Giorgi (1968) writes: "To state that man can be 'ahead of himself' means...that he may consciously choose to be a certain type of person, but finds that he cannot as yet quite organize himself to behave in the style he wishes" (p. 7). May (1981) associates change with freedom and describes these as inseparable. In his view, freedom is the possibility of changing: the possibility, for example, "of development, of enhancement of one's life; or the possibility of withdrawing, shutting oneself up, denying and stultifying one's growth" (p. 5). Therefore, freedom "includes the capacity to remain as one is--but the person is different from having considered and rejected changing" (p. 8). Deci and Flaste (1995) concur with May's view of human freedom and change. Their book about human motivation is based on the assumption that human behavior is autonomous, rather than determined.
A number of authors have written about how and why people change, and how to help them change, from various theoretical perspectives (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 1994; Curtis & Stricker, 1991; Deci & Flaste, 1995; Klar, Fisher, Chinsky, & Nadler, 1992; Levenson, 1995; Mahoney, 1991). As Curtis (1991) comments, psychologists "know a lot about what leads people to behave, think, and feel the way they do, what leads them to persist [italics added] in their ways, and how to enable people to change" (p. 6). According to Klar (1992), social psychology theories view people as seeking either change or stability, and the dominant, social cognition approach has tended toward the stability view. The social psychology literature has mainly focused on external processes and the social origins of change, whereas the psychology literature has emphasised the internal process of personal change, in natural settings and in therapy (Curtis, 1991; Stricker, 1991). Stricker (1991) suggests that neither internal nor external processes are primary; instead, he advocates an interactionist approach which focuses on the transaction between them.

There are a number of theoretical perspectives on change in the psychology literature. In the developmental-psychosocial perspective, the self, the self-concept, and self-esteem are thought to develop in a normative sequence throughout the lifespan, in correspondence with Erikson's (1980) eight stages of psychosocial development (Hamachek, 1994). Cognitive-behavioral theories emphasize the role of social learning in change...
(Goldstein, 1984; Larimer & Marlatt, 1994). For example, Larimer and Marlatt (1994) associate relapse in addictive behaviors with cognitive factors, including self-efficacy, attributions, and outcome expectancies. The experiential tradition in psychology emphasizes the role of affect in change (Curtis, 1991). For example, Greenberg and Rhodes (1991) suggest that emotion effects change by motivating behavior and providing access to cognitions; also, emotion may itself be the target of change (p. 40).

Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross (1992) have developed a transtheoretical "stages of change" model to describe and explain how people intentionally change. They describe change as "a movement from one rather steady stable state or pattern of behavior through a transition to another relatively stable state or pattern" (p. 88). The stages of change in this model are precontemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance. The model has integrated various theories underlying therapeutic approaches, thereby deriving the following ten processes of change at "a middle level of abstraction" (p. 95): consciousness raising, self-liberation, dramatic relief, counterconditioning, stimulus control, helping relationships, environmental reevaluation, social liberation, self-reevaluation, and reinforcement management (p. 96). These processes are treated as "the independent variables that assess how people proceed to change their problem behaviors" (p. 96).
Several authors describe the process of personal change as one which can either occur within an existing framework, or transform the whole system (Curtis, 1991; Ferguson, 1980; Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967; Watzlawick et al., 1974). Ferguson (1980) writes about personal transformation through paradigm shifts. She believes that the "focus on awareness of awareness" is critical to transformative experiences (p. 88). Also, she regards the process, rather than the outcome, to be important in personal transformation. In the transformative process, there is a discovery of freedom from attachments that emerges with uncertainty and responsibility. Also, fear is transformed from a personal prison into an opportunity for self-knowledge (Ferguson, 1980).

Watzlawick et al. (1967) describe different levels of reality premises underling human existence. For instance, direct, sensory experience of things is first order knowledge, whereas knowledge about things is second order knowledge. Third order knowledge is "metaknowledge" about human existence in the widest sense, that is, our "being-in-the-world" (p. 262). A person's particular way of being is the outcome of choice, and is the meaning given to experiences. It is this meta-level of reality with which psychotherapy is concerned, in trying to bring about change. Only at this level "can it be seen that reality is not something objective, unalterable, 'out there'...but that for all intents and purposes our subjective experience of
existence is reality--reality is our patterning of something that most probably is totally beyond objective human verification" (p. 267).

Watzlawick et al. (1974) also describe change as occurring at different levels. In their view, first order change is the attempt to solve life problems; and yet, the solution may itself become the keystone of the problem. Therefore, in psychotherapy, the "solution" becomes the focus of second order change. Second order change is concerned with the here and now situation: the what, and not the why (p. 83). It takes "the attempted solution and places it in different frame" (p. 83), in a way that often appears strange. Hence, "there is a puzzling, paradoxical element in the process of change" (p. 83). Moreover, according to Watzlawick et al. (1974), "resistance to change can be turned into an important vehicle to change [by reframing it] as a precondition for, or even an aspect of, change" (p. 133).

Mahoney (1991) has identified five clusters of psychological theories of "resistance to change": motivated avoidance, motivational deficit, ambivalent choice, reactance, and self-protection (pp. 326-332). Theories of motivated avoidance are psychoanalytic in origin. They posit that unconscious motivations govern adaptive behavior, and generate self-defeating conflict. Motivational deficit theories derive from classical learning theories, and are used by some contemporary behaviorists. The ambivalent choice perspective concerns the immediate and delayed consequences of voluntary behaviors. For example, the immediate effects of behaviors are
often pleasant even though transitory, while their long-term consequences may be negative. Conversely, the immediate effects of behaviors may be negative, while the long term effects may be positive (p. 327). The fourth category, reactance theories, are used by social psychologists to explain delinquency and antisocial personality disorders (p. 328). Mahoney terms the final group of theories *self-protective*, to emphasize the "(potentially) healthy functions served by activities that may resist, decelerate, or otherwise impede psychological change" (p. 329). Theorists in this category, including Mahoney, believe that resistance to change occurs at a tacit level of awareness, yet they do not consider these processes to be either pathological or uncommon (p. 329). Rather, "resistance to change...[is] a reflection of basic self-organizing processes operating in the service of the individual's phenomenological needs to feel safe, secure, and viable" (p. 330).

Various authors have focused on therapeutic techniques to help people change. Andreas and Andreas (1989) and Bandler (1993) write about self-change based on neuro-linguistic programing, a field of psychology which focuses on personal development through the control of mental processes. These authors provide detailed instruction about techniques for "reframing" thoughts, and thereby changing, for example, behaviors and habits, feelings or emotions, or physical symptoms (Andreas & Andreas, 1989, p. 78). Some psychotherapists have used seemingly

Research

Psychology and the social sciences. There has been limited inquiry into persisting. Two studies examined persistence as a factor related to task performance for undergraduate (Kroll, 1991) and graduate psychology students (Sandelands, Brockner, & Glynn, 1988). Another study investigated the relationship between personality characteristics and persistence in high school students (McGiboney & Carter, 1993). In these studies, persistence was viewed as a component of behavior that is influenced by personality and/or environmental variables. In a study on the "midcareer crisis" (Perosa & Perosa, 1983), one of the three study groups consisted of persons who "wanted to change careers, but...were persisting [italics added] in their present vocations". The conceptual framework was based on a stage model of transition, and a conflict-theory model of decision making. The persisters were thought to be fearful of the psychological risk of changing, and consequently, "they avoided seriously testing options or became immobilized" (p. 78).
There is large body of research literature on intentional change. Some of this research has focused on testing theories in which behavioral intention is an independent variable (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Becker, 1974; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Other research has examined the process of change with persons in programs designed to facilitate change (Campanelli, 1990; Deci & Flaste, 1995), and with persons who initiated change on their own (Norcross, Ratzin, & Payne, 1989; Tough, 1982). For example, Norcross et al. (1989) tracked for 6 months, 213 adults who had made New Year’s resolutions. Data about coping processes and self-reported outcomes were collected through telephone interviews. The resolutions concerned smoking cessation (30%), weight loss (38%), relationship improvements (5%), reduction in alcohol consumption (2%) and other unique responses (23%) (p. 207). The researchers found that desire to change did not discriminate between successful (n = 132) and unsuccessful (n = 38) resolvers, nor did "the success (or failure) of the resolution have any effect on future self-change plans" (p. 209). Reflecting on "the collective inability of the self-change/coping literature to contribute to our broader understanding and treatment of addictive behaviors" (p. 210), the authors blamed the shortfall in understanding on "the penchant for viewing behavior change as problem-invariant and technique-oriented". They recommended that future research focus on "the underlying processes (or principles) of change" (p. 210).
Tough (1982) conducted interviews with 150 adults from across the USA, Canada, and England, focusing on intentional changes which the persons chose and took definite steps to achieve. About 4% of the persons interviewed were unable to identify any intentional changes in the previous two years. Tough comments generally about these "nonchangers": "No doubt there are times for each of us when we fail to make a change that in fact would have been very beneficial to us. We sometimes let a bad situation go too long, for instance, without trying to change things" (p. 45). He also accedes that the portion of a person's "characteristics and life that remains stable is probably at least as important as the portion that changes" (p. 46), and that "sometimes it is wise to choose nonchange" (p. 46).

Campanelli's (1990) doctoral dissertation was conducted in order to enhance understanding of intentional change in a group counseling setting. Intentional change was defined as "consciously choosing a goal and striving to make it a reality" (p. ii). Transactional analysis provided the theoretical frame of reference. Fifteen adults aged 27-64 years participated in the research. The primary source of data was their personal journals, from which Campanelli created case studies. Findings concerned clients' personal goals, ways in which they changed, their perceptions of change, and the obstacles and facilitating factors related to change. In discussing the findings, Campanelli emphasized the importance of choice points,
autonomous action, and consciously chosen values which are "prized, affirmed in public, and acted upon in a consistent way" (p. 221).

Campanelli (1990) also addressed "changes not achieved", which she described as continuing in "patterns of old behaviour" (p. 165). Using transactional analysis terminology, she identified 14 sources of resistance to change: "passivity, grandiosity, fear, lack of will, driver behaviour, compulsive thinking, maintaining own frame of reference, control, rebellion/compliance (adaptation), distrust of self/environment/others, ego, competition, blame/judgment/shame, and distorted thinking" (p. 187). No data were presented on the participants' perspective about their experience of persisting with behavior that they wanted to change. Commenting on these continuing behavior patterns, Campanelli suggests: "individuals have habitually returned to a limited way of thinking and behaving because they have listened to beliefs that were formed from past experiences. Habit, not reason, often have [sic] determined what choices are made to shape their lives" (p. 223).

A program of research by Deci and Flaste (1995) has examined "the reasons why people enter programs designed to change self-destructive behaviors" (p. 161). These authors were curious as to why "so many people do not adhere to medical regimens and are unsuccessful in their attempts to lose weight, stop smoking, limit their alcohol, and so on" (p. 161). They concluded from data gathered from participants that change is only
successful when persons fully endorse it, that is, "when they have a kind of relaxed commitment, reflecting a deep personal choice" (p. 162). According to these authors, changing "counterproductive behaviors" (p. 164) is difficult, because they serve a purpose; for example, "they bind anxiety, provide an escape from pressures, or provide some other, similar type of comfort" (p. 162). In their view, the choice to change is up to the person: "The choice might be to change, but it might also be to continue the behavior....But until they take interest in their underlying motivations and make a real choice, the self-destructive behaviors will continue to 'control them'" (p. 165).

Some psychology and social work research has indirectly examined persisting and change in relation to women in abusive relationships (Dutton & Painter, 1993; Horton & Johnson, 1993; Strube & Barbour, 1983). A nursing study by Marden and Rice (1995) is also included here. Two of these studies attempted to explain why women persist in an abusive relationship. For example, Dutton and Painter (1993) empirically tested their "traumatic bonding" theory, which posits that strong emotional attachments are formed as a result of intermittent abuse. They gathered data through in-depth interviews and questionnaires from 75 women who had recently left abusive relationships. Findings supported the theorized effect of the severity of maltreatment and power differentials on long-term attachment to the abusive partner (p. 105). Marden and Rice (1995) examined hope as a factor explaining how women cope in abusive relationships. The research
was based on a cycle of violence model, and dissonance theory. The researchers conducted four audio-taped focus group sessions with 24 women, using a set of open-ended questions. Findings identified four dimensions of hope: "hope for change in their partner's behavior, hope for survival, hope as something to cling to, and hope for control of the situation" (p. 70). These findings indicate that the women hoped for change, but not whether they wanted to change.

Two studies (Horton & Johnson, 1993; Strube & Barbour, 1983) examined how women change an abusive situation. Horton and Johnson (1993) recruited 185 "postabuse survivors" (p. 483) who replied to public service advertisements, and to whom questionnaires were mailed. From the findings, they developed a profile of women who successfully ended abuse and identified strategies used to end abuse, including the use of personal resources, community agencies, and legal resources. Strube and Barbour (1983) used objective and subjective measures related to economic dependence and psychological commitment to examine why women stay with or leave abusive relationships. Research subjects were 98 women who had sought counseling about their abusive situations; 61 (62.2%) decided to leave the relationship. Findings indicated that "both economic dependence and commitment were significantly, and independently, related to decisions to leave an abusive relationship" (p. 785).
Nursing Literature

Theoretical

Change and persistence are ubiquitous concepts in the nursing literature (DeFeo, 1990; Hall, 1981), although not always explicitly addressed. The conception of change differs in the totality and simultaneity paradigms.

Totality paradigm. Writing at a time when nurse scholars were beginning to set forth nursing theories, Hall (1981) cautioned against the uncritical adoption of the change paradigm that she believed was sweeping nursing. She suggested that nursing theories committed to change and persistence should be submitted for study and analysis, because "the two explanations of behavior, growth and persistence, lead to different paths in theory development" (p. 5). The author argued for the generation of empirical knowledge about human behavior. Citing Hall, Fawcett (1989) identified change and persistence as two opposing world views underlying nursing conceptual models. According to Fawcett, the change world view "uses the growth metaphor, and the persistence world view focuses on stability" (p. 12). She attributed the following features to the change world view: change is inherent, natural, and continuous; there is variance within individuals; progress is valued; and realization of potential is emphasized (p. 12). In contrast, the persistence world view includes the following elements: stability is natural and normal, and change occurs only for survival; there is
invariance within individuals; conservation is emphasized; and solidarity is valued (p. 12).

Notwithstanding Fawcett's (1989) proposed change and persistence world views, aspects of both notions are evident in totality paradigm nursing theories. Levine's (1991, 1996) conservation model recognizes that change is pervasive in life, but is more consistent with Fawcett's persistence world view. According to Levine, challenges to integrity or wholeness of the human organism arise from the internal and external environment. The human maintains integrity in response to environmental challenges through adaptation. Health, then, is a pattern of adaptive change that is basic to survival. Although the range of adaptation is infinite within limits compatible with life, the most successful adaptations require the least expenditure of energy (Levine, 1991, 1996).

DeFeo (1990) analyzed the concept of change as represented in the theories of Roy, King, Parse, and Rogers. He concluded that change is important in the work of each of these theorists, but there are fundamental differences related to the paradigms which they represent. Roy (Roy & Andrews, 1991) and King (1987) are totality paradigm theorists: In their view, humans respond to internal and external changes through coping, and, for Roy, adaptation. Health is considered to be a dynamic process of predictable stages of growth and development, and for the individual, it involves changing within these normative parameters (DeFeo, 1990).
A number of nursing authors who write about change have borrowed conceptualizations from psychology and social psychology to discuss the process of health behavior change (McMahon & Jones, 1992; Wing, 1994), and nursing interventions to help persons change unhealthy behavior (Conn, 1994; Damrosch, 1991). This literature is consistent with the totality paradigm, in its assumption of causal relationships between the psychosocial aspects of human beings and their environment.

**Simultaneity paradigm.** As DeFeo (1990) observed, the simultaneity paradigm theorists, Parse and Rogers, view change quite differently than do totality paradigm theorists. Rogers' (1987) theory has three principles that stipulate the nature of change in human and environmental fields as being continuous, innovative, and probabilistic (pp. 143, 144). In Parse's theory of human becoming, the human is viewed as "always changing, always in the process of transforming" (Parse, 1987, p. 165). Transforming is "the changing of change" (Parse, 1981, p. 62): It is a shifting view, in which new discoveries emerge in the human-universe process. Human becoming signifies the human's continuous evolving with diversity while moving multidimensionally with the emerging possibles (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1994, 1995b, 1996b).

The simultaneity paradigm theories are not completely congruent with the change world view described by Fawcett (1989). For example, although change is considered to be inherent and continuous, it is not necessarily the
case that progress is valued, or that the realization of potential is emphasized. In Parse's theory, values such as these are only regarded according to the person's priorities. Health is a synthesis of values, and the quality of life from the person's perspective (Parse, 1990a, 1994). Health, then, is living one's values; thus, it is a personal commitment (Parse, 1990a). In this context, to persist means to stay with one's chosen values: "One can choose to stay with the commitment or change the commitment by changing the meaning of a situation, thus, changing health" (Parse, 1990a, p. 138).

Research

**Totality paradigm.** Although no studies were found which focused on the experience of persisting while wanting to change, per se, researchers have examined the process of changing health behavior; for example, for pregnant women (Higgins, Frank, & Brown, 1994), and cardiac patients (Fleury, 1991; Price, 1992). Higgins et al. (1994) interviewed 115 pregnant women to discover which health behavior changes they had initiated because they were pregnant. Findings indicated that about half of the women had made changes in areas including diet, exercise, smoking habits, and alcohol intake. Price (1992) interviewed 47 patients 6-10 weeks after they had had a myocardial infarction, in order to identify differences in social and cognitive factors for those who quit smoking and those who did not. The results showed significant differences between "quitters" and those who
continued smoking: The former group scored higher on the variables of expectations, utilities, and subjective norms regarding non-smoking. Fleury (1991) used a grounded theory approach and constant comparative analysis to analyze interview data from 29 persons who were trying to change by carrying out programs for cardiac risk factor modification. The basic social process that was identified was empowering potential, which was posited to explain peoples' motivation to initiate and maintain health-related change.

Simultaneity paradigm. Three research studies (Kelley, 1991; Kraynie, 1985; Smith, 1990) guided by the human becoming theory have focused on phenomena similar to persisting while wanting to change. Kraynie (1985) studied persisting in change even though it is difficult; hence, the emphasis was on changing, rather than persisting while wanting to change. The Giorgi phenomenological method was used, with a sample of two professional women selected for their ability to articulate their ideas. The general structural description stated:

The experience of persisting even though it is difficult emerges in the pushing-resisting of close interhuman relationships where there are conflicting values. The individual experiences turmoil in the ambiguity and conflict of the situation in which there is a certain feeling of being bound or trapped. As the individual chooses anew from among possible alternatives, the struggle to stay with that choice unfolds.

In the powering that is lived in the choosing of the valued alternatives and persisting with that choice even though it is difficult, the individual lives a rhythmical pattern of certainty-uncertainty, experiences feelings of aloneness and helplessness and of being sure of the rightness of the choice all at once. The individual experiences disdain and dissonance as the struggle to persist is lived. (p. 64)
For the participants in this study, "the struggle to affirm the valued alternative" (Kraynie, 1985, p. 66) emerged as the rhythmical pattern of certainty-uncertainty.

Smith (1990) and Kelley (1991) used Parse's (1987; 1990b) research method in their studies. Smith investigated the lived experience of struggling through a difficult time for 10 unemployed persons. The emergent structure was: "sculpting new lifeways 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" (pp. 22-23), which was interpreted in the language of the human becoming theory as powering the enabling-limiting of valuing. Kelley (1991) investigated the lived experience of struggling with going along when you do not believe. The participants were eight persons over the age of 65, who were volunteers in various community organizations. The emergent structure of struggling with going along when you do not believe was: "justifiable yielding, as opposing views intensify personal convictions, and compel disclosure while suffering consequences" (p. 127). Justifiable yielding was interpreted as valuing the benefits of going along over the choice to not go along. The research finding was conceptually interpreted as valuing the powering of revealing-concealing.

This concludes the review of the general and nursing literature on persisting and change. The next section is a review of the literature on
ambiguous yielding, the first of three subconcepts which the researcher has created to define persisting while wanting to change.

**Ambiguous Yielding**

**General Literature**

**Theoretical**

**Literary criticism.** Ambiguity has been used in literary criticism to refer to the multiplicity of meanings in language, which contributes to the richness and complexity of linguistic expression. The classic works of Empson (1953) and Nowottny (1965) exemplify this usage of the term (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). According to Empson (1953), all good poetry is ambiguous. **Ambiguity** in this usage refers to diverse ways in which the language of poetry exhibits multiple implications, and thereby encompasses aspects of human experience that are seemingly disparate (Nowottny, 1965, p. 146).

**Philosophy.** The concept of ambiguity has interested western philosophers since ancients times (Kreyche, 1983). For example, Kreyche finds evidence of the theme of ambiguity in Heraclitus’ view of reality as flux, consisting in a tension of opposites. The notion of ambiguity is central in the writings of existentialists, for whom ambiguity relates to the essential freedom of human existence (Kreyche, 1983), and also, the fact that its meaning can never be fully expressed (Heidegger, 1926/1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1948/1964, 1945/1995). For example, in Heidegger’s philosophy, the
meanings that occur in every self-interpretive act are inexhaustible, indeterminate, and in temporal flux (Silverman, 1978, p. 99). Merleau-Ponty (1945/1995) maintains that the subjectivity of human existence renders the meaning of human behavior inaccessible to causal thought; thus, behavior may only be apprehended from the subject's perspective (p. 120).

Ambiguity is inherent in human freedom. Kreyche (1983) describes freedom as "a stark possibility...for glory and shame, which cannot be explained but only lived" (p. 50). De Beauvoir (1948/1968) contends that humankind should not try to dispel the ambiguity in existence, but rather, "accept the task of realizing it" (p. 13). For her, there are ethical possibilities in human ambiguity, consisting in actions that lay claim to both the freedom and responsibility of existence (de Beauvoir, 1948/1968). Kreyche (1983), too, ponders the discomfiting ambiguity inherent in issues of freedom and responsibility. Believing that human beings are compelled toward clarity and certitude, he nevertheless advocates that fundamental ambiguity be embraced, because it makes possible "a diversity of interpretations [and] a richness of meaning" in human existence (p. 51).

**Psychology and the social sciences.** The psychoanalytic literature also considers ambiguity to be fundamental to the human condition. While it is thought to arise "in states of self transition and growth" (Maldonado, 1993, p. 93), nevertheless, its role in psychopathology has been emphasized (Maldonado, 1993; Sas, 1992). Ambiguity is also considered to be a feature
of the analytic relationship, the goal of which is to achieve understanding through the use of an interpretative process (Levenson, 1995; Maldonado, 1993; Rendon, 1991; Spence, 1983).

Nursing Literature

Theoretical

The concept of *ambiguity* was not found to be addressed in the totality paradigm literature. However, in the simultaneity paradigm literature, Parse (1981) uses the word *ambiguity* in connection with "the paradox of living certainty-uncertainty...in human encounters as individuals make concrete or clear their choices in situation yet, simultaneously, live the ambiguity of the unknown outcomes" (p. 60). Certainty-uncertainty is a paradoxical pattern specifying the concept of originating, from the third principle, which is "choosing a particular way of self-emergence through inventing unique ways of living" (Parse, 1981, p. 60). Thus, Parse views ambiguity as inherent in being human; humans are always originating, living with knowns and unknowns, in the process of becoming.

Research

The word, ambiguity, was identified in the findings of a study by Cody (1995), who investigated the lived experience of grieving for ten families living with AIDS, using Parse’s (1987, 1990b) phenomenological-hermeneutic method. One of the core concepts that emerged in the findings was *possibilities emerging with ambiguity* (pp. 223-225), which he linked
with the certainty-uncertainty within the concept of originating. For these families, the paradox of certainty-uncertainty was related to the possibilities inherent in the experience of grieving; for example, choosing ways of living with AIDS meant "the continuous unfolding of opportunities and limitations within a context of unwelcome and welcome change and challenges to personal values" (Cody, 1995, p. 224).

This concludes the review of the general and nursing literature related to the subconcept of ambiguous yielding. The next section is a review of the literature on comfort-discomfort, the second defining subconcept of persisting while wanting to change. This term was not found in the general literature; therefore, the following section addresses only the nursing literature.

**Comfort-Discomfort**

**Nursing Literature**

**Theoretical**

The term, *comfort-discomfort*, is a unitary concept that appears in the literature on the human becoming theory, in which human-universe patterns of relating are described as rhythmical and paradoxical in nature (Parse, 1981, 1987, 1992, 1994, 1995b, 1996b). Thus, paradox is "an inherent aspect of human experience and an important dimension of health" (Mitchell, 1993, p. 44; Parse, 1995b). Comfort-discomfort, then, is a paradoxical pattern of living health.
Research

The concept of comfort-discomfort appeared in the findings of four nursing studies. Stanley (1978) used the van Kaam phenomenological method to examine the lived experience of hope for 100 college students. The lived experience of hope was found to involve comfortable and uncomfortable feelings. Several research studies (Cody, 1991; Jonas, 1992; Parse, 1990b) guided by Parse's theory of human becoming have also uncovered the concept of comfort-discomfort. Jonas (1992) explored the meaning of being an elder in Nepal, using the descriptive exploratory method. One of the themes that emerged was: "Changing customs create a comfort-discomfort as the what-was unfolds into new possibles" (p. 173). The comfort-discomfort was connected with the opportunities and limitations experienced in the changes of aging. The concept of comfort-discomfort also arose from the dialogues with three of four participants in Cody's (1991) study on grieving a personal loss, which used Parse's (1987, 1990b) research method. Comfort-discomfort for these participants was lived amidst intense struggling in change and a shifting view in moving beyond the now. Parse (1990b) utilized her newly created research method to study the lived experience of hope. Comfort-discomfort surfaced in the dialogues with all 10 participants, and appears in the core concept, "harmoniously living the comfort-discomfort of everydayness" (p. 15). The participants, who were adults on hemodialysis, recognized the opportunities as well as the
limitations in their situations, which they chose to live harmoniously. The core concept, when connected with the theory, was interpreted as enabling-limiting.

This concludes the review of the nursing literature related to the subconcept, comfort-discomfort. The last section of the literature review is on opposing intentions, the third defining subconcept of persisting while wanting to change.

Opposing Intentions

Since intentions are related to the philosophical concept of intentionality, both terms were searched, and the literature has been integrated in this review.

General Literature

Theoretical

Philosophy. According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (Audi, 1995), intentionality means simply, "aboutness", that is, "things that are about other things exhibit intentionality" (p. 381); however, it notes that philosophers are deeply divided "about the proper definition or treatment of the concept of intentionality" (p. 381). The word has been in use since medieval times and earlier (Audi, 1995; May, 1973), but was revived by the nineteenth-century psychologist, Frantz Bretano, who used it to differentiate between mental and physical phenomena, in that only mental phenomena...
could manifest intentionality (Audi, 1995; Giorgi, 1970). Bretano’s student, Husserl, made the notion of intentionality central to his transcendental phenomenology, wherein it refers to the relationship between consciousness and things (Audi, 1995, Drummond & Embree, 1992). In Husserl’s (1965) phenomenology, intentionality was the basis of the eidetic analysis of objects, by means of which the reality existing in phenomena was to be discovered (Lauer, 1965).

Other European philosophers, such as Heidegger (1926/1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/1995), diverged from Husserl’s thinking on intentionality, but continued to develop the concept in the tradition of existential phenomenology. Heidegger’s (1926/1962) notion of intentionality concerns the nature of human existence. For Heidegger, the human is "a performer of intentional acts which are bound together by the unity of a meaning"; therefore, the human is "essentially not an object" (p. 73). He proposes that the intentionality of consciousness is founded in the unity of Dasein (see footnote xxiii, p. 498). Dasein means human existence or "being-there", and is that which makes possible an understanding of being (Audi, 1995, p. 317). For Heidegger, then, intentionality is the human’s understanding, interpretative, and interestingly choosing involvement in a situation (Bernsen, 1986, p. 143), and is therefore fundamental to the human’s experience of being in the world.
Merleau-Ponty (1945/1995), too, views intentionality as the grounds of human existence. He is careful to distinguish his notion of intentionality from the relation of consciousness to a possible object, "[in] that the unity of the world, before being posited by knowledge in a specific act of identification, is 'lived' as ready-made or already there" (p. xvii). Corresponding to the open unity of the world, "[there is] an open and indefinite unity of subjectivity" (p. 406). Thus, the unity of the world is not constituted in thought, but is lived.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/1995) offers his own interpretation of Husserl's intentionality of act and operative intentionality. For him, intentionality of act consists in acts such as making judgments and voluntarily taking a position; operative intentionality, on the other hand, is that which "produces the natural and antepredicative unity of the world and of our life, being apparent in our desires, our evaluations and in the landscape we see" (p. xviii). Unlike intentionality of act, operative intentionality is not the work of reflective awareness, but is a "spontaneous and original opening" to the world (Freeman, 1993, p. 80). Merleau-Ponty (1945/1995) believed that this broadened notion of intentionality was key to the phenomenological understanding of "a certain way of patterning the world" (p. xviii), in which every human word and gesture has meaning. Thus, in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, intentionality provides the basis for comprehending the significance of human life.
The European philosophers have strongly influenced the work of the American psychologist, Giorgi, and psychotherapist, May. Giorgi (1970) concurs with Merleau-Ponty's usage of the term intentionality to indicate, not a cognitive relationship, but a relationship of being: "As such, it can also be understood as describing man’s openness for, his orientation towards, or his essential directedness to the world" (p. 158). This insight, he maintains, guides psychology toward the study of behavior from a human science, rather than natural science perspective. Within a human science frame of reference, psychologists are concerned with understanding the meaning of human behavior, rather than determining cause-effect relations (pp. 156-161). Likewise, May (1973) focuses on intentionality as that which "gives meaningful contents to consciousness" (p. 226). He asserts that "every meaning has within it a commitment", in that it "tends toward something, is a turning of the person toward something, and has within it, no matter how latent, some push toward a direction for action" (p. 230). May emphasizes that the concept of intentionality "contains both our knowing and our forming reality, and that these are inseparable from each other" (p. 230).

In contrast to the above existential phenomenologists, analytic philosophers and philosophers of mind generally view intentionality as a property of the mind, variously understood. Some treat intentionality as the abstract, logical relation between thought and its object, wherein human action may be causally explained by its link with mentation (Mele, 1992;
Wilson, 1989). Others take a materialist or functionalist stance toward intentionality, wherein it is considered to be a property of the brain, involving, for example, information processing (Dennett, 1991; Lyons, 1990) and other brain states and processes (Lyons, 1995; Natsoulas, 1994; Searle, 1992).

In the philosophical discourse on intentionality, the word *intentions* is used extensively. According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, *intention* means: 

(1) a characteristic of action, as when one acts *intentionally* or *with a certain intention*; 
(2) a feature of one's mind, as when one *intends*...to act in a certain way now or in the future" (Audi, 1995, p. 380).

For analytic philosophers and philosophers of mind (Audi, 1993; Mele, 1992; Wilson, 1989), the relation between (1) and (2), above, is an important problem. For example, Audi's (1993) theory of human action presents beliefs, desires, and intentions as the causal and rational grounds of conduct. O'Sullivan (1977), however, contests "the possibility of giving a causal explanation of human action" (p.2). Instead, he argues for the primacy of human freedom, because any explanation of human action "is primarily a quest for meaning...[and] meaning is expressed, not caused" (p. 2). In his definition, "an intention is our knowing and wanting to achieve something" (p. 6); that is, an end, goal, or purpose. Thus, in intentional action, there is some dimension of knowing and willing. Because intentions
arise from directedness toward a purpose, they give sense and meaning to human actions (O'Sullivan, 1977).

**Social psychology.** In social psychology theory, intention belongs to a complex of antecedent variables used to explain and predict human behavior. For example, intention is a predictor variable in the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985), the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and the Health Belief Model (Becker, 1974). In these theories, behavioral intention is a considered to have a motivational influence on behavior (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). The TPB is the same as the TRA, except for the addition of perceived behavioral control, a variable which directly and indirectly (through intention) influences behavior (Blue, 1995). The transtheoretical "stages of change" model (Prochaska et al., 1992) incorporates intention to change in the "precontemplation" stage of change.

**Research**

A considerable volume of research has been conducted to test theories of behavior which include intentions as a variable (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Becker, 1974; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and also, similar, researcher-derived conceptualizations, in the area of exercise behavior (Blue, 1995; Godin, 1994; Terry & O'Leary, 1995), safer sex and contraceptive practices (Edem, 1993; Grimley, 1995; Schar, 1995), the practice of primary prevention (Meshack, 1994), alcohol-related behavior
(Aas, Klepp, Laberg, & Aaro, 1995; Phillips & Heesacker, 1992), and smoking cessation (Lillington, 1994). Another body of research has concentrated on intentional behavioral change as conceptualized in the transtheoretical "stages of change" model (Armstrong, Sallis, Hovell, & Hofstetter, 1993; Brownell & Cohen, 1995; Lichtenstein, Lando, & Nothwehr, 1994; Prochaska et al., 1992). These studies have generally supported the supposition that behavioral intention is, to varying degrees, related to behavior.

Nursing Literature

Theoretical

Simultaneity paradigm. The concept of intentionality was not found in the nursing literature, except in Parse's (1981) theory, wherein it is a basic philosophical tenet. Parse's view of intentionality was influenced by Heidegger's (1926/1962) work. It is her belief that the human is an intentional being, "involved with the world through a fundamental nature of knowing, being present and open" (Parse, 1981, p. 18). According to Parse (1981), one's involvement with the world is manifested in one's project of personal becoming, which "emerges from [one's] historicity and facticity", and is reflected in the "freedom and desire to reach beyond self" to possibilities (p. 19). Parse (1981) further explicates intentionality with the concepts of coexistence and situated freedom. Coexistence means that the human is not alone, but "is in the world with others" (p. 20), and knows self
through relationships with other. Situated freedom specifies the human's freedom to choose personal meaning in situations (p. 21).

**Totality paradigm.** Peplau (1952/1991) has devoted a chapter of her book to "opposing goals" (pp. 99-117), a topic related to the concept of opposing intentions, given that intentions are directed toward one's goals (O'Sullivan, 1977). In Peplau's view, goals motivate behavior; thus, opposing goals can "distort interpersonal relations" and interfere with a client's accomplishment of the tasks required to solve a problem (p. 116). Opposing goals compete for dominance, leading to conflict and frustration. Conflict is manifested "when a patient shows hesitation, vacillation, and/or blocking and inability to decide on a course of action to be followed" (p. 116). Thus, for Peplau, opposing goals are a problem, and the nurse's role in such situations is to "permit" a patient "to have and express his own feelings", and to foster the development of skills to solve the problem (pp. 116, 117).

Other authors in the totality paradigm have identified intentions as a variable in their conceptualizations of health behavior, using theories from the behavioral sciences, such as the theory of reasoned action, and the theory of planned behavior (Blue, 1995; Lillington, 1994). These theories have been discussed in the general literature section that deals with social psychology theories.
Research

The totality paradigm research literature has been included with the general literature, since it uses the same theoretical frameworks and is difficult to distinguish. In the simultaneity paradigm literature, the word *intentions* was found in a core concept in a research study conducted by Mitchell and Heidt (1994) on the lived experience of wanting to help another, using Parse's (1987, 1990b) research method. Participants were eight nurses who practiced therapeutic touch. The emergent core concept, *directing intentions to nurture*, "was revealed by participants as a commitment arising from reflecting and choosing from among other possible ways of being" (Mitchell & Heidt, 1994, p. 124). Thus, intentions in this study entailed a lived commitment to help others.

Summary

This chapter presented a review of the literature related to *persisting while wanting to change*. A voluminous literature was found related to the concepts of persisting, change, ambiguity, intentions, and intentionality, in philosophy, psychology, the social sciences, and nursing; however, much of it has arisen from a different ontology from the researcher's nursing perspective. The simultaneity paradigm theoretical and research literature are consistent with the conceptualization of persisting while wanting to change; for example, struggling with a difficult situation or persisting in change are viewed as chosen ways of becoming, and ways of living health

Portions of the general literature in philosophy and psychology have also enriched understanding of the phenomenon of interest, including that on the Eastern philosophies, and existential psychology and phenomenology. Various existential authors regard the human as an intentional being and an indivisible unity, open and knowingly present to the world (Giorgi, 1970; Heidegger, 1926/1962; Kreyche, 1983; May, 1973, 1981; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1995). These authors, and others (Empson, 1953; Nowottny, 1965) recognize the multidimensionality of human existence and language, and the multiplicity of meanings inherent in them. Therefore, it is believed that lived experience must be approached from the person's perspective (Giorgi, 1970; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1995).

Some authors regard persisting-change as a unitary construct that is paradoxical in nature (Cooper, 1981; Giorgi, 1968, 1970; Jacobson, 1983; Lee, 1994; May, 1973, 1981; Rawson & Legeza, 1973; Watzlawick et al., 1967; Watzlawick et al., 1974; Wilhelm, 1973). Change is deemed to be the ontological foundation of reality, which is the seamless, flowing unity of experience (Cooper, 1981; Giorgi, 1968; Jacobson, 1983; Lee, 1994; Rawson & Legeza, 1973; Wilhelm, 1973). Personal reality is considered to be constituted in chosen meanings, which one is free to change (Watzlawick

The review of the literature did not reveal any existing knowledge about the specific lived experience of persisting while wanting to change, although it was implicitly identified as a phenomenon. The next chapter describes the methodology used to develop knowledge on this health phenomenon.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

The nursing perspective providing the frame of reference for inquiry into the phenomenon of *persisting while wanting to change* is Parse's (1981, 1992, 1995b, 1996b) theory of human becoming. Parse's (1987, 1990b) research method was chosen as the method of inquiry, because it was developed to uncover the structure of universal lived experiences (Parse, 1996a) and hence, can answer the research question. Moreover, the researcher believes, with others (Mitchell, 1994; Mitchell & Cody, 1993; Parse, 1987; Smith, 1989), that nursing theory-guided inquiry is essential for the development of the knowledge base of the discipline. In this chapter, the background of the method, a description of the specific processes, ethical considerations, and measures to ensure rigor and credibility are presented.

**Background of the Method**

Until recently, nursing research has utilized only methods borrowed from other disciplines in the natural and human sciences (Parse, 1987; Parse et al., 1985). Parse (1987, 1990b) was the first nursing scholar to develop a unique research methodology for nursing. This method is similar to other phenomenological methods, in that entities for study are persons'
descriptions of lived experiences; however, it is unique in that it is
In constructing the method, Parse (1987, 1995a) took into consideration the
assumptions and principles of the theory, and the following principles of
methodology construction:

1. The methodology is constructed to be in harmony with and
evolve from the ontological beliefs of the research tradition.
2. The methodology is an overall design of precise processes
that adhere to scientific rigor.
3. The methodology specifies the order within the processes
appropriate for inquiry within the research tradition.
4. The methodology is an aesthetic composition with balance in

The following basic assumptions underlie Parse's research method:

1. Humans are open beings in mutual process with the universe.
The construct human becoming refers to the human-universe-
health process.
2. Human becoming is uniquely lived by individuals. People
make reflective and prereflective choices in connection with
others and the universe which incarnate their health.
3. Descriptions of lived experiences enhance knowledge of
human becoming. Individuals and families can describe their
own experiences in ways that shed light on the meaning of
health.
4. Researcher-participant dialogical engagement uncovers the
meaning of phenomena as humanly lived. The researcher in
true presence with the participant can elicit authentic
information about lived experiences.
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. (Parse, 1992, p. 41; 1995a, p. 152)
Description of the Method

Parse's (1987, 1990b, 1992, 1995a, 1996b) research method is phenomenological-hermeneutic in approach. Phenomena for study are lived experiences that are (a) universal human experiences surfacing in the human-universe process, and (b) health-related experiences that reflect being-becoming, value priorities, and quality of life (Parse, 1987, p. 174). "Universal lived experiences are those that all humans experience and, given a willingness and an opportunity, could describe" (Parse, 1996b, p. 59). The processes of the method are participant selection, dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation. These processes are described as they were followed in this study.

Participant Selection

Parse's research methodology assumes that persons who agree to participate in a study on a particular lived experience are able to give a true account of it. It is essential to invite persons to participate who live the experience, and are willing to describe it on audiotape (Parse, 1987, 1995a). A sample size of 10 participants is considered adequate (Parse, 1987). Participants had to be: (a) 18 years of age or over, and (b) able to read and speak English. Because of the author's interest in women in abusive relationships, participants were selected mainly from this population. However, recruitment of such women was somewhat difficult, and so recruitment was also opened to the general public. Recruitment was carried
out through women's shelters, upon referral from personal contacts of the researcher, and through public notices on bulletin boards. Eight women and two men volunteered to participate in the study. Five of the women were recruited from shelters, with the assistance of staff members who informed residents about the study and assisted the researcher in arranging appointments with those who were interested in participating. In addition, three women and one man volunteered upon referral by acquaintances of the researcher, and one man replied to the public notice. The latter volunteers were offered an explanation over the telephone, and when they agreed to participate, a mutually-convenient meeting location was arranged.

Researcher-participant discussions took place in a private area: for example, in a room at the shelter, with those who were shelter residents. With three participants, the meeting place was their home, and with another two, it was at a facility for higher education. Before proceeding, the researcher provided an explanation of the study and obtained informed consent. In the explanation, participants were encouraged to describe their experience of persisting while wanting to change, without reference to any particular context; thus, participants were free to choose a personally meaningful context.

Ethical Considerations

Approval was obtained from the Loyola University of Chicago Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). Permission to recruit
volunteers was requested from several women's shelters (see Appendix B) and letters of approval were received (see Appendix C). A public announcement was also used to recruit participants (Appendix D). All participants were given a general explanation of the project (see Appendix E). Shelter staff provided this information to potential participants, and assisted in arranging appointments with volunteers. Prior to beginning the dialogical engagements with participants, the researcher again explained the study to them, and told them of their rights to refuse to participate, their rights if they chose to participate, and that the discussion would be audiotaped. The researcher provided a telephone number where she could be contacted by participants, if they were experiencing discomfort after speaking with her, and informed participants that if they wished, she would arrange for appropriate follow-up. Participants signed a consent form (see Appendix F) and received a copy of it.

Confidentiality was ensured by assigning participants a code number which was used to identify their descriptions. The record of names and codes was kept separate from the transcriptions and was destroyed once the transcription of the tapes was completed. The audiotapes and transcriptions were stored in a secured cabinet in the researcher's home and were destroyed after completion of the study. No identifying information about participants has been revealed in any materials obtained.
Dialogical Engagement

Dialogical engagement is not an interview, but rather, an intersubjective "being with", in which the researcher is truly present with the participant in an engaged attentiveness, as the person describes the lived experience under study (Parse 1987, 1990b, 1995a, 1996b). Dialogical engagement uncovers the structure of the lived experience, "as the remembered, the now and the not-yet unfold all at once" (Parse, 1987, p. 176). Before coming to each participant, the researcher centered on the phenomenon of persisting while wanting to change, opening self to be truly present to the participant as s/he described the lived experience. Dialogical engagement with each participant began with the researcher asking: "Please tell me about your experience of persisting while wanting to change," and continued until the participant had nothing further to say. The researcher used only comments like: "Please go on", "Could you tell me more about that?", or "How does that relate to persisting while wanting to change?" Discussions were audiotaped and transcribed to typed format.

Extraction-Synthesis

Extraction-synthesis is the process whereby the researcher extracts and synthesizes the essences from the dialogues in the language of participants, and "conceptualizes these essences in the language of science to form the structure of the lived experience" (Parse, 1995a, p. 153). It occurs through "dwelling with" the research-participant dialogues by
contemplatively centering self while repeatedly reading the transcripts and simultaneously listening to the audiotapes (Parse, 1987, p. 176; 1990b, 1995b, 1996b). Extraction-synthesis involved five processes: (a) From each participant’s description, essences in the participants’ language were extracted and synthesized; (b) the essences were then stated in the researcher’s language; (c) a proposition from each participant’s description was formulated; (d) core concepts from all the propositions were extracted; and (e) the core concepts were synthesized to form the structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change, which answers the research question (Parse, 1987, 1990b, 1992, 1995b).

It is important to note that although the author had already developed a theoretical description of persisting while wanting to change, based on creative conceptualization and the review of the literature, this theoretical understanding was not used as a basis for "categorizing" the data. Rather, it provided the researcher’s horizon of understanding, which, in dialogue with the participants’ descriptions, emerged as a new understanding. This is the "fusion of horizons" in the hermeneutic process of understanding described by Gadamer (1960/1994).

Heuristic Interpretation

The finding of the study is the emergent structure of the lived experience (Parse, 1987, 1990b). The structure of persisting while wanting to change was linked to the theory of human becoming through heuristic
interpretation, which includes structural integration and conceptual interpretation. Structural integration moves the structure of the lived experience to a higher level of abstraction, while conceptual interpretation further specifies the structure with the concepts of the human becoming theory (Parse, 1987; 1990b, 1992, 1995b). Heuristic interpretation results in a theoretical structure consisting of concepts from the principles of the human becoming theory. Through heuristic interpretation, the structure is woven with the theory, thereby enriching the concepts with descriptive data and expanding the theory. Also, ideas for future research studies and practice are generated (Parse, 1987, p. 177).

**Credibility and Rigor**

Qualitative and quantitative research are founded upon different assumptions, and it is not appropriate to judge the scientific merit of both types of research using the same standards (Burns, 1989; Parse, 1987; Parse et al., 1985). The assumptions of the two approaches differ with respect to purposes and aims, and the processes of data collection and analysis. With quantitative research, data collection and analysis are directed toward the purposes and aims of generalizability, reproducibility, and inferences about causal relationships. In contrast, with qualitative research, data collection and analysis are directed toward the purpose and aim of understanding meaning and theory development or enhancement (Burns, 1989). Burns (1989) has developed five standards for the critique of
qualitative research, that are based on its foundational assumptions: (a) descriptive vividness, (b) methodological congruence, (c) analytic preciseness, (d) theoretical connectedness, and (e) heuristic relevance. These criteria will be used to address issues of credibility and rigor in this research.

**Descriptive Vividness**

Descriptive information has been provided about the participants, dialogical engagement, and extraction-synthesis, so that the reader may gain a contextual understanding of the whole (Burns, 1989). Moreover, the researcher has endeavored to stay true to the meaning in original descriptions during the extraction-synthesis process, as the participants' language was moved to the more abstract language that reflects the researcher's nursing perspective.

**Methodological Congruence**

The research method was congruent with the purpose and nursing perspective of the study. The researcher was guided by the nurse theorist who created the human becoming theory and its corresponding research method, thus ensuring rigor in adherence to the methodological approach. Methodological congruence has four dimensions: (a) rigor in documentation, (b) procedural rigor, (c) ethical rigor, and (d) auditability.
Rigor in documentation. The researcher has presented all elements of the study, including the phenomenon, purpose, research question, significance of the phenomenon, assumptions, metatheory, context, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, sampling, data gathering and analysis strategies, theoretical development, conclusions, implications for further research and practice, and a literature review (Burns, 1989).

Procedural rigor. The researcher has taken steps to ensure the accuracy and quality of the data (Burns, 1989), by following the processes of Parse's research methodology, which have been clearly specified (Parse, 1987, 1990b, 1992, 1995b, 1996b). Dialogical engagements were audiotaped, and the accuracy of the transcriptions was checked through comparison with audiotapes, which were kept until completion of the research.

Ethical rigor. The researcher has discussed the ethical implications of conducting the study, including informing participants of their rights, obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' rights during the study, and obtaining ethical review and approval of the Loyola University Institutional Review Board prior to beginning the research.

Auditability. To ensure auditability, the researcher has reported the decisions made in the transformation of data to the theoretical level, in order that another researcher, following the decision path, would arrive at similar conclusions (Burns, 1989). Evidence of movement up the ladder of
discourse has been provided; also, direct quotes from the original data have been included, in support of the extracted core concepts.

**Analytical Preciseness**

The researcher strove for analytic preciseness by keeping careful records of the decision-making processes regarding the transformations of concrete data across several levels of abstraction (Burns, 1989). This process was monitored by the nurse theorist who created the research method and guided this research. In adherence to this criterion, the resultant theoretical structure fits logically with the data in its entirety (Burns, 1989).

**Theoretical Connectedness**

The researcher has endeavored to ensure that the created theoretical structure is "logically consistent, reflective of the data, and compatible with the knowledge base of nursing" (Burns, 1989, p. 50). Through heuristic interpretation, findings were integrated with the theory of human becoming.

**Heuristic Relevance**

This criterion stipulates that readers should be able "to recognize the phenomenon described in the study, its theoretical significance, its applicability to nursing situations, and its influence in future research activities" (Burns, 1989, p. 51). It has three dimensions: (a) intuitive recognition, (b) relationship to existing body of knowledge, and (c) applicability.
Intuitive recognition. The researcher has attempted to ensure that the theoretical structure derived from the data is personally meaningful to readers, and that its relevance to nursing is readily apparent (Burns, 1989), by providing a description of the phenomenon of interest, and demonstrating the connectedness between the data and interpretive statements.

Relationship to existing body of knowledge. The researcher has reviewed the literature in nursing and other disciplines, and discovered a dearth of knowledge about the lived experience under investigation; however, the researcher's conceptualization of the phenomenon of interest was enhanced by portions of the literature.

Applicability. As required by this criterion, the researcher has discussed the findings of this research study with respect to expansion of the theory of human becoming, implications for further research, and practice guided by the theory (Burns, 1989).

Summary

This research has followed Parse's (1987, 1990b, 1992, 1995b, 1996b) research methodology, a phenomenological-hermeneutical approach rooted in the ontology of the human becoming theory. The method is congruent with the purpose of the research, which was to uncover the structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change. The research processes include participant selection, dialogical engagement,
extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation. Participants were 10 adults who were willing and able to describe their experience of persisting while wanting to change. Standard measures were taken to protect human rights, including informing the participants of their rights, obtaining informed consent, and taking steps to assure anonymity. Every effort has been made to adhere to Burns' (1989) five standards for credibility and rigor in qualitative research.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is the presentation of findings that arose from the dialogical engagements with 10 young or middle-aged adults, including eight women and two men. All eight women chose to relate their experience of persisting while wanting to change in the context of a relationship with a male partner, while the two men chose to describe other situations. One man discussed the phenomenon in relation to his struggle with eating "junk food", and the other described persisting in an unsatisfying job while wanting to change. The structure of the lived experience was discovered by following the processes of Parse's (1987, 1990b, 1992, 1995a, 1996b) phenomenological-hermeneutic method: namely, extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretation. First, the extracted-synthesized essences from each participant's description are presented. These essences contain the essential ideas pertaining to persisting while wanting to change and are stated, first, in the language of the participant, and then, in the language of the researcher. The latter statements convey the meanings contained in the participant's language, at a more abstract level. From the extracted-synthesized essences from each participant's description, a non-directional
proposition is presented, which contains the central meaning of **persisting while wanting to change** for that participant.

Next, the core concepts pertaining to **persisting while wanting to change** are identified. Core concepts are the central ideas contained in the propositions from each and every participant. They are written at the same level of abstraction as the researcher's language in the extracted-synthesized essences, and in the propositional statements. These core concepts have been synthesized to form the structure of the lived experience of **persisting while wanting to change**, which is the main finding of the study, and answers the research question. Finally, in the last section, the core concepts are connected, through heuristic interpretation, with concepts from Parse's theory of human becoming.
Participant One

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. The participant says that for her, persisting while wanting to change was staying in an abusive situation, although it didn’t feel good and she knew it wasn’t right. However, she was always taking care of the kids, and she wanted to teach them to respect and care about people, so she would leave but then go back, afraid of being alone.

2. The participant accepted the predicament with her partner, but she was always wondering how he was going to be. She hates that she gets very angry and wants to hit someone, and she means to work on that and other things, so that she and the kids can have a better life.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Wavering in abiding with the burdensome emerges with solicitude for the cherished.

2. Yielding with the uncertainty of the foreboding evolves with engaging and distancing wrath, as consideration of new possibilities arises with ameliorating intentions.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome amid solicitude for the cherished, while yielding with the uncertainty of the foreboding emerges with engaging and distancing wrath, as consideration of new possibilities arises with ameliorating intentions.
Participant Two

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. The participant says that for her, persisting while wanting to change was struggling between leaving and staying in her marriage. She felt stuck in the situation like a brainwashed prisoner. She never knew how her husband would be. In good times, he gave her attention, but when he was on drugs, he was intimidating. Still, she liked the excitement, and it seemed important to have a father figure in the family, so she let the good overrule the bad, and hoped that she could help him change.

2. The participant says it was scary to think about moving to a shelter. She felt uncomfortable and depressed, because she knew better than to stay. She was getting detached from her family and feels that she lost those years of her life.

Essences: The Researcher's Language

1. Wavering in abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished emerges with ameliorating intentions.

2. Yielding with a foreboding impasse emerges with engaging and distancing intimate affiliations in anticipation of uncertain possibilities, with regret for the relinquished.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise in yielding with a foreboding impasse, while engaging and distancing intimate affiliations in anticipation of uncertain possibilities emerges with regret for the relinquished.
Participant Three

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. The participant says that for her, persisting while wanting to change was staying in an abusive relationship that she knew was not right, believing that she had to suffer the consequences of making a bad choice. Wanting a good lifestyle for her children, and determined to protect them from the pain of divorce, she kept trying, thinking her husband wasn’t all bad and that she could change him.

2. The participant says she settled for a lot less than she wanted and deserved. She felt afraid and pessimistic about what was going to happen if she stayed or left, and didn’t have the confidence or energy to make decisions for change. Feeling ashamed, she isolated herself from family and friends, and having nobody else, she had long conversations with God.

3. The participant says she forgot that she was worthy, capable, and strong; and yet, her faith pushed her to find out how to change things and get fairness for herself. She got tremendous satisfaction and courage from thinking about her good points and achievements, and just getting through the days.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished emerges with ameliorating intentions.

2. Yielding with foreboding uncertainty amid a listless desolation arises with engaging and distancing intimate affiliations.

3. Anticipating new possibilities arises with contemplating uplifting successes.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions emerge in yielding with foreboding uncertainty in a listless desolation, while engaging and distancing intimate affiliations arises with the anticipation of new possibilities, in contemplating uplifting successes.
Participant Four

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. For the participant, persisting while wanting to change was feeling stuck and staying in an abusive relationship when she knew she had to get out. She didn’t want the kids to grow up in that detrimental situation, and she thought her own well-being was important. She wanted something better for herself and her kids.

2. The participant said she never knew when her partner was going to change: It was like having a bomb and not knowing when it was going to explode, and she got horribly low self-esteem and wanted to give up. Still, she believed in herself, but it took time for her to contemplate sacrificing material things, and about how to survive without her partner. It took courage, patience, and strength to keep going.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid solicitude for the cherished emerges with ameliorating intentions.

2. Yielding with foreboding uncertainty amid a listless desolation arises with resolutely engaging and distancing in anticipation of new possibilities.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid solicitude for the cherished, while ameliorating intentions arise in yielding with foreboding uncertainty, as a listless desolation emerges with resolutely engaging and distancing in anticipation of new possibilities.
Participant Five

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. For the participant, persisting while wanting to change was repeatedly leaving and going back to a severely abusive relationship, when she knew that she needed to leave to survive. Still, she wanted to have somebody to love her and she felt familiar with her partner. He gave her good times with the bad times, and she told herself that it was going to get better.

2. The participant said that it was scary and hard to think about starting over with another, and she wasn’t ready to break the tie altogether. She felt lost, incapable of change, and unlike anyone else. But slowly, she figured out what she wanted to do with her life, and met other people. She thinks she will never get back all those years.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Vacillating in abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished arises with yearning for amelioration.

2. Yielding with the foreboding amid a bewildering uncertainty emerges with engaging and distancing affiliations in anticipation of new possibilities, amid regret for the relinquished.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is vacillating in abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as yearning for amelioration arises in yielding with the foreboding in a bewildering uncertainty, while engaging and distancing affiliations in anticipation of new possibilities emerges with regret for the relinquished.
Participant Six

Essences: The Participant's Language

1. For the participant, persisting while wanting to change is continuing, in spite of feeling doubtful and trapped, in a relationship that sucks the life out of her and has had problems since before the marriage. She wants it to be different, and hopes that counselling will help.

2. The participant is reluctant to try uncustomary ways in relationships with her husband and in-laws, lest she be forced into an uncomfortable intimacy, or others would not care about her or would judge her. Still, she struggles not to be overwhelmed by negative feelings, and would like to achieve the self-confidence to change.

3. The participant says that at times, she feels hopeless and lethargic, and she disconnects from people and activities and puts all her energy into the pleasure of being with her son and others.

Essences: The Researcher's Language

1. Irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished arises with yearning for amelioration.

2. Contemplating foreboding possibilities amid bewilderment arises in moving with the anticipation of assurance.

3. Listless desolation emerges with the uplifting enjoyment of engaging and distancing affiliations.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as a yearning for amelioration arises in contemplating foreboding possibilities with bewilderment, while moving with the anticipation of assurance in a listless desolation emerges with the uplifting enjoyment of engaging and distancing affiliations.
Participant Seven

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. For the participant, persisting while wanting to change is an absorbing, continuous struggle between eating and not eating rich junk food. Eating is a consistent sanctuary to which he retreats and although it’s fun when he’s doing it, he is acutely aware that it’s short-lived and isn’t going to give him Nirvana. He wants to go in a different and better direction.

2. The participant says that he feels ashamed and discouraged that he lets his cravings direct him. It’s as though he were scared and holding back from being more intimate with people, and other things. In order to change he will have to try to have a different relationship to himself and things. He keeps working on it, and hopes he can, in his lifetime.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Wavering in abiding with the encumbrance of an illusive, cherished refuge arises with ameliorating intentions.

2. A humiliating yielding with indulgence amid a foreboding uncertainty emerges with regret for the relinquished, while engaging and distancing affiliations in anticipation of new possibilities.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the encumbrance of an illusive, cherished refuge, as ameliorating intentions arise in a humiliating yielding with indulgence amid foreboding uncertainty, while regret for the relinquished emerges with engaging and distancing affiliations in anticipation of new possibilities.
Participant Eight

Essences: The Participant's Language

1. For the participant, persisting while wanting to change was staying in an unhappy marriage against her better judgment, having grown up with the idea of staying with the commitment "for better or worse". She had more children, as if trying to make sure that the marriage would always be. While she put up with "crap", she kept trying to make it better.

2. The participant hated herself and felt like a fool for staying, but she felt too overwhelmed to leave, as she knew what the marriage was like, but she didn't know what was "out there". Although she had resources, she didn't ask for help, because she thought it was her own fault. Still, she kept trying to untangle the ball of yarn, one strand at a time.

Essences: The Researcher's Language

1. Irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished emerges with ameliorating intentions.

2. A humiliating yielding with the bewilderment of foreboding uncertainty emerges with resolute engaging and distancing with anticipation of new possibilities.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise in a humiliating yielding with the bewilderment of foreboding uncertainty, while resolute engaging and distancing emerges with anticipation of new possibilities.
Participant Nine

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. For the participant, persisting while wanting to change was staying in a marriage, even though she and her husband were constantly separating and getting back together, as she was committed to a successful marriage, and wanted to become a good parent. She prided herself on being a very independent, confident person, but her husband wanted her to be subservient, so they made each other miserable. Still, she thought she could make it better.

2. Rather than face the consequences of leaving, the participant kept trying to be true to herself and also meet her husband’s expectations, which created conflict. She couldn’t count on him and didn’t want to involve her family, so she developed more inner strength and focus in her work. It was a very energy-draining struggle, and degrading, as she had to subdue her feelings in order to survive in peace.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. A vacillating abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished emerges with ameliorating intentions.

2. A humiliating yielding with foreboding constraints emerges with the desolation of engaging and distancing affiliations while anticipating possibilities for serenity.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is a vacillating abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise in a humiliating yielding with foreboding constraints, while the desolation of engaging and distancing affiliations emerges with anticipating possibilities for serenity.
Participant Ten

Essences: The Participant’s Language

1. For the participant, persisting while wanting to change was working in a job he didn’t enjoy, with people who made him feel bad inside. He felt trapped and forced to do it, to meet family and financial obligations. Although he did try, he couldn’t find a more creative, challenging job. He wanted something better, but he got comfortable with the dollars.

2. The participant said he just went with the flow, since he thought if he didn’t, things would fall apart. He didn’t have a career plan and didn’t really know what he liked to do; yet he loves children, and thinks maybe he should have gone into teaching. To escape his situation, he invariably went for long walks at lunch time.

Essences: The Researcher’s Language

1. Reluctantly abiding with the burdensome amid contentment with the cherished emerges with ameliorating intentions.

2. Anticipating uncertain possibilities arises with yielding with a bewildering impasse amid regret for the relinquished in engaging and distancing in uplifting diversions.

Proposition

Persisting while wanting to change is reluctantly abiding with the burdensome amid contentment with the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise with anticipating uncertain possibilities, while yielding with a bewildering impasse emerges with regret for the relinquished, in engaging and distancing in uplifting diversions.
Propositional Statements of Participants

1. Persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome amid solicitude for the cherished, while yielding with the uncertainty of the foreboding emerges with engaging and distancing wrath, as consideration of new possibilities arises with ameliorating intentions.

2. Persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise in yielding with a foreboding impasse, while engaging and distancing intimate affiliations in anticipation of uncertain possibilities emerges with regret for the relinquished.

3. Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions emerge in yielding with foreboding uncertainty in a listless desolation, while engaging and distancing intimate affiliations arises with the anticipation of new possibilities, in contemplating uplifting successes.

4. Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid solicitude for the cherished, while ameliorating intentions arise in yielding with foreboding uncertainty, as a listless desolation emerges with resolutely engaging and distancing in anticipation of new possibilities.

5. Persisting while wanting to change is vacillating in abiding with the encumbrance of an illusive, cherished refuge, as ameliorating intentions arise in yielding with the foreboding in a bewildering uncertainty, while regret for the relinquished emerges with engaging and distancing affiliations in anticipation of new possibilities.

6. Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as a yearning for amelioration arises in contemplating foreboding possibilities with bewilderment, while moving with the anticipation of assurance in a listless desolation emerges with the uplifting enjoyment of engaging and distancing affiliations.

7. Persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the encumbrance of an illusive, cherished refuge, as ameliorating intentions arise in a humiliating yielding with indulgence amid foreboding uncertainty, while regret for the relinquished emerges with engaging and distancing affiliations in anticipation of new possibilities.
8. Persisting while wanting to change is irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise in a humiliating yielding with the bewilderment of foreboding uncertainty, while resolute engaging and distancing emerges with anticipation of new possibilities.

9. Persisting while wanting to change is a vacillating abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise in a humiliating yielding with foreboding constraints, while the desolation of engaging and distancing affiliations emerges with anticipating possibilities for serenity.

10. Persisting while wanting to change is reluctantly abiding with the burdensome amid contentment with the cherished, as ameliorating intentions arise with anticipating uncertain possibilities, while yielding with a bewildering impasse emerges with regret for the relinquished, in engaging and distancing in uplifting diversions.
The Lived Experience of
Persisting While Wanting to Change

Core Concepts

- Wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished
- Engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions
- Anticipating the possibilities of the new

Structure of the Lived Experience

The lived experience of persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, as engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new.

Heuristic Interpretation

Heuristic interpretation weaves the emergent structure of the lived experience with the theory of human becoming, through structural integration and conceptual interpretation (Parse, 1987, 1995a). These processes, through progressive abstraction, link persisting while wanting to change with Parse’s theory of human becoming, thereby surfacing new relationships that expand the theory and generate ideas for research and practice (Parse, 1987). Illustrations of the progressive abstraction of the core concepts is provided in Tables 1-4.

Structural Integration

Persisting while wanting to change is confirming-disconfirming the treasured in the ebb and flow of deliberate, easing involvements while envisioning the creation of the will-be.
Conceptual Interpretation

Persisting while wanting to change is valuing the connecting-separating of imaging originating.

Table 1. First Core Concept as Evident in Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept:</th>
<th>Wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Integration:</td>
<td>Confirming-disconfirming the treasured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Concept:</td>
<td>Valuing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant:

1. wavering in abiding with the burdensome amid solicitude for the cherished...
2. wavering in abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished...
3. irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished...
4. irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid solicitude for the cherished...
5. vacillating in abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished...
6. irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished...
7. wavering in abiding with the encumbrance of an illusive, cherished refuge...
8. irresolutely abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished...
9. a vacillating abiding with the burdensome amid the cherished...
10. reluctantly abiding with the burdensome amid contentment with the cherished...
Table 2. Second Core Concept as Evident in Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extracted Concept:</th>
<th>Engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Integration:</td>
<td>The ebb and flow of deliberate, easing involvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Concept:</td>
<td>Connecting-Separating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant:

1. engaging and distancing wrath, with ameliorating intentions...

2. ameliorating intentions arise...while engaging and distancing intimate affiliations...

3. ameliorating intentions emerge...while engaging and distancing intimate affiliations

4. ameliorating intentions arise...resolutely engaging and distancing...

5. yearning for amelioration arises...while engaging and distancing affiliations...

6. yearning for amelioration...engaging and distancing affiliations.

7. ameliorating intentions arise...with engaging and distancing affiliations...

8. ameliorating intentions arise...while resolute engaging and distancing...

9. ameliorating intentions arise...engaging and distancing affiliations...

10. ameliorating intentions arise...while engaging and distancing in uplifting diversions.
Table 3. Third Core Concept as Evident in Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extracted Concept:</th>
<th>Anticipating the possibilities of the new</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Integration:</td>
<td>Envisioning the creation of the will-be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Concept:</td>
<td>Imaging Originating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant:

1. the uncertainty of the foreboding...as consideration of new possibilities arises...

2. the foreboding...in anticipation of uncertain possibilities...

3. foreboding uncertainty...arises with the anticipation of new possibilities, in contemplating uplifting successes.

4. the foreboding uncertainty...in anticipation of new possibilities.

5. a bewilderment uncertainty...in anticipation of new possibilities...

6. contemplating foreboding possibilities with bewilderment, while moving with the anticipation of assurance...

7. foreboding uncertainty...in anticipation of new possibilities.

8. the bewilderment of foreboding uncertainty... anticipation of new possibilities.

9. anticipating possibilities for serenity.

10. anticipating uncertain possibilities.
Table 4. Progressive Abstraction of Core Concepts of Persisting While Wanting to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE CONCEPT</th>
<th>STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL INTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished</td>
<td>Confirming-disconfirming the treasured</td>
<td>Valuing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions</td>
<td>The ebb and flow of deliberate, easing involvements</td>
<td>Connecting-Separating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating the possibilities of the new</td>
<td>Envisioning the creation of the will-be</td>
<td>Imaging Originating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of the Lived Experience. The lived experience of persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, as engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new.

Structural Integration: Persisting while wanting to change is confirming-disconfirming the treasured in the ebb and flow of deliberate, easing involvements while envisioning the creation of the will-be.

Conceptual Interpretation: Persisting while wanting to change is valuing the connecting-separating of imaging originating.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study sought to discover the meaning of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change. Participants were 10 young or middle-aged adults, including eight women and two men. The research question was, "What is the structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change?" It was answered by following the extraction-synthesis processes of Parse's (1987, 1990b, 1995b, 1996b) research methodology. The structure is: Persisting while wanting to change is wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, as engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new. This structure emerged from the propositions obtained from participants' descriptions, which arose through dialogical engagement. It interrelates, in a non-directional statement, three universal ideas, or core concepts, that were discovered in all 10 propositions: wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions, and anticipating the possibilities of the new. In this chapter, each core concept is further discussed in relation to the study's aims: (a) to enhance understanding of the meaning of this paradoxical pattern of health; and (b), to add to the
knowledge base of nursing by expanding and further specifying Parse's theory of human becoming. The structure of persisting while wanting to change is also discussed with respect to the relevant theoretical and research literature, and in relation to health and quality of life.

Wavering in Abiding with the Burdensome-Cherished

The first concept, wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, denotes persisting with that which is burdensome and cherished, all-at-once, while wanting to change. It was evident in the participants' descriptions that persisting while wanting to change pertained to the multidimensional realms of the "burdensome-cherished", with which the participants irresolutely persisted, often with expressions of resignation or regret. Although they wanted to change the burdensome, still, they persisted with it, inasmuch as it was also cherished. Changing was also cherished, but did not have as high a value priority. The complex reality of the burdensome-cherished was metaphorically described, by one participant, as a tangled ball of yarn, seemingly impossible to unravel. Every participant described wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished as feeling "stuck", "trapped", or "paralyzed" in a bewildering impasse that made explicit the notion of wavering in abiding with. At the same time, they indicated that they were aware of what they were doing, and said that they felt responsible, or ashamed; or that they "knew better", or knew that "it wasn't right". They also made wavering efforts to change. Thus, persisting while
wanting to change was experienced as an exhausting, desolating struggle of wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished; and yet, amid the desolation, there was also comfort in persisting with the familiar.

The context of the wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished varied among the participants. All eight women described it in the context of a relationship with a male partner. These relationships were burdensome, in that their partners were abusive, "controlling", or, as one woman stated, "my needs were not being met"; they were burdensome, too, insofar as the women felt constrained by circumstances from changing. However, the women also cherished these relationships, in different ways; for example, they were afraid to be alone, or they believed that it was important to keep their commitment; or they wanted to have a successful marriage, a father figure in the family, or a good lifestyle for their children.

One of the two men who participated described a struggle with eating-not eating rich junk food. Eating junk food was both a cherished sanctuary and a burdensome habit to which he repeatedly returned, even though he wanted to change. For the other man, the burdensome-cherished was an unenjoyable job in which he persisted because he felt obligated, and also, he cherished the money that it provided for his family. Thus, in various contexts, each of the 10 participants described wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished.
Illustrations from the Dialogues

Participant Two said her marriage was "sometimes good", inasmuch as her husband was a "very nice, caring, considerate...nice guy. But as soon as he got on drugs...he would become like Mr. Hyde." Thus, she struggled between leaving and staying, and she would "run the relatives...back and forth." She said that one reason she stayed was to have a "father figure" in the family, which she thought was "the ideal situation", and it was "kind of important to me". She stayed, too, because she "liked the excitement of something always happening", and "the fact that he was dependent on me"; and also, she knew "that he could protect me." She said, "I was stuck in a relationship that I didn’t think I could get out of", and "it was ugly, it was depressing...because it was like, I knew better".

Participant Five said she kept leaving and going back to an abusive partner, because "I just felt lonely. I felt--even though he was beating me, I felt like I was familiar with him--I mean, I knew him." Participant Eight described staying in a marriage in which she was really unhappy. She said, "I really, really did not want to be there, but I did want to be there, because I wanted it to work." She said, "I tried to get out...change, move on in my life, a couple of times"; and yet, she stayed, because of "an accumulation of a hundred things...coming together. They look like a ball of yarn that is so tangled, that pulling that first string to get it done is so--it's like, "I can't!"

And so, as time went on, she got a "victim persona". She felt herself pulled
back to the relationship, "simply because it was what I knew. And what was out here was what I didn’t know." But when things got bad, she would say to herself, "You fool! What are you doing here? You are miserable!" As she explained, "the thing that made me feel the worst was that I was persisting when I knew...it was crazy!"

Participant Seven described his habit of eating rich junk food. As he put it, "there's an acute awareness" of "something that I do, that I know...is detaining my development"; and he feels "discouraged", "sad" and "ashamed" that he hasn't "come through it yet", in spite of all his hard work. However, he said, eating junk food has always been "a real consistent thing. I could always go to it....It's a way that I'm not lonely, when I'm alone." As he explained, "I can retreat to--and forget about it, in my ice cream, and my pizza...so, in a way, it's a sanctuary. But a very short one." He said that it feels "like a real stuck place," as if he were "a magnet...getting stuck to that metal...and getting stuck to it again."

Participant Ten described persisting with a job that he didn't enjoy. He said that he only did it "for the money", since he had "family obligations" and "financial responsibilities." He did try to get another job, but as he said, "as I got on, it became more difficult to change, because you get comfortable, and it's very difficult to replace the dollars that you're getting." And so he persisted in the job, but he was "never really happy", as he felt "trapped", "locked in", and without "any personal freedom".
Connection with Theoretical Concepts

The core concept of wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished was structurally integrated with the theory of human becoming, in more abstract language, as confirming-disconfirming the treasured. Parse (1994) describes "confirming-not confirming...[as] the persistent living of what is treasured and not treasured simultaneously" (p. 18). Since humans are intentional beings, "all that is confirmed-not confirmed is explicitly-tacitly intended" (Parse, 1994, p. 18). Persisting while wanting to change is intrinsically paradoxical, in that there are explicit-tacit intentions to persist and change, all-at-once. The concept, wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, is confirming and disconfirming what is treasured and not treasured all-at-once, in light of other possibles that are desired, but not chosen. Parse (1994) specifies confirming-not confirming as the paradoxical rhythm of valuing. Valuing, a concept from the first principle, is confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs through "choosing, prizing, and acting" (Parse, 1981, p. 45; 1994, 1995b, 1996b).

The concept of valuing is clearly consistent with the first core concept, wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished. The participants in this study wavered between the options of persisting with, and changing the burdensome-cherished, while choosing to view the situation as a bewildering impasse. At the same time, they described a discomforting awareness of responsibility for choosing to persist. Wavering
in abiding with the burdensome-cherished confirmed-disconfirmed the participants' belief in the priority of persisting over changing. Thus, valuing is the first concept in the theoretical structure of persisting while wanting to change.

Engaging-Distancing with Ameliorating Intentions

The second core concept, engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions, denotes a process of moving with and away from relationships with persons, ideas, objects, and situations, while purposing change for the better. All participants described their experience of persisting while wanting to change using words like "uncomfortable", "depressed", "unhappy", "ashamed", or "afraid"; and most of them used the word "better" to describe the change they desired. The diversity of associations with which participants engaged and distanced with ameliorating intentions reflects their uniqueness and individual circumstances. For example, they described engaging-distancing relationships with self, family, friends, God, and daily activities, as they persisted with the burdensome-cherished while wanting to make it better.

Illustrations from the Dialogues

Participant Two said that while she persisted in an abusive relationship, she would "run the relatives", whom she described as welcoming, strong, positive people. However, she felt herself "getting
detached from family", since she "would feel uncomfortable after a while."
As she explained, "I knew my family was basically shaking their heads,
saying, 'Why is this girl--?' I mean, asking themselves the same question I
was asking myself, 'Why is she letting him--why is she in that situation?"'
And so, she would go back to her own place, where she could do what she
wanted; but there, she felt like a "brainwashed prisoner of war".

Participant Three described her experience of staying in an abusive
relationship, thinking that her husband "wasn't all bad" and that she could
"fix that by what I do". However, she felt "isolated and depressed", because
she couldn't talk to her family about how she felt, without "exposing" a
situation about which she "was ashamed". However, the "religious aspect" of
her faith pushed her to talk "somebody that's not going to tell, or that you
don't have to face." And in "long conversations with God", she asked God to
show her how to "live better than this. Because in the back of my mind", she
said, "I knew I had the strength...I was gonna get out. I was gonna change
this."

Participant Six recounted her experience of staying in a marriage
relationship, while "wanting it to be different". She tried to "come up with
some solutions" to the problems, and appealed to her husband to change,
but he didn't. She said that staying in the relationship "sucks the life out of
me", and she goes into "a depressing sort of shutting down", in which she
starts "to disconnect from life, people, activities." Instead, she said, "I just
tend to put all my energy" into taking "whatever pleasures are there, daily, being with my son, or other relationships", in order to keep going "in a situation that's not what I would have liked for my life."

In Participant Ten's account of persisting for years in a job he didn't enjoy, he said there were times that he tried to get another job, and he once had a job offer, but "it really wasn't challenging, or creative", and so he stayed in the job. However, he felt "thrown into a work situation" with people with whom he would rather not have associated. Nevertheless, he said, "the freedom would come, like at lunch time, I would just go for long walks, by myself...and I would escape those other people".

Connection with Theoretical Concepts

This second core concept, engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions, was structurally integrated with the theory of human becoming, in more abstract language, as the ebb and flow of deliberate, easing involvements. This conceptualization describes rhythmical patterns of deliberately moving with and away from others and the universe, with the explicit-tacit purpose of easing the unease of persisting while wanting to change. The ebb and flow rhythm of moving with and away from associations relates to the concept of connecting-separating, from the second principle of Parse's theory. Connecting-separating is a paradoxical, rhythmical pattern of relating which consists in apparent opposites that are "dimensions of one phenomenon....[It is] moving together and apart all-at-
once...in the rhythmical flow of cocreation...with the universe" (Parse, 1995b, p. 7).

Connecting-separating is congruent with the core concept, engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions. In the participants' descriptions of their experience of persisting while wanting to change, connecting-separating was a clearly evident pattern of relating, in which they simultaneously moved with and apart from others and the universe, in the ebb and flow rhythm of deliberate, easing involvements. Thus, connecting-separating is the second concept in the theoretical structure of persisting while wanting to change.

Anticipating the Possibilities of the New

The third core concept is anticipating possibilities of the new. It emerged from participants' descriptions of considering the possibilities in persisting and also, in changing. Many of the participants described the immediacy of the experience of persisting while wanting to change; it was very much in their awareness, and several commented that they "lived it day-by-day". Persisting while wanting to change was fraught with the foreboding of certain and uncertain consequences of persisting and changing. Persisting with the known was comfortably familiar even though foreboding; and changing, although desired and intended, meant contemplating risking with the uncertain. Thus, participants anticipated and
hoped for new ways of becoming, yet they felt overwhelmed with the idea of changing, or unsure about how to proceed.

Illustrations from the Dialogues

As Participant Seven described *anticipating possibilities of the new*, persisting while wanting to change was "a holding back [to avoid] the doors that I’m inevitably heading towards", as if he were "scared of the things that would be part of a whole man’s life." Yet, he said, "There’s lots of things I know I could do, to manifest things that I want to do in my life...that really feel better and healthier". Comparing himself to a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, the participant mused that he would have to "push towards" having "a different relationship" to himself and "really strong and powerful [things]," in order "to go in the direction that I know is towards the light". "In my lifetime", he said, "I hope that I come to terms with it". Thus, the participant envisioned new ways that he hoped and desired to become, but he held back, afraid of the uncertain possibilities beyond "the doors" that he was approaching.

For Participant Four, persisting while wanting to change was staying in an abusive relationship even though she wanted to leave. "It’s frightening", she said, "because you never know when he was gonna change....It’s like having a bomb and not knowing when it’s going to blow up and explode". Although she knew she had to get out for her own and the children’s benefit, still, she had to "map out how", which took time for her to
"contemplate". She explained, "You have to be willing to just--make sacrifices. I mean, your kids and your well-being and your health is more important than any material things." She wanted "to change for the better", but it "scared" her to think about "How am I gonna do this?....How am I gonna survive without him?" Thus, for this participant, anticipating possibilities of the new involved the foreboding expectation of the imminent consequences of persisting in an abusive relationship, and also, the daunting contemplation of finding new ways of living without her partner.

Participant Six described persisting in marriage and in-law relationships that she wanted "to be different". For her, anticipating possibilities of the new involved contemplating, with hope and foreboding, changing the familiar to unfamiliar new ways of relating. As she observed, she knew "how to yell and scream and criticize", but if things were to change, she said, "it would put us in an another place, an unfamiliar place in our relationship, that would force us into an emotional intimacy that I may not ...be that comfortable with". To be different would mean, "you kind of have to make yourself vulnerable...[and that's] very frightening." And although she considered telling others what her needs were, she was afraid to "take the chance on them...either not caring what my need is, not wanting to help me, or judging me for having the need, you know, or criticizing me". Still, she said, counselling gave her "new hopes" for "moving ahead" with her situation.
Connection with Theoretical Concepts

The third core concept, *anticipating possibilities of the new*, was structurally integrated with the theory of human becoming, in more abstract language, as *envisioning the creation of the will-be*. This conceptualization indicates the picturing of possibles yet to be invented and lived. All participants described, with hope and foreboding, the possibles that they envisioned in persisting while wanting to change. The envisioned possibles were the considered options and consequences of choosing, and also, the unspoken possibles that were present to prearticulate awareness. In envisioning the possibles in persisting and changing, the participants were already moving with creating the will-be. The envisioned creation of the will-be became actual in the day-to-day living of persisting while wanting to change; each day, the participants chose anew their own ways of becoming.

*Envisioning the creation of the will-be* was conceptually interpreted as *imaging originating*, concepts from the first and third principles, respectively, of Parse's theory. Imaging is the creating of personal reality, at reflective and prereflective realms of awareness; it is the explicit-tacit knowing that "structures the meaning of an experience" (Parse, 1981, p. 42). Originating is "choosing a particular way of self-emergence through inventing unique ways of living" (Parse, 1981, p. 60). Certainty-uncertainty is a paradoxical rhythm of originating, and is "the all-at-once being sure and unsure of the outcomes of decisions" (Parse, 1994, p. 18).
The participants in this study made real the experience of persisting while wanting to change through *imaging*, wherein they shaped, with explicit-tacit knowing, the meaning of the experience. They were *originating* unique ways of self-emergence, while moving with imaged certain-uncertain possibilities in persisting-changing. Together, the concepts, *imaging* *originating*, are congruent with the core concept, *anticipating possibilities of the new*, and thus, are the third and fourth concepts in the theoretical structure of persisting while wanting to change.

The Findings in Relation to the Principles of Parse’s Theory

The first principle of Parse’s theory of human becoming states:

"Structuring meaning multidimensionally is cocreating reality through the languaging of valuing and imaging" (Parse, 1981, p. 42). The participants in this study multidimensionally structured the meaning of persisting while wanting to change as they lived the chosen option of persisting, thereby cocreating personal reality. In the preceding discussion, the first and third core concepts of the findings, *wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished*, and *anticipating possibilities of the new*, were interpretively linked with the theoretical concepts of *valuing* and *imaging*, respectively. Thus, the findings of this study specify the meaning of valuing and imaging for persons who are persisting while wanting to change, and expand the meaning of the first principle.
Languaging, the third concept of the first principle, specifies the cocreation of meaning through expressing personal reality in rhythms of speaking-being silent and moving-being still (Parse, 1994). While languaging was not linked with an emergent core concept of the findings, it was evident during the dialogical engagements with participants, as they described the meaning of their lived experiences of persisting while wanting to change. The participants' choice of words, gestures, and tone of voice languaged the multidimensional meaning of a paradoxical experience that they acknowledged to be perplexing.

The second principle of Parse's theory is: "Cocreating rhythmical patterns of relating is living the paradoxical unity of revealing-concealing and enabling-limiting while connecting-separating" (Parse, 1981, p. 50). These unitary, rhythmical patterns of relating are simultaneous processes in multidimensional living experiences (Parse, 1994). Each concept was implicit in the participants' descriptions of persisting while wanting to change; however, as previously discussed, the foremost pattern that emerged was in the second core concept, engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions, which is conceptually related to the concept of connecting-separating. Thus, the study findings contribute further understanding about this paradoxical rhythm of relating.

Revealing-concealing, the first concept of the second principle, is the all-at-once disclosing and hiding of who one is at the moment (Parse, 1994).
In this study, it appeared in participants' descriptions as they engaged and distanced with ameliorating intentions. For example, a number of participants said that they distanced themselves from close affiliations to hide from them what was happening, as they felt ashamed. Also, since one cannot ever completely show who one is (Parse, 1994), participants revealed and concealed the meaning of their experiences in dialogical engagements with the researcher.

Enabling-limiting is the second concept of the second principle. It specifies the opportunities and limitations that emerge in the process of moving with choices in the process of becoming. In this study, enabling-limiting surfaced as participants yielded with the bewildering impasse of the burdensome-cherished in the process of engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions. Participants often expressed regret for relinquished opportunities and affiliations in persisting while wanting to change; for example, one woman who had persisted in an abusive relationship said she felt "cheated out of a lot of enjoyment", and others said that they had lost those years of their lives. A number of participants regretted distancing from family, friends, and other cherished affiliations. Some also expressed appreciation for cherished affiliations and uplifting enjoyments that emerged with persisting while wanting to change, enabling them to go on with strength and courage.
The third principle of the theory is: "Cotranscending with the possibles is powering unique ways of originating in the process of transforming" (Parse, 1981, p. 55). It specifies the human's continuous emerging with diversity in mutual process with the universe, which is becoming. As discussed earlier, the third core concept, *anticipating possibilities of the new*, is conceptually linked to the second concept, *originating*. The participant's descriptions of persisting while wanting to change enhance understanding about the meaning of originating.

Powering is the first concept of the third principle. It is the pushing-resisting force that "enlivens the ebb and flow of life" (Parse, 1994, p. 18). Powering amid persisting while wanting to change was described by participants in this study as a pushing ahead with faith, hope, strength, and courage, while yielding with the bewildering impasse of the burdensome-cherished. The third concept, transforming, "is the changing of change" (Parse, 1981, p. 62), in which the unfamiliar shifts to the familiar, "as people, ideas, objects and situations are viewed in a new light" (Parse, 1994, p. 18). Seven participants described persisting while wanting to change from the vantage point of having moved with changing. Transforming was not in the foreground in their descriptions of the experience as it was happening; however, a number of participants offered new insights that arose while they reflected on the experience, such as, to never again be isolated from friends, or that material things were not as
important as their happiness or well-being, or to always be true to self. Therefore, as the rhythm of persisting while wanting to change shifts from persisting to changing, transforming may emerge as a central concept.

The Findings in Relation to the Relevant Literature

In this section, the findings from this study are discussed in relation to theoretical and research literature that is relevant to persisting while wanting to change. The discussion begins with selected theoretical views.

Related Theoretical Views

In Chapter II, the philosophical and religious literature was explored with respect to the phenomenon of interest. There, a Biblical passage was cited, in which the apostle Paul describes persisting in doing that which he would not, and in not doing that which he would. He introduces the passage by saying, "that which I do I understand not", and ends it with the exclamation, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" (New Scofield Study Bible, 1967, Romans 7: 15, 19). Nearly 2000 years later, the participants in this study echoed similar comments about their experience of persisting while wanting to change, which attests to the universality of this phenomenon in human experience. The bewilderment they shared with Paul perhaps ensues from the intrinsic paradox of knowingly persisting when one's intention is to change. This study, however, presents a different interpretation of this paradox from that of Paul's theological perspective, in which it was viewed
as a battle between the believer's "old" and "new" natures, or the desire to do evil and the will to do good. Participants' descriptions of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change, interpreted from the human becoming nursing perspective, surfaced the structure: wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, as engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new. Thus, the participants' struggle between the options of persisting and changing unfolded as wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished.

As established in Chapter II, portions of the literature from Eastern philosophies, and existential psychology and phenomenology, present views of persisting and changing that are consistent with the researcher's human becoming nursing perspective. A fundamental assumption in this literature was that humans are intentional, unitary beings, open and present to the world, and that human experience is multidimensional, having a multiplicity of meanings (Giorgi, 1970; Heidegger, 1926/1962; Kreyche, 1983; May, 1981; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1995). As described by participants in this study, persisting while wanting to change is a unitary experience, unfolding all-at-once at many realms, in interrelationship with others and the universe; participants did not partition their lived experiences into traditional categories, such as psychological, spiritual, or social. In relating the meanings of their experiences, participants were aware of opposing intentions to persist and change; this quintessential intentionality, residing in
the multidimensional, chosen meanings of the situation, was at the crux of 
wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished. That humans are 
intricately and knowingly involved with the world surfaced in participants' 
descriptions as engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions.

Similar to the ontology of Parse's human becoming theory, Taoism 
and Buddhism consider change as the matrix of present, future, and past, 
continuously unfolding in the seamless process of experienced reality 
(Jacobson, 1983; Lee, 1994; Rawson & Legeza, 1973). Persisting while 
wanting to change unfolded as the all-at-once experience of what was, and 
is, amid anticipating the possibilities of the new. Some participants had 
moved beyond the experience, but they could give an account of it, as it 
was appearing in the moment.

The findings of this study are consistent with the ontological 
perspective of persisting-changing as a paradoxical, unitary phenomenon, 
as explicated by a number of authors writing on Eastern philosophies 
(Cooper, 1981; Jacobson, 1983; Lee, 1994; Rawson & Legeza, 1973; 
Wilhelm, 1973), existential psychology and phenomenology (Giorgi, 1968, 
1970; May, 1973, 1981), and psychotherapy (Mahoney, 1991; Watzlawick et 
al., 1967; Watzlawick et al., 1974). In this literature, change was considered 
to be a foundational reality, wherein persisting, or non-change, attains 
meaning (Cooper, 1981, Giorgi, 1968; Jacobson, 1983; Lee, 1994). Thus, 
without the fundamental understanding of human life as a changing,
evolving process, the idea of persisting has no meaning. It was evident in the participants’ descriptions of persisting while wanting to change that awareness of persisting became meaningful in light of wanting to change.

Also consistent with the researcher’s human becoming perspective and the findings of this study, is the notion that human freedom and changing are fundamentally related, as affirmed by a number of authors (de Beauvoir, 1948/1968; Ferguson, 1980; Jacobson, 1983; Kreyche, 1983; May, 1981; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1995; Watzlawick et al., 1967; Watzlawick et al., 1974). Some authors posit that human freedom, and hence, change, are inherently ambiguous, in that every passing moment presents opportunities to create anew (de Beauvoir, 1948/1968; Jacobson, 1983; Kreyche, 1983; May, 1981). The participants in this study freely chose personal meaning in their experience of persisting while wanting to change. While wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, they considered the possibilities in persisting and changing, and chose to persist. This choosing was fraught with ambiguity, as the participants knew they could change, but chose the meaning of the situation as being stuck or trapped in a bewildering impasse, while engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions. For example, one man persisted in a job that he didn’t enjoy and said that he didn’t have "any personal freedom"; yet, paradoxically, "the freedom would come at lunch time", when he would go for long walks by himself, to escape the unwanted company of his colleagues. Participants
also confronted the ambiguity of creating the not-yet, while *anticipating the possibilities of the new* amid hope and foreboding.

The findings of this research have provided a beginning knowledge base on the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change as a complex, multidimensional, and chosen way of becoming. This differs from theoretical perspectives that view similar phenomena as static in nature, and potentially pathologic; for example, Peterson (1987) described the psychoanalytic concept of ambivalence as an "intractable block which can preclude choice and paralyze action" (p. 91). The participants in this study moved with the choice to persist, while wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished amid a desolating struggle, yet they anticipated the possibilities of the new with strength, courage, and determination. This view is very different from the transtheoretical "stages of change" model, which posits a linear process of movement through the stages of precontemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance (Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992).

Mahoney (1991), a psychotherapist, describes a view of the change process that is more similar to the findings of this study. He describes an "oscillative dynamics in the process of change", which involves "conflicts, tensions and (in one form or another) resistance" (p. 332). He compares the "oscillative tensions in experience" to the yin and yang of Eastern philosophy; the dialectics of Socrates, Plato, Hegel, and Marx; and other
interpretations in the literatures of various fields. Mahoney uses the metaphor of "expansions and contractions" to describe the oscillative dynamic of the change experience. The idea of an oscillative dynamic is somewhat similar to an emergent core concept in this study, \textit{wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished}; but it is also different, in that Mahoney portrays expansion-contraction as having two dimensions, active and passive. In contrast, \textit{wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished} is lived multidimensionally. Moreover, the findings do not support active and passive dimensions of the lived experience, in that awareness of choosing was implicit throughout the participants' descriptions.

Thus far, the discussion has related the structure of persisting while wanting to change to relevant theoretical literature, which has added further depth to the meaning of \textit{wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished}, as \textit{engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new}. In the next section, the findings are discussed in relation to the relevant research literature.

\textbf{Related Research}

In Chapter II, it was noted that although much research has been conducted on intentional change, little has been done on persisting, virtually none of which is pertinent to the current research. One study of midcareer crisis, carried out by counseling psychologists, Perosa and Perosa (1983), included one group of "persisters" (\(n = 45\)), who wanted to change careers
but were persisting in their present vocations. An "affective stages of transition" model, and a decision-making model guided the researchers, who used a structured interview approach. Findings indicated that those who persisted "tended to minimize the psychological risk to themselves if they remained" (p. 77), fearing that the risk in changing was greater; thus, "they avoided seriously testing options or became immobilized" (78). The findings of the current study of persisting while wanting to change present a somewhat different understanding. Considering the risk of changing was evident in anticipating the possibilities of the new, and yet, participants also hoped for change. Moreover, while the bewildering impasse of wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished can be viewed like the notion of immobilization, it is not exactly the same, in that it was not merely avoiding the risk of changing; it also involved living a value that had greater priority at the moment, in the paradoxical rhythm of engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions.

In Chapter II, a number of research studies focusing on intentional change were discussed. Some studies (Campanelli, 1990; Deci & Flaste, 1995) evaluated the change process of persons in programs designed to facilitate change. Norcross et al. (1989) tracked the progress of 213 adults who had made New Year's resolutions concerning smoking cessation, weight loss, relationship improvements, alcohol consumptions, and other concerns. Interestingly, desire to change was unrelated to success or failure
of the resolution, nor did its success or failure effect future self-change plans. Likewise, in the current research, a number of participants had persisted for years, while wanting to change. Thus, changing health patterns appears to be an ongoing struggle for many persons, which further supports the universality of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change.

Psychologists Deci and Flaste (1995) have accumulated a body of research on human motivation for behavioral change, conducted over two decades. Their basic assumption is that autonomy and responsibility are essential to healthy behavior. They have concluded that changing "self-destructive behavior" is successful only when persons are deeply and personally committed to change. Similarly, in this researcher's human becoming perspective, changing one's health is a personal commitment. The participants in the current research study attested that they made repeated attempts to change, but they wavered in abiding with the burdensome-cherished. As one woman related, she kept going back to an abusive relationship, since she was not ready to break the tie altogether. This researcher concurs with Deci and Flaste that the choice to change is up to the person, but differs with their recommendations for "promoting healthy behavior", since the researcher believes that persons choose and live their values, and only the person can change his or her health and quality of life.
Also relevant to the current research is a study by Campanelli (1990), which examined the process of intentional change for 15 adults undergoing group counselling. The primary source of data was the participants' personal journals. A transactional analysis frame of reference guided data analysis. Regarding the participants who persisted in patterns of behavior that they wanted to change, Campanelli identified 14 sources of resistance to change, including, for example, passivity, grandiosity, lack of will, distrust of self/environment/others, and distorted thinking (p. 187). Campanelli suggested that these individuals "have habitually returned to limited ways of thinking and behaving because they have listened to beliefs that were formed from past experiences"; hence, their lives were shaped by "habit, not reason" (p. 223).

In the present research, the new understanding about persisting while wanting to change as a process of becoming is very different than Campanelli's (1990) focus on limitations. For example, *wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished*, rather than being a limited way of thinking and behaving, is viewed as a way of living one's value priority. *Engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions* describes the participants' rhythmical patterns of relating with and apart from others and the universe, which emerged with *anticipating the possibilities of the new*.

Selected research studies on women who persist in abusive relationships were also reviewed in Chapter II. In the current research,
seven of the eight women who participated described persisting while wanting to change in the context of an abusive relationship; however, this research differs in theoretical perspective, purpose, and methodological approach. For example, one of the studies mentioned tested the traumatic bonding theory of abusive relationships (Dutton & Painter, 1993); two others used a survey approach to develop a profile of the women, and to identify factors related to changing an abusive situation (Horton & Johnson, 1993; Strube & Barbour, 1983). Also, the nurse researchers, Marden and Rice (1995), explored how women cope in abusive relationships, using a focus group approach. The current research generated a meaning structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change, by interrelating three core concepts from all 10 participants' descriptions. One similarity of this finding with those of the Marden and Rice study is that a number of participants spoke about hoping for change, which was captured in the core concept, *anticipating the possibilities of the new*. However, Marden and Rice interpreted participants' descriptions of hope as a dimension of coping.

Nursing research that has examined the changing of health behavior has focused on isolating factors, rather than the meaning of lived experiences; for example, Higgins et al. (1994) identified areas of change for 115 pregnant patients, and Price (1992) identified factors associated with success in quitting smoking for 47 patients who had survived a myocardial infarction. Fleury (1991) used a grounded theory approach to identify the
basic social process of persons who were trying to modify cardiac risk factors. None of these studies were guided by a nursing theoretical perspective; thus, they have not contributed unique nursing knowledge about the process of changing health patterns.

A growing body of research guided by the human becoming theory has generated an understanding about the participative experience of health and quality of life from this uniquely nursing perspective. The current study is the first to explore the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change. However, as mentioned in Chapter II, several studies have focused on similar phenomena. Kraynie (1985) used the Giorgi phenomenological method to investigate persisting in change for two professional women. While a theoretical structure is not created in using this methodology, the following extract from the resultant general structural description is very similar to the finding of the present study:

The individual experiences turmoil in the ambiguity and conflict of the situation in which there is a certain feeling of being bound or trapped. As the individual chooses anew from among possible alternatives, the struggle to stay with that choice unfolds.

In the powering that is lived in the choosing of the valued alternatives and persisting with that choice even though it is difficult, the individual lives a rhythmical pattern of certainty-uncertainty, experiences feelings of aloneness and helplessness and of being sure of the rightness of the choice all at once. (p. 64)

In the present study, the participants also related that they felt trapped, as they struggled between the options of persisting and changing while wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished. They also described
the certain-uncertain consequences of persisting and changing, while *anticipating the possibilities of the new*. A difference is that in the present study, participants described persisting even though they knew better, or that it wasn't right. However, in the Kraynie study, participants were "sure of the rightness" of their choice to change, as they powered with choosing and living the valued alternative.

In the present research, the core concept, *wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished*, was structurally integrated with the theory as *confirming-disconfirming the treasured*, which was interpreted as *valuing*. Other studies guided by Parse's theory and research methodology have investigated other phenomena related to struggling with change, and the findings have consistently been interpretively linked with the concept of valuing. For example, Kelley (1991) investigated the lived experience of struggling with going along when you do not believe, for eight elderly volunteers in various community organizations. Smith's (1990) research was an inquiry into the lived experience of struggling through a difficult time for 10 unemployed persons. Allchin-Petardi (1996) explored persevering through a difficult time for eight women who had undergone treatment for ovarian cancer. Other studies have examined the lived experience of grieving with various groups (Cody, 1991, 1995; Pilkington, 1993), and the lived experience of considering tomorrow, for home-less women (Bunkers,
1996). In each of these studies, confirming one's value priorities by choosing and acting was essential to the process of changing health.

An important pattern of relating for participants in a number of these studies involved being with and apart from others at many realms, all-at-once, which the researchers interpretively linked with the concept, connecting-separating (Allchin-Petardi, 1996; Bunkers, 1996; Cody, 1991, 1995; Pilkington, 1993). Thus, connecting-separating seems to be an important rhythm during life transitions. In the current study, connecting-separating specified a paradoxical pattern of engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions, as participants wavered between persisting and changing, while abiding with the burdensome-cherished.

In several of these studies, the concept, originating, was chosen to specify ways the participants cotranscended with the possibles. For example, Cody (1992, 1995) investigated the lived experience of grieving for families living with AIDS; one core concept was possibilities emerging with ambiguity, which he interpreted as originating. In Bunkers' (1996) study of the lived experience of considering tomorrow for home-less women, resilient endurance amidst disturbing unsureness was interpretively linked with originating. These findings bear resemblance to a core concept from the current research, anticipating the possibilities of the new, which specified participants' descriptions of the ambiguous, sure-unsure possibilities in choosing among the options of persisting and changing. Like the women in
Bunkers’ study, participants in this research also spoke of carrying on with strength and determination, amid the desolating struggle of wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished.

In this section, the structure of persisting while wanting to change was discussed with respect to the relevant theoretical and research literature. In the next section, the discussion will explicate the findings in relation to health and quality of life, which are essential concerns to the discipline of nursing, especially from the human becoming perspective.

Persisting While Wanting to Change, Health, and Quality of Life

From the human becoming perspective, health is the unitary human’s experience of becoming, in mutual process with the universe (Parse, 1981, 1992). Parse (1990a, 1994) has further elaborated health as a personal commitment, and quality of life. It is the meaning one chooses, reflectively and prereflectively, in living rhythmical patterns of relating with the universe (Parse, 1990a). "The person participates in choosing from options at all levels of the universe, thus making clear value priorities, that is the personal commitment" (Parse, 1990a, p. 137). Thus, health is choosing and living one’s values priorities. One can choose to stay with one’s personal commitment, "or change the commitment by changing the meaning of a situation, thus, changing health" (Parse, 1990a, p. 138). The lived experiences that one participates in creating "incarnate quality of life"
Here, quality means the substance of what is experienced, which can only be known by the person living the life (Parse, 1994). One's quality of life is experienced from moment to moment, in living paradoxical rhythms multidimensionally, all-at-once (Parse, 1994, 1995b).

*Persisting while wanting to change*, as described by the participants in this study, is a paradoxical pattern of health, and a chosen way of becoming; it is not a static phenomenon, wherein one remains the same. The participants described persisting while wanting to change as a perplexing reality which they had lived day-by-day, for years. They chose anew, each moment, each day, their way of becoming, with an expanded repertoire of experience. Pivotal to their descriptions of *persisting while wanting to change* were the chosen meanings of *persisting*, in light of recognized possibilities, desires, and intentions for *changing*, which incarnated their quality of life.

The structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change as *wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished*, as *engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new*, enhances understanding of health and quality of life, from the human becoming perspective. For the participants, *wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished* surfaced as a desolating, energy-draining struggle, which involved yielding amid shame, resignation, and bewilderment, with various constraints that they believed prevented them
from making desired changes; and too, there was comfort in abiding with the familiar burdensome-cherished. As participants wavered between the options of persisting and changing, they carved out their quality of life. This core concept specifies the intense struggle of choosing among prized options, in the process of valuing; as such, it is integral to the struggle that persons may experience in venturing to change a personal commitment, thus changing health.

Wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished emerged with the ebb and flow rhythm of engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions amid desolating bewilderment. A dimension of quality of life that was important to participants' descriptions of day-to-day living was engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions. It appeared as an all-at-once rhythm of moving with and apart from relationships with themselves, family, friends, colleagues, and daily activities, while easing the unease and pushing for a better quality of life.

Even though they persisted, participants knew that they could change, and they continued with strength, courage, and determination, anticipating the possibilities of the new. They anticipated new possibilities with hope and foreboding all-at-once, in light of the envisioned consequences, certain and uncertain, of persisting and changing. In contemplating changing, participants envisioned themselves living a peaceful, happy life in relationships with others; however, changing from
familiar to unfamiliar health patterns was a frightening prospect, though appealing, in light of wanting a better quality of life.

Persisting while wanting to change is a paradoxical struggle between changing-not changing one's personal commitment to live health patterns. Parse (1990a) has suggested three ways of changing one's personal commitment "by changing the meaning of a situation, thus changing health" (p. 138): creative imaging, affirming self, and spontaneous glimpsing of the paradoxical. For the participants in this study, imaging was integral to creating unique ways of becoming, which is originating. A number of participants described persisting while wanting to change, having already moved through the experience by changing their personal commitment. Describing their experience as it was appearing in the now moment, these participants related ways that they imagined themselves changing, and ways that they affirmed themselves by focusing on their strengths and successful endeavors. Moreover, a number of participants mused on the inherent paradox of persisting while wanting to change, commenting that they were still searching to understand, "Why?"

The findings of this study enhance understanding of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change, and also, expand the theoretical concepts, thus adding to the knowledge base of the theory of human becoming in relation to health and quality of life. The final chapter
will address conclusions, recommendations, and the researcher's reflections on this study.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, REFLECTIONS

This research study explored the paradoxical health phenomenon of *persisting while wanting to change*, a concept created by the researcher, and thus, hitherto unexamined. The researcher was guided by Parse's (1981, 1992, 1995a) theory of human becoming in both the conceptualization of the phenomenon, and the research methodology. The purposes of the study were to generate the structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change, and to advance nursing science by expanding Parse's theory. In this chapter, conclusions are presented in relation to these purposes, and recommendations are posited for future research and nursing practice guided by the theory. Finally, reflections on the study are offered.

**Conclusions**

The research participants were 10 young and middle-aged adults, who described their experiences of persisting while wanting to change. Three core concepts, universal to all 10 participants' descriptions, were linked to create the structure: The lived experience of persisting while wanting to change is *wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished,*
as engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions arises with anticipating the possibilities of the new. This structure was the central finding of the study, and fulfilled its main purpose. It was discussed in relation to participant’s descriptions, the concepts and principles of the human becoming theory, and the relevant theoretical and research literature. The findings were also discussed in relation to health and quality of life, thus enhancing understanding about health as a personal commitment and a process of becoming.

Parse’s theory of human becoming provided the foundation for the researcher’s horizon of understanding, beginning with the underpinning assumptions about the human-universe-health process, and extending to the conceptualization of the phenomenon of interest. It also provided the phenomenologic-hermeneutic research methodology which guided the researcher in generating the meaning structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change. The findings have contributed new knowledge about a previously unexplored phenomenon that is significant to nursing, as a way of living health. They have also added to the growing knowledge base about paradoxical rhythms in lived experiences of health, others being restriction-freedom (Mitchell, 1992, 1995), and joy-sorrow (Parse, in press).

Quality of life for persons living the experience of persisting while wanting to change is incarnated in the multidimensional reality of wavering
in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, which confirms one's personal commitment to persist rather than change. It is lived day-to-day as the paradoxical rhythm of engaging-distancing with ameliorating intentions, while moving beyond in anticipating the possibilities of the new in the process of becoming. This new knowledge has expanded Parse’s theory, and thus, contributed to the scientific base of nursing.

Recommendations

The goal of research with qualitative methods in general, and Parse’s human becoming methodology in particular, is to enhance understanding about lived experiences of health, and to generate ideas for further research, thereby advancing the science of nursing. Another important objective was to contribute to persons’ quality of life through nursing practice guided by the expanded knowledge of the human becoming theory. In the following section, recommendations are offered for future research, and for nursing practice.

Future Research

This research study created a structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change from the descriptions of eight women and two men. More inquiry into the phenomenon is needed. The eight women chose to describe their experience in the context of a relationship; and seven of these described the relationship as abusive. Studies conducted
with various persons, in relation to different contexts, may ensue with
different concepts that contribute further knowledge and understanding. For
example, persisting while wanting to change could be studied with persons
attending community health centers, hospital outpatient services, and self-
help organizations; and with persons in workplaces, through employee
health programs. Individuals who are struggling with changing health
patterns, for example, in relation to eating, exercise, relationships, and
alcohol or other substance use, may be especially immersed in the
experience.

The structure of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to
change was created by linking three core concepts, each of which could
kindle ideas for further inquiry into related phenomena. These phenomena
would need to be universal lived experiences, stated in ways that any
person could speak about them. The first core concept, wavering in abiding
with the burdensome-cherished, was linked to the theoretical concept of
valuing. It could lead to related studies on the lived experiences of: (a)
struggling to change a familiar but burdensome situation, (b) struggling with
a difficult choice, or (c) feeling pulled in different directions.

The second core concept, engaging-distancing with ameliorating
intentions, was related to moving with and apart from involvements with
others, activities, and situations while trying to make things better. It was
linked to the theoretical concept of connecting-separating. Studies could be
launched on the lived experience of trying to make life better, with and apart from others; or trying to make life better through involvements and noninvolvements.

The third core concept, anticipating the possibilities of the new, concerns picturing the consequences of choosing to persist and change, with both hope and foreboding. It is linked with the theoretical concepts of imaging originating. Related phenomena for further research might be the lived experiences of anticipating trying something yearned for, or considering living differently. Research on such phenomena could use creative ways of engaging persons in imagining ways they would like to change; for example, through poetry, art, music, or dance.

Recommendations for Practice

With qualitative research, there is no intent to generalize findings to populations, as it would be impossible to predict how persons will experience a health phenomenon. Rather, the aim of this research was to enhance understanding of the meaning of the lived experience of persisting while wanting to change. The ontology of the human becoming theory is one in which persons are assumed to be creative authors who participate in creating their health by choosing and living values. Therefore, enhanced understanding is not merely knowledge to be applied as a tool in interventions to change persons or their environment. Rather, the significance of enhanced understanding for nursing practice is that it
changes the way nurses think about persons, and hence, how they are present with them. The mode of practice, in this perspective, is true presence, lived in the all-at-once dimensions and processes of the nurse-person process: illuminating meaning, synchronizing rhythms, and mobilizing transcendence (Parse, 1987, 1992, 1996b).

A deepened understanding of the meaning of persisting while wanting to change can broaden nurses’ horizons, engendering a new sensitivity and respect for the dignity of persons living this experience. A heightened awareness can open the nurse to bear witness to the struggle of wavering in abiding with the burdensome-cherished, and guide the nurse to move with the person’s rhythms. A number of participants in this study commented that they felt ashamed or embarrassed about persisting while wanting to change, and thus avoided family and friends, rather than expose what was happening and face others’ censure. In the nurse’s non-judgmental, loving true presence, persons can, if they choose, illuminate the meaning of their situation by explicating what it is like for them to persist while wanting to change. Not having to face another’s expectation to change may create opportunities for persons to clarify their own value priorities.

The participants in this study anticipated the possibilities of the new with both hope and foreboding. They often commented that they wanted to change, but felt stuck or overwhelmed, and didn’t know what to do. Parse (1990a) suggests creative imaging as a way of changing one’s personal
commitment. In the nurse-person process, the nurse can ask persons to picture what it would be like to stay with their commitment, and what it would be like to change. Picturing the possibilities is already making them real, which is mobilizing transcendence.

**Reflections**

Parse's (1994) human becoming theory and research methodology have guided this researcher in the process of sciencing, a voyage of discovery in coming to know. Universal lived experiences of health are the phenomena for inquiry, from this perspective. Participants are selected on the basis of being willing and able to give an account of their lived experience of the phenomenon of interest. Reflections on the experience of conducting this study have raised this researcher's awareness of some challenges surrounding participant selection.

The idea for this research project germinated in connection with women in abusive relationships, which prompted the researcher to choose this population for participant selection, in the belief that such persons could describe the phenomenon of interest. However, this choice created challenges, the first being participant recruitment through women's shelters. Difficulties in this regard eventually led to using public announcements. Fortuitously, three participants thus recruited described their experience in relation to different contexts, thereby adding variety to the descriptions, overall. Another challenge arose during the extraction-synthesis process, in
that some participants' descriptions centered around the experience of staying in an abusive relationship. The researcher then had to discern the relevance of portions of the voluminous descriptions to the phenomenon of persisting while wanting to change.

The researcher has learned from conducting this study that selecting participants from a specific population may pose unnecessary constraints for researchers guided by Parse's research methodology, since any person could be invited to describe a universal lived experience. While it is important to develop such knowledge with a diversity of persons, in varied contexts, nevertheless, researchers are cautioned to consider the potential challenges of selecting unique participant groups.

This study was one of three that have investigated explicitly paradoxical lived experiences. The others were inquiries into restriction-freedom (Mitchell, 1995), and joy-sorrow (Parse, in press). This researcher has learned that exploring a paradoxical phenomenon presents its own challenges. For example, while describing their experience, participants sometimes focused mainly on one side of the rhythm, that is, persisting, or wanting to change. Thus, the researcher would have to ask the participant to also describe the other side of the rhythm, or to relate what they were saying to persisting while wanting to change. A similar challenge ensued during the extraction-synthesis process, wherein each essence had to reflect the unitary phenomenon, rather than just one side of the rhythm.
In Chapter I, the researcher laid the theoretical foundation for this inquiry by comparing two paradigms of knowledge development: human science, and natural science. Conducting this qualitative research project meant taking another step down "the road less traveled" (Parse, 1996a), in the human science tradition; and in the words of the poet, "that has made all the difference" (Frost, 1951, p. 271). Having had access to the uniqueness and diversity of other human beings' personal health experiences has been a priceless privilege for this researcher; and so too, was the opportunity to contribute to the development of nursing as a human science. Parse's theory and research methodology have created this opportunity. "The further explication of extant or emerging nursing conceptual models is essential for the growth, even the survival, of the discipline of nursing as we move into the 21st century" (Smith, 1992, p. 148). As a nursing theory-guided inquiry, this study has contributed uniquely nursing knowledge about the human-universe-health process, and has thus advanced the scientific base of the discipline.
APPENDIX A

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPENDIX A
LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
RESEARCH SERVICES OFFICE
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
6525 NORTH SHERIDAN ROAD
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Tel: (312) 508-2471 Matthew Creighton, SJ, Chair

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
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Tel: (312) 508-2471 Matthew Creighton, SJ, Chair

Investigator: Florence Beryl Pilkington
Home Address: 1044 West Rosemont Avenue
Apartment 2
Chicago, Illinois 60660
Home Telephone: 743-0117 [Area Code: 312]

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:** Persisting While Wanting to Change

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 May 23, 1997, however, your approval will automatically lapse.

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 1569.

With best wishes for your work,

Sincerely,

Matthew Creighton, SJ
APPENDIX B

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS
LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

[addressee]
[addressee]

Dear [addressee],

As discussed in our recent telephone conversation, I am a doctoral student in nursing at Loyola University Chicago. I am writing to obtain permission to use [name of agency] as an agency through which to recruit participants for my dissertation research. This research project focuses on the health experience of persisting while wanting to change. The persons I would like to invite to join in the study are women who have been in abusive relationships.

I am seeking review and approval for this research from the Loyola University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. Included with this letter, for your information, is a copy of the participant explanation for the study and a sample consent form.

What I will need from you is a letter with the following: (a) an invitation for me to conduct my research through your agency; (b) a statement that clearly indicates that approval of my research by the Loyola IRB will meet your agency guidelines for the protection of human subjects; and (c) an offer that your staff will act as a referral source for contacting possible participants who are women 18 years of age or older, able to read and speak English, and who have been in an abusive relationship.

You can send that letter to the address below. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

F. Beryl Pilkington, RN, MScN
Doctoral Student
1044 West Rosemont Ave,
Chicago IL 60660
Tel. (312) 743-0117
APPENDIX C

LETTERS OF PERMISSION
April 18, 1996

F. Beryl Pilkington
1044 W. Rosement Ave.
Chicago, IL 60660

Dear Ms. Pilkington,

This is to grant you permission to conduct your research at the House of the Good Shepherd. We hope that your research on Persisting While Wanting to Change will provide data that will enhance understanding of the women that we serve.

Our staff will be able to act as a referral source for contacting potential participants that meet the criteria of your study: women who are 18 years of age or older, able to read and speak English, and who have been in an abusive relationship.

Documentation of approval of your research by the Loyola University Review Board will meet all the requirements for conducting your research in our agency. We will be pleased to assist you with this project.

Sincerely,

Sister Kathleen Moore
Director, House of the Good Shepherd
Dear Ms. Pilkington,

This is to grant you permission to conduct your research at Cornerstone Community Outreach. We hope that your research on Persisting While Wanting to Change will provide data that will enhance understanding of the women that we serve.

Our staff will be able to act as a referral source for contacting potential participants that meet the criteria of your study: women who are 18 years of age or older, able to read and speak English, and who have been in an abusive relationship.

Documentation of approval of your research by the Loyola University Review Board will meet all the requirements for conducting your research in our agency. We will be pleased to assist you with this project.

Sincerely,

Sandra Ramsey
Director

C C O
939 W. WILSON
CHICAGO, IL 60640
(312) 271-8163
APPENDIX C
LETTER OF PERMISSION

Rainbow House/Arco Iris

May 30, 1996

F. Beryl Pilkington
1044 W. Rosement Avenue
Chicago, IL 60660

Dear Ms. Pilkington,

This is to grant you permission to conduct research through Rainbow House. We hope that your research on Persisting while Wanting to Change will provide data that will enhance understanding of the women that we serve.

Our staff will be able to act as a referral source for contacting potential participants that meet the criteria of your study: whom who are 18 years of age or older, able to read and speak English, and who have bee in an abuse relationship.

Documentation of approval of your research by the Loyola University Review Board will meet all the requirements for conducting your research in our agency. We will be pleased to assist you with this project.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Linas
Executive Director
APPENDIX D

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Have you ever persisted in something even though you wanted to change?

- NURSING DOCTORAL STUDENT seeking volunteers to participate in research on the experience of persisting while wanting to change.

- Would involve one meeting with researcher to "tell your story" on audiotape.

- Anonymity guaranteed.

- For more information, contact Beryl (312) 743-0117.
APPENDIX E

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS
APPENDIX E

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

Research Study on
The Experience of Persisting While Wanting to Change

You are being asked to participate in a study conducted by Beryl Pilkington, a doctoral student at the Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago. This study is about the experience of persisting while wanting to change.

Participation will involve one tape-recorded discussion between you and Beryl Pilkington. You will be asked to describe your experience of persisting while wanting to change. You will not be asked any probing questions. This discussion will be scheduled at your convenience and will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what you want to share. The meeting will take place at a mutually convenient place, with privacy ensured.

The information you share will be strictly confidential, and the tape will be erased after the study is finished. Your name will not appear on the transcription of the tape, or in any other written report of this study. You may stop the discussion and withdraw from participation in this study at any time, for any reason, without penalty.

You may find it helpful to discuss your experience of persisting while wanting to change, and you will be contributing to nursing knowledge. There are no known risks related to this study. If you become uncomfortable about some aspect of the discussion, you may talk with Beryl Pilkington at (312) 743-0117, or seek referral for other support services.

You are free to talk with Beryl Pilkington at any time, about any concerns or questions you may have regarding this study. Thank-you for considering participating in this study.
APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM
APPENDIX F
CONSENT FORM
PERSISTING WHILE WANTING TO CHANGE

I am 18 years old or older, and am willing to participate in this study on persisting while wanting to change being conducted by Beryl Pilkington, doctoral student, Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University of Chicago.

The purpose and procedure of the study have been fully explained to me, and I realize that I can end my participation at any time, without penalty.

I understand that I will be asked to discuss my experience of persisting while wanting to change. This discussion may take 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what I want to share. The discussion will be tape recorded, and this tape will be erased once the study is completed. I also understand that a transcript of the discussion will be made. I have been told that my name will not appear on the written transcripts, reports, or published papers. However, quotations from our discussion may be used anonymously in the report of the study. I have also been informed that all tapes and written materials will be kept in a locked file.

I understand that there are no known risks or benefits to such a discussion. However, my descriptions may aid the development of nursing knowledge.

I understand that I am free not to answer any question. If during the discussion I become uncomfortable, I have the option to stop and withdraw from the study, or stop and reschedule.

I understand that I may call Beryl Pilkington at (312) 743-0117 at any time, to talk about any concerns or questions I may have about my participation in the study.

I have also been informed that whether or not I participate will have no effect on services that I or any member of my family may receive.

I freely and voluntarily consent to participate in this study, and will be given a copy of this consent form.

Participant’s Signature  ____________________________  Researcher’s Signature  ____________________________

Date  ______________  Date  ______________
REFERENCES


young adults. Dissertation Abstracts International, 39(03), 1212B. (University Microfilms No. AAG7816899)


Florence Beryl Pilkington was born in Galt, Ontario, Canada. In 1973, she earned a diploma in nursing from the South Waterloo Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Cambridge, Ontario, and was awarded with the First General Proficiency Award in Nursing. She later attended the University of Western Ontario, in London, Canada, where she graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1985, and received the Faculty Association Academic Award. In 1987, she completed a Master of Science in Nursing degree at the University of Toronto, where she was awarded the Connaught Scholarship and an Ontario Graduate Scholarship. In 1988, she was inducted as an inaugural member of the Lambda Pi chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society.

In 1994, Ms. Pilkington was awarded a fellowship and research assistantship at Loyola University Chicago, where she completed her PhD in nursing in January, 1997.
DISSEMINATION APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Florence Beryl Pilkington has been read and approved by the following committee:

Rosemarie Rizzo Parse, RN, Ph.D., FAAN, Director
Professor, Nursing
Loyola University Chicago

Marybeth Young, RN, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Nursing
Loyola University Chicago

William K. Cody, RN, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Nursing
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation 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 Ph.D.

November 11, 1996  Date

Rosemarie Rizzo Parse  Director’s Signature