LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

HAVING COURAGE:
A LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HUMAN BECOMING

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BY
DEBRA ANN BOURNES

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

Having courage is inextricably related to the way people make choices about what is important, what to do, and how to go on in life in ways they view as worthwhile. It is a universal lived experience that is important to quality of life. The purposes of this research were to identify the essences of the experience of having courage and to contribute to knowledge about human becoming—the nursing theory guiding this study. Participants were ten persons 21 to 64 years of age who were living in the community with spinal cord injuries. They were willing to speak about having courage and to share a symbol, picture, piece of music, poem, or metaphor which was an expression of their lived experience of having courage. The Parse research method for data gathering and analysis—a phenomenological-hermeneutic method—was used to answer the research question: What is the structure of the lived experience of having courage? The Parse research method illuminates the structure of universal lived experiences of health through the processes of dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation. The central finding of this study is the structure: The lived experience of having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured. This structure is comprised of three core concepts—fortifying tenacity, triumph amid the
burdensome, and guarded confidence with the treasured—that reflect the unitary experience of having courage for the participants in this study. Using examples from the participants' descriptions, the findings are discussed in relation to how they enhance understanding about human becoming and in relation to how they can inform future research and practice.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

We have to believe we have value, we could not have courage otherwise, and our sense of being more than ourselves is our most precious possession. It is in honor of these feelings that we endure and try. Even the most meager life will have a wealth of patience, a treasure of endurance, immeasurable courage and cheer....

- Florida Scott Maxwell -
The Measure of My Days, 1968

Maxwell (1968) implies that courage is all-at-once inherent in being human and immeasurable. Having courage is intertwined with what living is all about. It is inextricably related to the way humans make choices about what is important, what to do, and how to go on in life in ways they view as worthwhile. Having courage is a universal lived experience of health.

The human becoming school of thought is concerned with unitary human beings' lived experiences of health (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1995, 1997b, 1998). Health from the human becoming perspective is the way persons live day-to-day. It is a process that incarnates personal values as persons become who
they want to be (Parse, 1990). Universal lived experiences of health are the phenomena for study with the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998).

**Phenomenon of Concern: Courage**

The phenomenon *courage* is traditionally connected with stories of heroic actors who risk their lives. It is sometimes regarded as synonymous with fearlessness (Rachman, 1978). In other instances, courage is associated with overcoming fear, overcoming obstacles, performing difficult or dangerous feats, or engaging in combat (Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985; Rorty, 1988). It has also been affiliated with wisdom and acts of endurance for a noble cause *in spite of fear* (Plato, 1961; Rachman, 1978; Walton, 1986). The works of several authors (Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; May, 1975; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952) support the notion that having courage is a universal lived experience essential to being and becoming.

According to Tillich (1952), “courage is rooted in the whole breadth of human existence and ultimately in the structure of being itself” (p. 1). Being, from Tillich’s perspective, is understood as life, as the process of living, or as becoming. Being and nonbeing are eternally present as a unity. Courage is “self-affirmation of being in spite of [the presence] of nonbeing” (Tillich, 1952, p. 86).

In its existential form (Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952), *having courage* is everyday courage. It is the courage which impels humans to move
on and to choose their own paths in spite of the complexities and difficulties of
day to day living (Servan-Schreiber, 1987). It is a universal lived experience
significant to quality of life that emerged as an important phenomenon in the
author's research and practice with persons living in a variety of situations. For
example, one woman who works in a setting in which she is called upon to
present her values to others—values that are different from the more traditional
ones held by her co-workers—says having courage is looking at yourself, like in
a mirror, deciding what you are afraid of, and fighting your inner fears. It is
being true to yourself by acting on your own individuality so that you have no
regrets. She says having courage is very hard and needs practice since
sometimes it is easier to go with the flow and say it does not matter than to
stand by one's convictions and see things through. She also believes having
courage is a choice—with risks associated with experiencing the consequences
of triumphs and defeats in everyday living. For her, having courage makes
one's life more rich and glorious. It is necessary to get the most out of life.

Another person chose to describe having courage in connection with her
relationship with her father. She believes courage is a strength inside you that
helps you face what is uncomfortable. She says her symbol of courage is a line
from the song *The Dance* by Garth Brooks. She explains that when she thinks
about what she went through with her father, who lived the last two years of his
life with severe emphysema and alcoholism, she wonders if it would have been
a lot easier not to have been there for him, but, in the words of the song she
adds, "I could have missed the pain, but then, I would have missed the dance" (Arata, 1994). Having courage, for this woman, is having the strength, every day, to get up and face that day." She acknowledges "there are times when having courage is a little uncomfortable, but when you put your head on your pillow at night you have no regrets, you are comfortable with yourself."

Finally, another woman believes having courage is being "really committed to something and being really true to yourself. It is a process that involves having internal strength, persevering, knowing what you want, and sticking to it." She shares that her symbol of courage "is the sun glistening on water. The little stars that I see where the sun meets the water give me strength to have the courage to do what I need to do."

Having courage emerged as a phenomenon significant to quality of life in each of the preceding examples. Metaphors and ideas connected with having courage also surfaced as the author listened to music, viewed paintings, watched movies, and read literature. For example, in Sleep With the Angels, Mary Fisher (1994) raises awareness and challenges myths about acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). The gripping nature of her work arises from the way she candidly shares her own experiences of being a mother and a person who happens to have the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Fisher's book is an account of how one person with courage can make a difference. In a letter to her young sons, she recalls the first time she told her story in public. She says, "It takes courage to step forward when a cause is sometimes
unpopular and positions are easily misunderstood. I know from both struggling to find the courage myself and from seeing it in others” (p. 84). Later in the book, she entreats a group of health professionals to have courage and to persist in being caring and compassionate in their treatment of persons with AIDS—saying that even when it seems like the difference they are making is minute it is an important difference. Fisher re-tells Loren Eiseley’s (1978) story about the star thrower to illuminate the importance of having the courage to step forward, persevere amid adversity, and recognize accomplishments:

A young man was picking up objects off the beach and tossing them out into the sea. A second man approached him, and saw that the objects were starfish. "Why in the world are you throwing starfish into the water?" "If the starfish are still on the beach when the tide goes out and the sun rises high in the sky, they will die," replied the young man. "That's ridiculous. There are thousands of miles of beach and millions of starfish. You can't really believe that what you're doing could possibly make a difference!" The young man picked up another starfish, paused thoughtfully, and remarked as he tossed it out into the waves, "It makes a difference to this one" (Fisher, 1994, p. 146).

For this researcher, the image of a starfish is a metaphor for having courage that is connected with the notion that it is worthwhile to find ways to step forward even when a cause is unpopular or misunderstood if it is something one believes is important and can make a difference—even to one starfish at a time.
The inukshuk is another symbol of having courage. Each inukshuk "is uniquely constructed with its stones oriented to act as a compass or to mark a trail" (Mitchell & Bournes, 1998, p. 2). It became significant to this researcher after viewing the print of an artist's sketch of several Inuit people travelling across the tundra in the direction of an inukshuk they could see in the distance. Travelling across the tundra—a vast, foreboding ice-land—is a risk and it requires perseverance. There are both opportunities and dangers along the way. The opportunities include finding food or visiting other communities. The dangers include starving, freezing, or getting lost. These notions sparked in the researcher the idea that having courage is related to humans' choices to take risks and to persevere amid opportunities and dangers for the sake of what they value.

**Having Courage and Quality of Life: Persons Living With Spinal Cord Injury**

Living with a spinal cord injury has dramatic effects on all realms of a person's health and quality of life. No research on the phenomenon *having*
courage as an experience of health and quality of life has been reported with persons who live with spinal cord injury; however, there is literature on what it takes to live with a spinal cord injury (Clayton & Chubon, 1994; DeVivo & Richards, 1992; Fuhrer, 1994; Hammell, 1992; Kannisto, Merikanto, Alaranta, Hokkanen, & Sintonen, 1998; Kannisto & Sintonen, 1997; Krause, 1997, 1998; Lundqvist, Siosteen, Blomstrand, Lind, & Sullivan, 1991; McColl & Rosenthal, 1994; Scivoletto, Petrelli, DiLucente, & Castellano, 1997; Stensman, 1994; Trieschmann, 1988). These authors indicate that the continuous process of choosing meaningful and satisfying ways to go on after the injury is considered integral to quality of life. Having courage is relevant to how persons make choices about what is important, what is satisfying, and what is worthwhile.

Having courage is associated with having faith, with putting one’s life back together after a traumatic event, with triumph over adversity, with overcoming obstacles, and with showing tenacity and endurance (Lucas, 1994). According to Trieschmann (1988), rehabilitation after a spinal cord injury is a lifelong process that requires on-going adaptations to new challenges individuals face on a daily basis. Similarly, Hammell (1992) believes that persons who live with spinal cord injuries—especially those with severe traumatic injuries—have experienced one of the most devastating of all non-fatal injuries and suggests that the goal, after the initial crisis period, is not medical recovery—but rather adjustment to circumstances which have been drastically changed. Persons with spinal cord injuries are often faced with
finding ways to contend with architectural barriers, economic costs, vocational limitations, changes in their social and familial roles (Kreuter, Sullivan, Dahllof, & Siosteen, 1998; Scivoletto et al., 1997), changes in marital status (DeVivo & Richards, 1992), medical complications, reduced level of independence (Kreuter et al., 1998; Scivoletto, et al., 1997), and a less active lifestyle (Krause, 1998). Others have documented that the drastic changes in the lives of persons with spinal cord injury are connected with depression (Kreuter et al., 1998), decreased self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy (Kreuter et al., 1998), and mood disturbances (Lundqvist et al., 1991).

Having courage is essential to moving on in life—in spite of one's circumstances. Frankl (1959/1984) says it is associated with inner strength. Humans' inner strength can elevate them above their outward fate. He says that humans are always free to choose their attitude in any given set of circumstances (Frankl, 1959/1984). Health professionals also believe courage is connected with the strength or will that persons display during their own suffering and dying to persevere, confront, endure, and accept difficulties (Kahn, Steeves, & Benoliel, 1994). In their study of quality of life for persons with quadriplegia, Bach and McDaniel (1993) say that inner strength is necessary to quality of life. Inner strength was related to their 14 participants' responses about the will to live and to have control over their lives. Learning more about the experience of having courage will give health professionals a better understanding about how persons with spinal cord injuries find ways to
persevere and to go on in life, day-by-day, amid their personal obstacles and struggles.

**Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of this study were (a) to discover the structure of the lived experience of having courage; and (b) to expand the theory of human becoming.

**Significance for Nursing**

All research using a nursing theoretical framework ultimately contributes specifically to nursing knowledge. The unique knowledge base of nursing is embedded in the theories and frameworks set forth by nurses to guide research and practice. Nursing theories define the biases of the discipline's openness to what it is possible to discover. They also provide a framework for interpreting what is discovered in ways meaningful and unique to nursing.

The findings of this Parse method study on *having courage* enhance nursing in several ways. New knowledge gained from this study extends knowledge of the concept courage, sheds light on phenomena for further research, expands understanding of the human becoming theory—which focuses on human health and quality of life—and contributes to nursing's unique knowledge base (Parse, 1981, 1987, 1992, 1995, 1996a, 1997b, 1998).
The phenomenon having courage is a universal lived experience of health that is significant to quality of life. It is a human experience intertwined with all life events—embracing meaning and values, desires and dreams, relationships and plans, concerns and fears. Having courage arises with the incarnation of humans' health and quality of life. Quality of life is the "whatness...or the essence of life" (Parse, 1994, p. 17)—thus, having courage is a significant phenomenon of interest to nurses and other health professionals who are with people in a variety of situations.

Nursing Perspective


Through the process of concept inventing (Parse, 1997a), a conceptual definition of having courage was created. Concept inventing is "a multidimensional all-at-once process of analyzing-synthesizing, bringing to life
novel unitary concepts.... [It] entails the rational-intuitive definition of an idea surfacing from the beliefs and values of the scholar who is creating the concept" (Parse, 1997a, p. 63). Ideas for concepts emanate from multiple sources including practice, literature, metaphor, art, and music (Parse, 1997a).

Having courage emerged as an important phenomenon as this author dwelled with ideas, metaphors, and situations that arose in research and practice. The examples given earlier illuminate how ideas about a concept can surface in multiple ways through multiple mediums. The essences of having courage that arose with the concept inventing process were co-created with this author's multidimensional experiences all-at-once.

Three essences emerged from the concept inventing process. They are deliberate steadfast risking, creatively living the cherished, and opportunities-restrictions. Combined, these essences constitute a unitary definition of having courage:

*Having courage is deliberate steadfast risking while creatively living the cherished with opportunities-restrictions.*

The unitary conceptualization of having courage as deliberate steadfast risking while creatively living the cherished with opportunities-restrictions is a unique creation consistent with the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998). Exploration of this conceptualization within the framework of the principles and concepts of human becoming clarifies the meaning of having
courage at the theoretical level and contributes further insight for research and practice.

The human becoming school of thought posits that the phenomenon of concern for nursing is the human-universe-health process (Parse, 1981, 1997c, 1998). The ontology of human becoming specifies humans as unitary, open beings who are free to choose meaning in situations and who exist and cocreate with others, ideas, objects, and situations at multidimensional realms of the universe (Parse, 1981, 1998). The human becoming school of thought is concerned with unitary human beings’ lived experiences of health. Three themes emerge from the assumptions: meaning, rhythmicity, and transcendence (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1995, 1997b, 1998). The three principles constituting the human becoming theory flow directly from the themes. In the next section, the principles and their related concepts were woven with the essences of the unitary definition of the lived experience of having courage: deliberate steadfast risking, creatively living the cherished, and opportunities-restrictions.

**Deliberate Steadfast Risking**

The first essence in the unitary definition of having courage, deliberate steadfast risking, is prudently persevering with the all-at-once tensions and struggles inherent in choosing and shaping unique ways of living value priorities. Having courage encompasses risk—it is a willingness to embrace
being with nonbeing for the sake of what is possible. At the theoretical level, 

*deliberate steadfast risking* was conceptualized as powering.

Powering is one of three concepts in the third principle of human 
becoming: "cotranscending with the possibles is powering unique ways of 
originating in the process of transforming" (Parse, 1998, p. 46). The theme of 
the third principle is transcendence. It is about the ways humans change and 
unfold in life as they reach beyond what was and is with what is not-yet (Parse, 
1981). In this principle, powering is associated with the conformity-
nonconformity and certainty-uncertainty of originating and the familiar-unfamiliar 
of transforming.

Powering is the continuous affirming—not affirming of being with 
nonbeing (Parse, 1998). It is the pushing-resisting rhythm that is continuously 
present as humans live with the tensions and struggles cocreated in moving 
beyond what was and is with what is not-yet. Being-nonbeing is an ever-present 
paradox. Being is risking living uniquely with the universe in the presence of 
nonbeing. Nonbeing is not only the possibility of death, it is also the possible 
threats that challenge one's sense of the not-yet, which may involve non-
affirmation of personal ways of living. According to Parse (1998) and Tillich 
(1952), "powering is the force of human existence and it underpins the courage 
to be" (Parse, 1998, p. 47).

The *deliberate steadfast risking* in having courage, when conceptualized 
as powering, is the all-at-once pushing-resisting rhythm that surfaces with
choosing to persist in spite of the ever-present nonbeing with being. In deliberate steadfast risking, pushing is the dominant rhythm as humans struggle for affirmation. Simultaneously there is the resisting that is cocreated as humans contemplate the risks with what is not-yet, as a way of recognizing the possibility of non-affirmation.

This is similar to Tillich's (1952) perspective that courage is “self-affirmation...in spite of nonbeing” (p. 86). It is essential to being and becoming (May, 1975). This view is also supported by Servan-Schreiber (1987), who believes affirmation of one's existence, "even with the most elementary gestures, [happens] in spite of the presence, threat, certainty, and irreducible mystery of death...[and] it takes courage" (p. 78)—the everyday courage that is a possibility in all human projects as humans invent unique ways of affirming personal value priorities. This notion is fundamental to creatively living the cherished.

**Creatively Living the Cherished**

*Creatively living the cherished* is the inventing of ways to be the same as—yet distinct from—others as one reaches beyond with what is important. *Creatively living the cherished* encompasses the notion that the lived experience of having courage is intertwined with human values. It was conceptualized as the theoretical construct originating valuing.
Originating is one of three concepts related to the third principle of human becoming: "cotranscending with the possibles is powering unique ways of originating in the process of transforming" (Parse, 1998, p. 46). Originating "is inventing new ways of conforming-not conforming in the certainty-uncertainty of living. It is creating ways of distinguishing personal uniqueness" (Parse, 1998, p. 49). Personal uniqueness surfaces amid interconnections with people and projects (Parse, 1992). The paradoxical rhythms conformity-nonconformity and certainty-uncertainty are inherent in the originating process (Parse, 1981, 1998). Conformity-nonconformity relates to the notion that humans strive to be like others yet simultaneously choose ways to be unique. Certainty-uncertainty, suggests that in every choice there is certainty about what one wants to do yet uncertainty about how decisions will unfold (Parse, 1981, 1998).

Valuing is one of three concepts in the first principle of human becoming: "Structuring meaning multidimensionally is cocreating reality through the languaging of valuing and imaging" (Parse, 1998, p. 35). The theme of this principle is meaning. It relates to the way human beings continuously structure the meaning of multidimensional experiences that are lived all-at-once. Valuing is connected with the speaking–being-silent and moving–being-still of languaging and the reflective-pre-reflective and explicit-tacit knowing of imaging.

Valuing is "confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs in light of a personal worldview. The paradoxical rhythm confirming-not confirming is
choosing from imaged options and owning the choices" (Parse, 1998, p. 37-38). From among available options humans make choices about what to believe, what to do, whom to relate with, and what ways to live. The choices humans make are their cherished options.

Originating valuing as a construct describes the meaning of creatively living the cherished at the theoretical level. Creatively living the cherished is innovating ways of all-at-once living with the certainty-uncertainty of conforming—not conforming, while confirming—not confirming the revered. Originating valuing refers to humans' courage to be unique and to be who they want to be. According to Tillich (1952), humans create what they are. "The essence of... being – the "should-be" and the "ought-to-be," is not something [humans] find, [they] make it.... the courage to be as oneself is the courage to make oneself what one wants to be" (Tillich, 1952, p. 148).

Similarly, van Kaam (1972/1985) writes about originality. Originality is an ability humans have to be themselves—it is awoken by values. Living originally—or living in ways true to one's values—is intrinsic to having courage and it is captured in the essence creatively living the cherished and thus in the construct originating valuing. The association between having courage and living originally is supported by numerous authors. For instance, Kohut (1992) describes courage as humans' ability to remain faithful to their ideals and values despite pressures to change or conform. In addition, Desmond (1927) describes intellectual courage—or the courage of opinion—as being the
sturdiness of character found in day-to-day human living that shows itself when humans are loyal to their beliefs and think for themselves despite social pressures to do otherwise. Similarly, Kennedy (1955/1961) recounts the stories of eight United States Senators who—despite pressures from their constituents, their party, their colleagues, and their families—demonstrated courage through "unyielding loyalty to absolute principle...[and] a deep-seated belief in themselves, their integrity, and the rightness of their cause" (p. 241). Finally, May (1975) talks about creative courage. Creative courage is "the discovering of new forms, new symbols, [and] new patterns on which a new society can be built" (May, 1975, p. 21). Those who present the new forms and symbols are the artists—they live out their imaginations. Courage is vital to creativity since creativity provokes jealousy by threatening the status quo, which society is devoted to protecting (May, 1975). This idea is related to opportunities-restrictions—another essence in the unitary definition of having courage.

**Opportunities-Restrictions**

The third essence in the unitary definition of having courage is opportunities-restrictions. Opportunities-restrictions are the infinite number of chances and impediments that occur all-at-once when deliberately risking to live the cherished. At the theoretical level, opportunities-restrictions is most closely associated with enabling-limiting—one of the three concepts in the second principle of human becoming: "Cocreating rhythmical patterns of relating is
living the paradoxical unity of revealing-concealing and enabling-limiting while connecting-separating” (Parse, 1998, p. 42). The theme of this principle is rhythmicity. Humans live rhythmical patterns of relating that are paradoxical in nature and cocreated with the human-universe-health process. In this principle, enabling-limiting is associated with the simultaneous disclosing and hiding inherent in the paradoxical rhythm revealing-concealing. Enabling-limiting is also connected with the rhythmical process of moving together with and away from, which is intrinsic to humans’ connecting with and simultaneously separating from people, places, and events that are important to them.

Enabling-limiting refers to the all-at-once existence of infinite opportunities and restrictions in all choices. Humans choose ways to be with situations and in choosing, they enable themselves to move in one direction while simultaneously limiting their movement in another direction. Humans are “enabled and limited by all choices” (Parse, 1992, p. 38). Having courage is a choice with the opportunities and restrictions that arise with the deliberate steadfast risking of creatively living the cherished. Various authors (Desmond, 1927; Kennedy, 1955/1961; Mackenzie, 1962; Walton, 1986) discuss moral courage in ways illustrative of how one is all-at-once enabled and limited with having courage. Moral courage is defined as an affirming and enduring commitment to values and beliefs; yet at the same time it is restricting in that it often surfaces with hardships in the form of disapproval or loss of respect from others. May (1975) captures the enabling-limiting nature of having courage in
his discussion of creative courage. He suggests that persons who present their creations for all to view are all-at-once enabled by the opportunity to share their work and restricted by the jealousy of others.

Having courage, then, from the human becoming perspective, is deliberate steadfast risking while creatively living the cherished with opportunities-restrictions. At the theoretical level it was conceptualized as powering the enabling-limiting of originating valuing.

**Research Question**

The research question that guided this study was: *What is the structure of the lived experience of having courage?*

**Summary**

This chapter introduced the phenomenon *having courage*—a universal lived experience significant to health and quality of life. The author defines *having courage* as deliberate steadfast risking while creatively living the cherished with opportunities-restrictions. The human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998) is the nursing perspective that guided this study. At the theoretical level, *having courage* is conceptualized as powering the enabling-limiting of originating valuing. The purpose of this research was to discover the structure of the lived experience of having courage and thus to enhance knowledge about this universal lived experience. The knowledge
gleaned from this study expands nursing knowledge and informs future research and practice endeavors.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on the phenomenon courage was reviewed. An extensive computerized literature search was conducted using American Poetry On-Line, Art Abstracts, ATLA Religion, the Catholic Periodical Literature Index, the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI), Education Abstracts, the Expanded Academic Index (astronomy, religion, law, history, psychology, humanities, current events, sociology, communications, and general sciences), Humanities Abstracts, INDY (general, English periodical citations), the Library User Information Service (LUIS), Medline (LMED), Modern Language Association (MLA), Philosophers Index, Psychological Abstracts (PSYCHINFO), and Social Science Abstracts. The key word used for the search was courage. The search was limited to citations in which courage was the subject, but not by the date of publication. A plethora of theoretical writings concerned with the nature of courage emerged. In addition, 15 studies on courage were located. The works of the various authors contribute important details about, and expand understanding of, the lived experience of having courage. In this chapter, the significant literature is
presented in two major sections: general theoretical literature and research literature. The chapter concludes with a summary of the state of what is known about courage.

**General Theoretical Literature**

Scholars from a variety of disciplines have published theoretical discussions of the phenomenon *courage*. There are no existing definitions of courage strictly consistent with the human becoming perspective (Parse, 1981, 1998); however, the definitions of courage uncovered and reviewed by this author all add depth and clarity to a general understanding of the phenomenon.

**Theoretical Literature in the Humanities and Human Sciences**

Courage is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (Murray, Bradley, Craigie, & Onions, 1989) in a variety of ways. One definition is “to speak one’s mind by telling all one’s heart.” It is also defined as “that quality of mind which shows itself in facing danger without fear or shrinking; [as] bravery, boldness, and valor; [as] “sexual vigor...inclination, [and] lust; [and as] spirit, liveliness, lustiness, vigor, vital force, or energy” (p. 1051). Early uses of the word courage connected it with energy and manly power since the “heart was not [considered] the seat of feeling or...sentiment, but the source of energy” (Rorty, 1988, p. 307). Rorty notes that “the horse’s mane and the rooster’s comb were called
their courage because they were thought to be indications of aggression and sexual energy” (p. 307).

The English word courage is derived from the French expression coeur and the Latin word cor—meaning heart. It is also associated with the Romanic word aeticum, or “age.” In its original English form, courage meant “the heart of an age” (Rogers, 1993). Rogers (1993) says, “One way to understand the etymology of courage is to consider its history a series of losses. Over the course of five centuries, from 1051 to 1490, courage was cut off from its sources in time, in the heart, and in feelings…and it came to mean ‘that quality of mind which shows itself without fear or shrinking,’ a definition associated with…bravery and heroism” (p. 271). Bravery and heroism are frequently connected with the type of courage associated with soldiers.

The soldier’s courage—often referred to as military courage—is most commonly held out as the outstanding example of courage. The military uses of the word courage are evident in other terms which are often use synonymously with it. For instance, many philosophers use either the Greek word andreia – meaning manliness, or the Latin word fortitudo – meaning strength. Rorty (1988), Aristotle (384-322BC/1985), and Plato (1977) are three authors that allude to a military definition of courage in their writings.

According to Rorty (1988), when courage is defined in the military sense, it is considered a set of “specific dispositions necessary [to engage in] hand-to-hand combat, to stand one’s ground, or to advance against a powerful
opponent" (Rorty, 1988, pp. 304-305). Rorty suggests that the virtue of courage is questionable when it is defined as a set of dispositions for overcoming fear, opposing obstacles, taking risks, and performing dangerous actions associated with combat. She believes it leads to detachment from what one is opposing and echoes of military campaigns and strategies. In addition, "the confidence that is part of [military] courage tends to diminish dispositions that are directed to avoiding oppositional confrontation.... Perceiving actions as victories or defeats [and] seeing compromise as partial loss, the centrally courageous do not usually promote, and often resist compromising attitudes" (Rorty, 1988, p. 301). Yet, amid her message of caution, Rorty is clear that she believes in the necessity of the aspect of military courage which includes the capacities and traits necessary to act under stress and to endure hardships when following one's judgments about what is best—an idea which echoes Aristotle's (384-322BC/1985) discussion of courage.

Aristotle (384-322BC/1985) is a strong proponent of military courage—which he calls bravery. Bravery, from Aristotle's perspective, is not synonymous with fearlessness. Brave persons experience fears and they "stand firm against them, in the right way, as prescribed by reason, for the sake of what is fine" (Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985, p. 73). Thus, for Aristotle, bravery is a state of character that enables one to endure in doing what is noble in spite of fearful things. Aristotle classifies bravery as a virtue and restricts its scope to situations where one's life is at risk. Bravery, from his view, "is not concerned with fear of
every sort of danger... it is [only] concerned with fear of death... [during times of] war” (Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985, p. 71-72). According to Aristotle, brave persons choose to withstand pain and death courageously since it is noble to do so and cowardly not to do so.

Plato’s (1977) conceptualization of courage concurs with Aristotle’s view that courage strives for what is noble in spite of an awareness of fear, but instead of restricting the scope of courage to situations where one’s life is at risk, Plato’s definition broadens the notion of courage to include the realm of the everyday. Plato thinks courage is one of the divine goods. He believes it to be the fourth most important virtue after wisdom, temperance, and justice (Plato, 1977). His conceptualization of courage is concerned not only with persons who are warriors, but also with those who are in danger at sea and those who show courage in illness, poverty, affairs of state, and in the face of pain or fear. For Plato, the scope of courage is profoundly ambiguous and it involves risks taken in day to day living. Courage, from his view, is not universal. He is concerned with what makes some persons brave and others not (Plato, 1961). Plato’s explication of courage is found in his dialogue The Laches (Plato, 1961).

*The Laches* is essentially a discussion about the definition of courage between Socrates and two Greek generals – Laches and Nicias. Over the course of the dialogue, the characters discuss several possible definitions of courage—their goal being to discover one definition that is applicable in any area of life. The first definition, that courageous persons are those who remain
at their post to defend themselves against the enemy, is abandoned since there are battles that have been won because soldiers feigned retreat, drew the enemy toward them, and then, in the disarray of it all, they attacked and defeated the enemy. Courage is then defined as “an endurance of the soul.” When Socrates questions whether or not they must say that courage is endurance accompanied by wisdom—it brings the others to say that courage is not just endurance—but wise endurance. Socrates then wonders whether persons who endure because they have the wisdom that they are better armed than their opponent are really the ones with courage. Maybe it is the person in the other camp—who holds out against all odds—who is the one with courage. The final definition considered is that courage is some kind of wisdom of the fearful and the hopeful in every situation. This definition is not accepted by the group since they believe that this degree of knowledge can be possessed by very few.

The Laches ends without Socrates, Laches, and Nicias discovering the meaning of courage. By ending the dialogue in that way, Plato leaves readers open to the ambiguity of courage, to the possibility that it involves some synthesis of wisdom and endurance, and, more importantly, to the idea that it is something that can, potentially, be lived everyday by all. For Tillich (1952), the failure of the characters in Laches to settle on a definition of courage “reveals a basic problem of human existence. It shows that an understanding of courage presupposes an understanding of [the human] and of his [sic] world, its
structures and values. Only he [sic] who knows this knows what to affirm and what to negate. The ethical question of the nature of courage leads inescapably to the ontological question of the nature of being" (p. 2).

According to Tillich (1952), courage—specifically stoic courage—posits interdependent relationships between fear of death and fear of life, and between the courage to live and the courage to die. Ontologically, stoic courage is the courage to be (Tillich, 1952). From Tillich’s view, the death of Socrates gave stoic courage life and shifted the meaning of courage in a way that suggested it was associated with wisdom.

Tillich (1952), presumably reflecting on the fact that Socrates did not attempt to escape his death sentence because of the restrictions inherent with the opportunities to do so, believes Socrates’ death “showed the human situation in the face of fate and death. It showed a courage which could affirm life because it could affirm death…. In Socrates the heroic courage of the past was made rational and universal. …Soldierly fortitude was transcended by the courage of wisdom” (Tillich, 1952, p. 11).

For Tillich (1952), courage is embedded in human existence. It is ontological in the sense that “it is a universal and essential affirmation of one’s being… [It is also an] ethical act in which [humans] affirm their own being in spite of those elements of their existence which conflict with their essential self-affirmation” (Tillich, 1952, p. 3). Being, from Tillich’s (1952) perspective, is life. It is the process of living—yet it coexists with nonbeing. Courage, from Tillich’s
view, is “self-affirmation ‘in spite of,’ namely in spite of nonbeing” (Tillich, 1952, p. 65). In the example above, Socrates affirmed and stood by his beliefs in spite of the fact that it would cost him his life—in spite of nonbeing.

Tillich (1952) also believes that courage and anxiety are interdependent. He defines anxiety as an existential awareness that nonbeing is part of one’s being. Fear is different than anxiety in that it is experienced in relation to a specific object. Fear is being afraid of something—for example, one might be afraid of pain, of being rejected, or of losing something or someone. The object of fear can be met with courage. It can be faced and endured, but courage cannot remove anxiety since nonbeing always exists with being.

According to Tillich (1952), self-affirmation has two distinguishable yet intertwined sides: the affirmation of self as a separate, individual, free, self-determining, and incomparable person; and the affirmation of self as a part of the universe to which one belongs “and from which one is separated at the same time” (Tillich, 1952, p. 86). The self affirms itself as a participant in the universe and as an individual. The courage to be is the courage to be as oneself and the courage to be as a part in interdependence (Tillich, 1952). The risk in the courage to be is the risk of “losing oneself and becoming a thing within the whole of things, or of losing one’s world in an empty self-relatedness” (Tillich, 1952, p. 155). The quality of everydayness that permeates Tillich’s discussion of courage is also illuminated in varying degrees by Servan-

Servan-Schreiber (1987) says, "There are only two important kinds of courage: the courage to die and the courage to get up in the morning. All other courage stems from these or is inspired by them" (p. 1). Everyday courage is not heroic courage. It is existential courage intertwined with what living is all about (Servan-Schreiber, 1987). It is the courage which impels individuals to move on and to choose their own path amid, or in spite of, the complexities and difficulties of day to day living in search of happiness. From Servan-Schreiber's perspective, everyday courage is universal and it plays a role in all human actions—even when one is not explicitly aware of it. In everyday circumstances, courage flows from reflective and pre-reflective motivations. When one has an explicit desire, it is the clear view of the end one wishes to attain that puts the means of attaining it into action.

Fear and laziness are the primary threats to courage (Servan-Schreiber, 1987). One’s mortality underpins one’s laziness and fear. Affirmation of one’s existence “even with the most elementary gestures, [happens] in spite of the presence, threat, certainty, and irreducible mystery of death. This is not heroism, since it is a matter of our common fate; however, it takes courage” (Servan-Schreiber, 1987, p. 78). Servan-Schreiber suggests that perhaps the moment of courage is the "passage into action in spite of laziness and fear. This
moment can be very short, but decisive. Once we have taken the plunge, the rest is a matter of the laws of gravity...." (p. 72).

The indispensability and the everydayness of courage described by Servan-Schreiber (1987) is reflected in the following excerpts from a poem about courage written by Anne Sexton (1981):

It is in the small things we see it.
The child's first step,
As awesome as an earthquake.
The first time you rode a bike,
Wallowing up the sidewalk.
The first spanking when your heart
Went on a journey all alone.
When they called you crybaby
Or poor or fatty or crazy
And made you into an alien,
You drank their acid
And concealed it...

Later,
When you face old age and its natural conclusion
Your courage will still be shown in the little ways,
Each spring will be a sword you'll sharpen,
Those you love will live in a fever of love,
And you'll bargain with the calendar
And at the last moment
When death opens the back door
You'll put on your carpet slippers
And stride out.

Similarly, O'Brien (1950) maintains that courage is needed by all humans—whether they are soldiers, athletes, scientists, saints, explorers, or ordinary men and women who engage in the commonplace duties of life. From O'Brien's perspective, courage is "a quality of mind which enables one to meet danger and difficulties with firmness and valor. It implies a subordination of fear
or pain to a fixed purpose or a steadfast resolution” (p. 7). He says there are three types of courage: physical, intellectual, and moral. Physical courage is displayed by, for example, athletes, shipwrecked sailors, and others who show great fortitude and stamina. Intellectual courage is involved in the accomplishment of intellectual feats. It is required by artists, scholars, scientists, and ordinary people who must solve the problems each day brings. Moral courage is the capacity to go against the social pressure of a group out of loyalty to one’s convictions (O’ Brien, 1950). O’Brien’s definition of moral courage is similar to the definitions of courage offered by Goldberg (1996), Mackenzie (1962), and Walton (1986), and it is almost identical to the central thesis of John F. Kennedy’s (1955/1961) book Profiles in Courage.

For example, in a manner reminiscent of the positions held by Aristotle (384-322BC/1985) and Plato (1977), Goldberg (1996) focuses on the moral good of the outcome of having courage. He defines courage as “a moral deed with an imperative aim” (p. 76), and says that, courage is “the individual’s expression of the ethic that each person should act as the maxim for every other person...[it] is the unwillingness to allow distractions, pastimes, or despair from diverting the self from its imperative to raise the consciousness of those with whom one’s existence is spent” (p. 76). Similarly, Mackenzie (1962) defines moral courage as a “readiness to expose oneself to suffering... that arises from firmness of moral principle... [and results] in mental suffering... or unpopularity” (p. 12). In his subsequent analysis, Mackenzie (1962) specifies
that truth, justice, compassion, common sense, and self-respect are the catalysts for moral courage.

Walton (1986) concurs that one is only courageous when the act of courage is for the sake of a morally worthy intention. For Walton, having courage must also include: careful presence of mind and deliberate action; and difficult, dangerous, and painful circumstances. Kennedy (1955/1961) agrees that courage is related to humans' commitment to beliefs and values thought to lead to the right, or even the morally correct, actions. Unlike the above noted authors, however, Kennedy maintains that courageousness is one's capacity to do what one believes is the right thing—but that it is not the ultimate rightness or wrongness of a position which determines the courageousness of an act.

Kennedy (1955/1961) begins his book by citing Ernest Hemmingway who said “courage is grace under pressure” (p. 1). Kennedy's book tells “the stories of the pressures experienced by eight United States Senators and the grace with which they endured them—the risks to their careers, the unpopularity of their courses, the defamation of their characters, and [only] sometimes...the vindication of their reputations and their principles” (Kennedy, 1955/1961, p. 1). Kennedy speaks about three types of pressure which discourage acts of political courage and which can drive Senators to abandon their conscience, their morality, and their integrity: Senators want to be liked; they want to be re-elected; and they must withstand lobbying from their constituency, the interest groups, the organized letter writers, the economic blocs, and the average voter.
Having courage is the ability of persons to choose actions true to their “deep-seated beliefs in themselves, their integrity, and the rightness of their cause” (Kennedy, 1955/1961, p. 241) in spite of pressures to do otherwise. Some of the statesmen mentioned by Kennedy demonstrated courage “through their unyielding devotion to absolute principle. Others demonstrated courage through their acceptance of compromise, through their advocacy of conciliation, or through their willingness to replace conflict with co-operation” (p. 241). In spite of the pressures of public disapproval, they all demonstrated a firm commitment to their belief that their course of action was the best one. In the final chapter Kennedy says:

The courage of life is often a less dramatic spectacle than the courage of a final moment; but it is no less a magnificent mixture of triumph and tragedy. A man does what he must—in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures—and that is the basis of all human morality. To be courageous...requires no exceptional qualifications, no magic formula, no special combination of time, place and circumstance. It is an opportunity that sooner or later is presented to us all. Politics merely furnishes one arena which imposes special tests of courage. In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, whatever may be the sacrifices he faces if he follows his conscience—the loss of his friends, his fortune, his contentment, even the esteem of his fellow men—each man must decide for himself the course he will follow. (p. 246)

For Kennedy (1955/1961) then, courage is a universal phenomenon—lived out by all humans at some time in some arena of life when they make choices to follow certain courses despite pressures. Similar to the works of Aristotle (384-322BC/1985) and Plato (1977), Kennedy (1955/1961) believes
courage is a virtue. May (1975), Aquinas (1964), and Desmond (1927) further explicate the notion of courage as a virtue.

From May's (1975) view, courage is the foundation that underlies and gives value to all other virtues and personal values. He believes humanness, worth, and dignity arise with commitment to personal choices and ultimately require courage. Courage is the "capacity to move ahead in spite of despair" (p. 12) and it is essential to being and becoming (May, 1975). Within this context, May distinguishes four categories of courage: physical, moral, social, and creative. The first category, physical courage, is the most rudimentary. It is based on myths of the frontier where survival is dependent on one's physical ability to endure hardships and to protect one's self, one's loved ones, and one's values.

The second category, moral courage, is grounded in one's willingness to recognize and to be sensitive to the suffering of other human beings (May, 1975). It is, in essence, the righting of wrongs. May suggests that when one does not want to decide whether or not to assist someone who is being treated unjustly, the tendency is to blind oneself to the other's suffering — since seeing it would force one to do something about it. Persons with moral courage perceive others' difficulties and act on their perceptions.

Social courage is the courage to engage in meaningful, intimate relationships with others (May, 1975). Intimacy with others requires risking oneself since one cannot know how relationships will turn out. May suggests
that the risk of intimacy connects with the fear of being abandoned and, paradoxically, with the fear of being totally absorbed by the other and losing one's independence.

Creative courage, according to May (1975), is the most important kind. It is "the discovering of new forms, new symbols, [and] new patterns on which a new society can be built" (May, 1975, p. 21). Those who present the new forms and symbols are the artists – they live out their imaginations. Those who glimpse new possibilities while appreciating what the artist has presented also engage in a creative act. Creativity requires courage because it provokes jealousy and it threatens the status quo which society is devoted to protecting (May, 1975).

Similar to May (1975), Aquinas (1964) distinguishes courage as one of the four cardinal virtues. Aquinas defines courage as "a disposition of the soul to stand firm to what is in accord with reason amid the sundry assaults of passion or the hardships of practice" (Aquinas, 1964, p. 127). It is inseparably connected with the other cardinal virtues: prudence, temperance, and justice. According to Aquinas, prudence is "a judgment of reason" (p. 121) which may be resisted by human emotions. Human emotions may cause one to "shirk a course of action dictated by reason, through fear of dangers or hardships" (Aquinas, p. 121). When this is the case, the person needs courage "to be steadfast and not run away from what is right" (Aquinas, p. 121). Courage is essentially the strength of mind which makes obedience to the dictates of
reason possible. For Aquinas, courage is the virtue upon which all other moral virtues are dependent; whereas, for Desmond (1927), courage is the most admired and the most honored of the virtues.

Desmond (1927) believes courage is “the soul of progress” (p. 50). In describing courage Desmond writes:

Bravery is daring courage, intrepidity is cool and lofty courage, and fortitude is courage of an enduring character. Its exercise is not in great exploits, where the quality of heroism inspires. Fortitude is the quiet discharge of duty in the face of danger or obloquy. It is the choice of the right with unwavering resolution. It is virtue fighting for the truth, yet calm and unwavering in the storm (pp. 40-41).

According to Desmond (1927), courage can be classified as: physical, moral, or intellectual. Physical courage is primal. It is the love for danger and the spirit of adventure inherent in human nature (Desmond, 1927). Intellectual courage is the courage of opinion. It is sturdiness of character found in day-to-day human living and it shows itself when humans are loyal to their beliefs and think for themselves despite social pressures to do otherwise. The price of intellectual courage is often loss of respect from others, but the benefit is keeping one’s self-respect (Desmond, 1927).

Moral courage is not well described by Desmond (1927). He defines it as a higher and rarer form of intellectual courage reserved to describe the endurance of, for example, early Christian martyrs who suffered cruel deaths rather than worshipping false gods. Courage, from Desmond’s perspective, is akin to will power. It is sustained by one’s motives—which may include “high
principles, deep affections, true loyalties, faith, or patriotism” (p. 41). In a similar manner, other authors embrace a view of courage as something associated with inner strength (Frankl, 1959/1984) or with internal force (Kohut, 1992).

Courage, from Frankl’s (1959/1984) view, is associated with inner strength. Humans’ inner strength “can raise [them] above [their] outward fate” (Frankl, 1959/1984. P. 76). A strong proponent of situated freedom, Frankl believes that “everything can be taken from [humans] but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances” (1959/1984, p. 75). Frankl uses descriptions of his own experiences in a concentration camp to demonstrate how one can maintain hope and courage in even the most atrocious situations. He maintains that courage can be restored, strengthened, or given to persons by helping them find meaning in their lives—possibly in the form of a future goal. Striving to find a meaning in one’s life “is the primary motivational force in man” (Frankl, 1959/1984, p. 104). Nothing helps one survive, even in the most horrific conditions, as much as the knowledge that there is meaning in one’s life. The meaning of one’s life is closely related to one’s ideas, principles, and ambitions—all key components in Kohut’s (1992) discussion of courage.

Kohut (1992), a psychologist, believes courage is an internal force that pushes outward against external pressure to keep the nuclear self from collapsing or caving in. Courage empowers the nuclear self to remain faithful to its deeply held ideals, purposes, and ambitions despite pressure to change or
conform. Kohut says humans are made up of multiple, competing selves. Courage “enables the victory of the nuclear self over the other selves” (Haitch, 1995, p. 87). It empowers self-affirmation. Kohut believes everyone can have courage; however, full assertion of the nuclear self is rare since the constraints of living in society make one fearful of developing unique ways of self-expression and creativity. The idea that courage is related to facing fear is mentioned by the majority of the authors previously discussed (Aquinas, 1964; Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985; May, 1975; O’Brien, 1950; Plato, 1961; Rorty, 1988; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952) and is further supported by the works of Putman (1997), Rachman (1978), and Rankin (1988).

Putman (1997) says all courage is, in some way, psychological and concerned with facing fear. He believes physical, moral, and psychological courage can be differentiated in relation to the type of fear which must be faced and the goal that is to be obtained. For instance, ‘physical courage is “characterized by overcoming a fear of death or physical harm…moral courage is tied to dealing with social disapproval…and fear of loss of ethical integrity or authenticity” (Putman, 1997, p. 1), and psychological courage is related to dealing with fear of loss of psychological stability (Putman, 1997). Putman assumes psychological courage is necessary “to face irrational fears and anxieties…those passions which…hold us in bondage. These can range from habits and compulsions to phobias…. It is the psyche itself whose loss is threatened” (Putman, 1997, p. 2).
In a similar way, Rachman (1978) defines courage as being "willing and able to approach a fearful situation despite the presence of subjective fear and psychophysiological disturbances" (Rachman, 1978, p. 25). He acknowledges that fearlessness is often regarded as synonymous with courage, but that he believes courage occurs when one perseveres in spite of fear. According to Rachman, courageous behavior "is determined predominantly by a combination of competence and confidence, and both of these behaviors are strengthened by repeated and successful practice" (Rachman, 1978, p. 248). Rachman spent time with army troops who reported that "a courageous example encouraged them to imitate that behavior and boosted their self-confidence" (p. 78). Rachman also notes that motivation and situational demand—including persons' sense of responsibility to themselves and to others, the effect of group membership and group morale, and the need to avoid disapproval—are important in determining courageous behavior.

Finally, Rankin (1988) defines courage as "the gallant, persistent struggle to affirm life precisely when fears would otherwise turn us in upon ourselves.... It is dogged perseverance in remaining open to the breadth and depth of life when realistic fears tempt us instead to cease our trust, to forsake our commitments beyond our private selves" (p. 47). Rankin believes courage cannot be given to someone—it is found inside the self. It is a "cultivated quality of enduring the things that cannot be changed while changing the things that cannot be endured—with a touch of poise and dignity" (Rankin, 1988, p. 47).
Theoretical Literature in Nursing

Scholars in nursing have written very little about the phenomenon of courage. There are articles in the nursing literature which recount stories of persons with courage (see for example, Rawnsley, 1994), yet only two nursing citations—one written from a simultaneity paradigm perspective (Bunkers, 1999) and one written from a totality paradigm perspective (Carnevali, 1983)—contain a unique theoretical discussion of the phenomenon.

Working from a simultaneity paradigm (Parse, 1987) perspective, Bunkers (1999) proposes that the process of encountering courageously life’s turning points is one of five core processes of discovery for teaching-learning. The other four core processes are: living a passionate presence, touching lightly the now, participating with others in love and hospitality, and acknowledging mystery. Bunkers says life’s turning points emerge with triumphs and defeats—and to “find a new way of relating—to transcend a difficult situation—requires courage” (p. 28). For Bunkers (1999), having courage “requires tenacity and a sense of the ridiculous. Tenacity is needed to continue on when the triumphs and defeats of tomorrow are not known. It means engaging the unfamiliar and moving with new possibilities...A sense of the ridiculous is needed for laughing at the incongruities and struggles in human experience” (p. 28). Courage, from Bunkers’ perspective, is a universal human experience since all humans encounter turning points in their lives. As well, the
idea that courage involves risk is inherent in Bunkers' statement that tenacity means engaging the unfamiliar. Risk is also a key idea in Carnevali's (1983) discussion of courage.

Carnevali (1983) approaches courage from a totality paradigm view (Parse, 1987). According to Carnevali, courage is defined as risk-taking capacity and courage deficit is a legitimate nursing diagnosis. Courage deficits are "identified in terms of self-perceived personal risk or threat, rather than the lack of understanding or desire" (p. 253). From this perspective, risk-taking capacity can be evaluated objectively either by viewing clients engaging in behaviors that have been identified as threatening or by viewing clients engaging in behaviors aimed at reducing their feeling of vulnerability. Such behaviors may include rehearsing or role playing the threatening situation or discussing the risk. Subjective data to assess risk-taking capacity may come from clients reporting, for example, plans to engage in risk-taking behaviors or perceptions of decreased risk.

**Research Literature**

Research on the phenomenon *courage* has been conducted by scholars from a variety of disciplines including psychology, anthropology, political science, and nursing. Although there are limitations in the studies reported, there are insights that emerge from their findings which are useful in developing a deeper understanding of the human experience of having courage.
Psychology Research Literature

The majority of the research on courage has been reported by scholars from the discipline of psychology—including Asarian (1981), Oppenheim (1996), Evans and White (1981), Szagun (1992), Szagun and Schauble (1997), Cuff (1993), Bolster (1996), and Lucas (1994). Asarian (1981) designed an empirical phenomenological study to investigate the phenomenon of courage as it is lived in the everyday life-world. The three research questions that guided the study were: What does it mean to perceive courage in another’s action; what does it mean for a subject to be courageous within his own experience of his behavior; and what are the dimensions of the phenomenon that were not present existentially in concrete situations? Initially, three subjects were selected and asked, first in writing and then in an interview, to identify and describe someone they perceived to be courageous. Asarian then asked the courageous persons identified by the first three subjects to speak and write about situations in which they were courageous as well as situations in which they wished they had been more courageous. Asarian identified ‘meaning units’ in the participants’ language and identified critical themes in the data.

The essential structure of courage reported as the main finding in Asarian’s (1981) study was: “Courage is an intended, arduous, behavioral commitment to values despite formidable conflict, fear, and suffering—including death if need be — for the intersubjective significance and intrinsic worth these values are perceived to possess” (p. 135). Thus, Asarian postulated that
courage is motivated by: commitment to values despite awareness of risk, intersubjectivity, the intrinsic meaning of the action, and fear of negative totalization—which he described as an intention to prevent oneself from becoming something one does not want to be.

In addition to the essential structure of courage given above, Asarian (1981) reported that two fundamental styles of courage emerged as findings in his study: assertive determined and dignified acceptance. Assertive determined courage was lived out by Asarian's participants in ways involving "a direct assault upon a challenge. The actors [sought] out opportunities to test themselves and forceful action [was] lived as an experienced entity. The style [was] further characterized by an active pride in accomplishment and likewise a personal mobilization through a direct refusal to give in to resistance" (Asarian, 1981, p. 68).

The second style of courage reported as a finding in Asarian's (1981) study, dignified acceptance, was characterized by participants' "acceptance of realistic limitations, a sensitive concern for others, and a radical openness to [one's] own feelings. There is still a willingness to take maximum responsibility for the self. However, this takes the form of in depth sustaining power in accepting limitations rather than a determined project to overcome them. There is an openness to paradox and satisfaction in the struggle" (Asarian, 1981, p. 68). The two fundamental styles of courage identified by Asarian were used as the conceptual framework for Oppenheim's (1996) work.
Oppenheim (1996) conducted an analysis of literary and historical accounts of courage. The purposes of the analysis were to explore the relationship between gender and type of courage, and to show that current ways of conceptualizing courage do not adequately capture the experience of courage—particularly for women. Oppenheim selected texts or stories which contain descriptions of women who have either been labeled as courageous, or who have been described as displaying those characteristics or behaviors which others have used in their definitions of courage.

Using Asarian’s (1981) distinction between the assertive determined and dignified acceptance styles of courage as a conceptual framework, Oppenheim (1996) examined the usual way courageous women have been portrayed and treated when exhibiting one type of courage or the other. The analysis culminated in a summary of the underlying messages communicated to women about their capacities for courage. The messages included the perceptions that: courageous women endure hardship and suffer silently; women are not meant to be heroes; a woman can be strong and powerful if she is an exception to the rule, if her power is justified through connection to a masculine figure, or if she is more like men than other women; women are incapable of reason; and women should not think for themselves. In light of these messages, Oppenheim concluded that courage needs to be redefined from a feminist perspective and suggested courage “might involve women finding and identifying their own truths; being willing to speak these truths out loud, in spite of the likely
consequences; and finally, being able to act in ways that affirm and live out their visions and experiences, creating the potential for empowerment and growth of the self” (p. 178).

Oppenheim’s (1996) work is clearly written and flows from its conceptual framework; however, the method of selecting and analyzing the texts and stories is not clear. The work is hermeneutic in nature and would have been clearer had it followed a rigorous hermeneutic method of inquiry (see for example, Cody, 1995; Parse, 1998). In addition, Oppenheim’s analysis as reported does not address the stated purpose of the entire work—to explore the relationship between gender and type of courage—since it focuses almost exclusively on accounts of courage involving women. Oppenheim’s focus on the relationship between gender and courage is related to the findings reported by Evans and White (1981) which support that there are gender-related differences in how courage is attributed to another.

Evans and White (1981) conducted a correlational study with 124 students 11 to 14 years of age. Their aim was “to seek an empirical definition of courage” and “to find out something about what courage actually means to people.” Their research questions were: “How is the concept of courage generally understood,” and “Does courage have different meanings for individuals at different developmental stages?” The research questions, as stated, are not appropriate for the correlational design of the study. By definition, correlational investigations are used to determine if there are
relationships between the dependant and independent variables under investigation—they are not appropriate to answer questions about the meaning of phenomena. As will be evident in the following discussion, Evans and White did not adequately answer their first research question.

Each participant in Evan's and White's (1981) study randomly viewed one of eight possible videos of either a male or a female actor handling a snake. Subjects then answered questions, using a Likert scale, regarding their perceptions of how frightened the actor was, how frightened they would have been to pick up the snake, and how brave they thought the person in the film was. Evans and White examined the relationships between the dependent variable “bravery attributed to another,” and the independent variables: “fear level of the student;” “fear attributed to an actor handling a snake;” “age of the student;” “gender of the student;” and “gender of the actor handling the snake.”

The dependant variable, bravery attributed to another, was classified into two naive modes: “attributing bravery if one is afraid oneself,” and “identifying bravery with fearlessness;” and one sophisticated mode: “bravery as a result of approach by a fearful person.” Fear level of the student (p<.001) and gender of the student (p<.05) were found to be significant predictors of bravery attributed to another. Further analysis showed that use of the sophisticated mode of attribution of bravery was significant in attributing bravery to the male actors but not in attributing bravery to the female actors (Evans & White, 1981). In addition, the findings revealed an increased use of the sophisticated mode of
attribution with increasing age (p<.01). The older children in the study were more likely to attribute bravery to the actors if they approached the snake fearfully (Evans & White, 1981). This finding is similar to those reported in two other studies which examined age-related changes in understanding of courage (Szagun, 1992; Szagun & Schauble, 1997)

Szagun (1992) conducted a descriptive comparative study to examine age-related changes in children's understanding of courage. Courage was defined by Szagun as an emotion-related mental construct that encompasses overcoming fear and requires cognitive advances with respect to understanding of risk-taking. Szagun divided a sample of 90 children into three equal age groups and used structured interviews with questions and scenarios addressing risk-taking, overcoming fear, and awareness of risk. In addition, the children were asked to rate the degree of courage necessary for 12 different risks on a five-point Likert scale. Six items involved physical risks and six items encompassed psychological and social risks. The final two items related to going into a cage and getting mixed up in a fight.

The results of the interviews were coded into two categories: mentalistic answers and physicalistic answers. Subjects were assigned a score for how often their answers were mentalistic. A chi square analysis was used to compare the frequency of answer categories for each age group. Szagun (1992) reported that the frequency of mentalistic answers increased significantly between the 5 to 6 year old age group and the 8 to 9 year old age group (p<.05)
(Szagun, 1992). The frequency of associating courage with subjective-risk, overcoming-fear, and reflective—risk-taking also increased with age (Szagun, 1992). The 5 to 6 year olds rated physical risks as being the most courageous, whereas the older children rated psychological or social risks, especially morally good risks, as being the most courageous.

Szagun’s (1992) study suggested there may be age-related differences in children’s understanding of courage; nevertheless, it should be noted that there are several potential measurement and ethical problems with the study as it is reported. For example, ethical issues are not addressed in the report, validity assessment of the rating tool developed for the study is not reported, and auditability of the findings from the interview data is not adequate. These potential weaknesses should alert readers to interpret the reported results with caution. Failure to report how ethical issues were addressed is also a limitation of the study of age-related differences in how courage is experienced and described that was conducted by Szagun & Schauble (1997).

Szagun and Schauble (1997) did a descriptive-exploratory comparative study to determine how children and adults describe their experience of courage, and to explore the emotional experience of courage systematically. Courage was defined as the quality shown by someone who does something difficult or dangerous even though she or he may be afraid. It is a complex emotion involving a combination of different emotional and mental states (Szagun & Schauble, 1997). Eighty participants in four age groups—6 year
olds, 9 year olds, 14 year olds, and adults—participated in an open-ended interview. They were asked to think of a situation in which they were courageous and to answer questions designed to elicit a description of their thoughts and feelings about being courageous. The six year olds' responses were tape-recorded. The other age groups submitted written responses. The interviews were transcribed and all data were coded into categories. The authors reported the frequency of answers in each category by age group. In describing situations in which they felt courage, the frequency with which the adults described "psychological risk"—as opposed to "physical risk"—was significantly higher than the combined younger groups (p < .001). In response to a question about how they were thinking and feeling during the situations in which they felt courage, the 14 year olds and the adults described 'feeling a strong urge to act' significantly more often than the 6 and 9 year old age groups (p < .001). When combined, the 6, 9, and 14 year old age groups reported using psychological strategies to help themselves feel courageous less frequently than the adult group (p < .001).

Based on the assumption that persons are courageous if they have responded in exemplary ways to serious life trauma, Cuff (1993) used methodological triangulation to generate a theory about courage and its development in individuals. Cuff related having used both a phenomenological and a quasi-experimental approach; however there is no evidence in the report that a research method consistent with phenomenology was used. The
qualitative section of the study was descriptive and did not follow any specific qualitative research method. It consisted of several semi-structured interview questions that were analyzed using content analysis. The study reported by Cuff is not a good example of methodological triangulation since methodological triangulation, by definition, involves the researcher conducting two or more distinct investigations using two or more research methods to gather data about a specific phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The participants in Cuff's (1993) study included 10 women who had been sexually assaulted, 10 people with severe physical disabilities, and 10 people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). The semi-structured interviews resulted in 14 themes including the ideas that courage includes: fearlessness and fearfulness; anticipation, immersion, and resolution; acknowledging fear; and tolerating loss and moving through it. Courageous people are humble, tenacious, spiritual, and caring. Courageous people also enjoy humor, have a purpose in life, and live in the present. Encouragement and courageous role models are sources of courage.

Cuff (1993) also used several instruments to measure factors related to courage: values, hopefulness, interest in others, self-actualization, and moral reasoning. The reliability and validity of all instruments used is reported in detail. The participants' scores on the Rokeach Value Survey, the Hope Scale, the Social Interest Scale, the Personal Orientation Inventory, and the Defining
Issues Test were compared with control groups drawn from standardized databases used for comparison groups for each tool. There were no significant differences between the participants and the comparison groups for most items on the instruments used. The exceptions were that the study group had a significantly (p=.008) higher degree of hope than an average group of American adults and a significantly (p=.01) higher degree of social interest than 327 adult university employees. The lack of a larger number of significant findings may have been the result of the study not having a large enough sample to detect differences even if they actually exist; however, the failure to note many significant differences between a group thought to be courageous and normal control groups, supports the conceptualization of having courage as a universal lived experience with the potential to show itself in any realm of day-to-day living—an idea supported by the works of two other investigators who focused on courage in the workplace (Bolster, 1996) and in transformative learning situations (Lucas, 1994).

Bolster (1996) conducted a two-phase quantitative study to explore the nature of courage in the workplace. Phase one was a survey of 77 middle managers from three large private sector companies. The survey tool was developed for this study. Reliability and validity were not reported. Findings showed that courageous acts reported by the participants fell into 4 categories: taking an unpopular position, decision-making, upholding an expectation/standard, and persevering. Courageous acts involved subjects’
superiors 70% percent of the time; 85% of the courageous acts were preceded by anxiety or fear, 65% reported negative feelings during the courageous act, and 73% of the subjects reported positive feelings following the courageous act. The consequences of courageous acts were perceived as positive in 85% of the cases.

In phase two, Bolster (1996) used a pretest—posttest design with a control group to examine the relationship between acts of courage and the development of personal empowerment. The validity of the battery of tools used to measure the construct empowerment is reported extensively. The treatment group received a courageous acts checklist to document courageous acts over a 10-week period. Unfortunately, most of the treatment group did not complete and submit documentation as instructed. The pretest sample consisted of 41 managers from four organizations. Subject mortality was a threat to the internal validity of this portion of the study since the posttest sample decreased to 27. A total of 45 acts of courage were documented by the treatment group. Eighteen were described by the control group as part of the posttest follow-up. Bolster noted significantly greater change (p=.03) in the self-efficacy score of subjects in the treatment group and suggested one might conclude that reflectively thinking about and acknowledging one’s actions as courageous are related to self-efficacy. This finding is similar to some of the descriptions of courage given by participants in Lucas’ (1994) study.
Lucas (1994) reported an exploration of the nature and role of courage in transformative learning using a phenomenological design; however, the study design would more appropriately be described as descriptive-exploratory. It is not consistent with any phenomenological methods. Eight research questions were used to guide the study. They were concerned with defining and describing transformative learning and courage, as well as with exploring the relationship between the two concepts. In-depth interviews were conducted with nine participants. Several questions were specifically related to the research questions, while others were related to participants' perceived fears during a transformative learning event. Lucas reported what each participant said, but did not synthesize the findings into shared themes. Lucas said courage was variously described as taking risks, making oneself vulnerable, the juice that makes things happen, letting in the will of something greater, searching for truth, having faith, putting life back together after a traumatic event, triumph over adversity, overcoming obstacles, showing tenacity, and endurance. Sources of courage described by the participants included: self-esteem, emotions, commitment to values, relationships, letting in the will of something higher, a mystery, and stepping outside oneself to a different role.

**Anthropology Research Literature**

One study on courage was found in anthropology. Bologna (1996) conducted an ethnography using the life histories method. The purpose of the
investigation was to bring to the forefront issues concerning women and language and to see whether or not women from a variety of backgrounds thought of themselves as courageous. The 12 participants in this study were all women who had done something in their lives considered outside the norm for women in their culture. During interviews participants were asked to describe the culture in which they grew up, the expectations of them growing up in that culture, the way the expectations were communicated to them, and an incident in their lives in which they behaved in a way which was outside the norm circumscribed by those expectations. Bologna described using an analysis process consistent with ethnography; however, the findings were not presented clearly and succinctly and readers have to wade through the stories and descriptions to discover themes.

The participants in Bologna's (1996) study responded in a variety of ways about their abilities to follow through with their choices in the face of obstacles, hurdles, and in more than one case, ostracism. Courage was described by Bologna's participants as "an opposition to something," "walking through fear," "daring," "standing out," "saying what you believe in," "faith and trust in the outcome," "strength," "having confidence in the self," and "an energy to influence change" (p. 107). Most of the participants initially questioned whether the word courage applied to them. Through the process of participating in the interviews, each of the women's perceptions shifted. "Through their spoken language, [they] began to experience the memories of their actions
differently…. The women were allowing themselves access to language – the language of courage – which broadened their spoken representation of their experiences” (p.112).

**Political Science Research Literature**

Schimel (1990) used a cross-sectional research design to explore courage with 24 persons from a variety of backgrounds. In an interview, participants were asked to describe an event that displayed their true capacities. They were also asked to complete three self-assessment tools related to locus of control, life attitudes, and personal perspectives. The reliability and validity of the three tools are not known. From all of these sources, Schimel summarized that participants described courage as: modest daily actions required in the process of everyday living; doing what is right for oneself; being true to one’s values; persevering; taking appropriate risks for personal change; facing reality; sacrificing some possibilities in order to realize others; being all you can be; taking responsibility for one’s actions; considering the well-being of others; and being spiritual. Schimel’s participants believed that passion, authenticity, and commitment give individuals courage. In order to become courageous, one must have an awareness of one’s values and desires, an openness to change, and a willingness to go through pain. Schimel's participants also indicated that the initial impetus for courage may come from one’s relationships with others or from a spiritual force.
Nursing Research Literature

Five of the existing studies on courage were conducted within the discipline of nursing by Donohue-Porter (1987), Haase (1985), Lawrence (1993), and Finfgeld (1992, 1998). Donohue-Porter (1987) used Colaizzi's phenomenological method in a study in which ten persons living with complications associated with diabetes were interviewed to illuminate their experience of courage. The primary research question that guided the study was: What is the role of courage and how is it experienced and manifested in the person with diabetes complications? Donohue-Porter also listed 12 sub-questions including: "Is courage a universal phenomenon;" "Is courage an untapped resource in chronic illness;" "How do patients with diabetes complications view courage;" and "What sustains the person through the development of courage?"

A structure of courage was reported as the answer to the research questions. For the persons with diabetes who participated courage is "a dynamic state which can be nurtured by one's own resources or through inspiration of others" (Donohue-Porter, 1987, p.122). It is a search for meaning and can be difficult to maintain. Courage is both pleasant and unpleasant, it requires commitment and is realized within the context of interpersonal relationships (Donohue-Porter, 1987).
Although the findings of Donohue-Porter's (1987) study shed light on the phenomenon of courage, there were difficulties with the rigor and credibility of the study as it was reported. First, the phenomenological design was not consistent with Colaizzi's method as it is published (Colaizzi, 1978). For example, the research questions were not stated in a manner congruent with Colaizzi's method and the data gathering method reportedly followed a combination of Spradley's (1979) ethnographic method and Bogdan and Bilken's (1982) qualitative method. Colaizzi's phenomenological method was used for data analysis only. According to Parse (1996a), "This misuse is why...phenomenological methods have been called 'soft science.' The phenomenological methods...[are] governed by rigorous processes in data gathering and data analysis, and, unless the processes are adhered to, the sciencing is not sound and the critiques of it are correct" (pp. 12-13). In this instance, Donohue-Porter (1987) used a modification of Colaizzi's phenomenological method without acknowledging or justifying having done so. Use of rigorous processes for data gathering and analysis was more clear in the two other nursing studies in which Colaizzi's phenomenological method was also used (Haase, 1985; Lawrence, 1993).

Haase (1985) used Colaizzi's phenomenological method to identify the common elements of courage as it was experienced by nine adolescents with chronic illness. The research question was: What is the essential structure of the lived experience of courage in chronically ill adolescents? Data were
gathered using three open-ended interview questions: "Please describe a situation in which you were courageous;" "Describe your experience exactly as you remember it including your thoughts, feelings, and perceptions as you remember experiencing them;" and "Please continue to describe your experience until you feel it is completely described." Participants spoke about courage associated with having heart surgery, having leukemia, dealing with a bone marrow transplant, having a kidney transplant, and being different. The essential structure of courage was not synthesized into a meaningful statement, but rather reported as a list of short sentences more descriptive of the participants' illness trajectories than of the structure of courage itself. Close examination of Haase's findings reveals that the essential structure of courage reported as the main finding of the study includes reference to courage as: involving danger; requiring endurance; depending on supportive relationships with others; and contributing to definition of self. These findings are similar to those reported by Lawrence (1993).

Lawrence (1993) also used Colaizzi's phenomenological method to answer the research question: What is the essential structure of the lived experience of courage in serious mental illness? Some of the key points reported as the answer to the research question include descriptions of the difficulties of living with mental illness and of the process of coming to have hope, acknowledging and accepting the illness, becoming empowered and
committing to getting well, continuing on despite setbacks, having a sense of control, and overcoming fears.

The human becoming theory was reported as the conceptual framework for Lawrence's (1993) study; however, there were several conceptual problems with the way in which several principles and concepts of the theory were interpreted. At the beginning of the study, Lawrence conceptually related the experience of courage with powering, originating, transforming, and valuing and stated “courage is the powering of values by originating new ways of living” (p. 14). The findings are then presented within another conceptual framework—stages Lawrence derived from the work A Hero's Journey (Campbell & Moyer, 1988). There was a short paragraph in the discussion section connecting the findings with concepts of the human becoming theory. Lawrence reported:

“powering the living of one’s values, the pushing-resisting force of affirming the self, despite the threat of nonbeing is the situation which the participants in this study described. Originating, the manifestation of enabling and limiting valuing is the process the participants described as they accepted the unacceptable and expanded their vision of the possibilities of meaningful existence. Transformation for the participants took place as they let go of the old world views and images of self in order to make connections with new ways of being successful in the world” p. 117).

According to the standards for qualitative research specified by Burns (1989), auditability was not properly addressed in this portion of the study. For instance, Lawrence (1993) did not report how decisions to relate the findings with specific theoretical concepts were made, nor was it clear what data the decisions were based upon. Since readers are not certain the theoretical
statements above are connected to the data, the contribution of the findings to the knowledge base of nursing, specifically the human becoming school of thought, is questionable. In general, the previously described studies on courage conducted in nursing have either not made explicit (Donohue-Porter, 1987; Haase, 1985), or have improperly used (Lawrence, 1993) a nursing framework. Thus, they have not expanded understanding of nursing's unique knowledge base. This is also true of the following two investigations (Finfgeld, 1992, 1998) in which the method chosen to guide the studies precludes the explicit use of a nursing framework.

The study by Finfgeld (1992) was conducted within the discipline of nursing using a grounded theory methodology to develop a conceptual framework of courage for elderly persons with chronic illness. Finfgeld clearly and concisely reported how the grounded theory methodology was followed from initial conceptualization of the study through the data analysis. Consistent with the method, theoretical sampling was used to recruit 21 chronically-ill elderly participants. The initial sampling was guided by a literature review and a pilot study. Data analysis led to the development of a conceptual model of becoming and being courageous. The conceptual findings in the model included the notions that courage was seen as: encompassing a variety of coping strategies; being necessary when there is an identifiable threat; involving some mental and physical struggle in order to resolve a threat; and transforming a struggle into a challenge. Courage was also conceptualized as: requiring
commitment, long-term determination, and perceived control; being based on problem-solving moderated by discernment; including quiet acceptance; and being strengthened by significant others, hope, and input from healthcare providers. These findings were used by Finfgeld (1998) to inform the theoretical sampling process in another grounded theory study conducted to answer the research question: What role does courage play in the management of persistent health concerns among middle-aged adults?

The purpose of Finfgeld’s (1998) investigation was to develop a substantive theory of courage in middle-aged adults with long-term health concerns. Similar to her earlier work (Finfgeld, 1992), Finfgeld (1998) clearly demonstrates how the grounded theory methodology guided the entire research process. The constant comparative method was used to analyze interview data from meetings with 25 participants between 40 and 64 years of age who were living in their own homes with long-term health concerns. The open-ended interview questions focused on the participants’ descriptions and perspectives of how courage helped them manage their illnesses; on ways to promote courage; and on the outcomes of being courageous. The findings—which were connected with previous research on courage, with recommendations for future investigations, and with practice—are defined as interdependent. They include the view that courage is “an ongoing progressive-regressive process of becoming and being courageous” (Finfgeld, 1998, p. 153); and that courage involves awareness and acceptance of threats, problem solving, enhanced
sensitivity to oneself and the world, taking responsibility, and being productive. Courage was also reported to be affected by one's values, self-confidence, hope, role models, and relationships. The outcomes of being courageous were found to include "personal integrity and thriving in the midst of normality" (Finfgeld, 1998, p. 153). Finfgeld (1998) established the credibility of the study findings by obtaining feedback from the participants mid and post data analysis. The auditability of the report was enhanced by the use of examples from the participants' data that supports the findings.

**Summary of Theoretical and Research Literature**

Existing literature reveals multiple conceptualizations of the meaning and scope of courage. Views of courage as synonymous with fearlessness (Murray et al., 1989), or with the dispositions necessary to engage in combat (Aristotle, 384-322 BC/1985; Rorty, 1988), have been gradually expanded, and to some extent even replaced, by conceptualizations which connect it with taking risks (Plato, 1961, 1977) and with wisdom (Aquinas, 1964; Plato, 1961; Tillich, 1952), endurance (Aquinas, 1964; May, 1975; Plato, 1961, 1977), perseverance (Rachman, 1978; Rankin, 1988), or persistence (Tillich, 1952). Courage has been considered the capacity: to move ahead in spite of despair (May, 1975); to affirm self in spite of factors which conflict with self-affirmation (Kennedy, 1955/1961; Rankin, 1988; Tillich, 1952); to meet dangers and difficulties (O'Brien, 1950; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Walton, 1986); and to face personal
fears (Putman, 1997; Rachman, 1978; Tillich, 1952), risks, or threats (Bunkers, 1999; Carnevali, 1983).

Courage is sometimes described as one of the four cardinal virtues (Aquinas, 1964; Desmond, 1927; Kennedy, 1955/1961; May, 1975; Plato, 1961, 1977). It is thought to be the foundation that underpins and gives value to all other virtues and values (May, 1975). Having courage includes following one's judgments about what is best (Goldberg, 1996; Kennedy, 1955/1961; Rorty, 1988) and striving for what is noble (Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985; Plato, 1961, 1977; Walton, 1986) for a fixed purpose or a steadfast resolution (O'Brien, 1950). Courage is sustained by one's motives, loyalties, and principles (Desmond, 1927). It flows from reflective and pre-reflective motivations and desires (Servan-Schreiber, 1987), and it relates to remaining faithful to one's most enduring values, ideals, goals, purposes, and ambitions (Goldberg, 1996; Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; Rankin, 1988; Rogers, 1993).

Courage is also associated with energy, spirit, liveliness, vigor (Murray et al., 1989), and boldness (Rogers, 1993). It is defined as one's inner strength (Frankl, 1959/1984) or will power (Desmond, 1927). According to Kohut (1992), courage is like an internal force that empowers self-affirmation of the nuclear self. Courage impels individuals to move on day-by-day with their personal struggles (Servan-Schreiber, 1987).

The works of May (1975), Kohut (1992), Kennedy (1955/1961), Servan-Schreiber (1987), Tillich (1952), and Bunkers (1999) support the notion that
courage is a universal experience essential to being—a perspective most closely associated with the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998). From the human becoming perspective (Parse, 1981, 1998), having courage is universally experienced by unitary humans. The notion that having courage is a universal experience is supported by the works of the authors noted above. Some of their definitions of courage, however, either do not specifically support a unitary view of humans (Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; May, 1975; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952), or do not distinguish the idea that courage is existential from the idea that courage is a universal lived experience (Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952). May (1975) acknowledges that courage is essential to being and becoming, but implies that humans are physical, moral, and social beings—rather than unitary wholes who are different from the sum of their parts. Similarly, Kohut’s (1992) ideas about courage include the assumption that everyone can have, and in fact needs, a certain degree of courage to get by in daily life, yet his definition of courage is not consistent with the ontology of human becoming since it is underpinned by the assumption that humans are made up of multiple, and competing, selves.

Kennedy’s (1955/1961) conceptualization of courage, though not written and explicated from a nursing perspective, is generally supportive of the ontology of human becoming. Kennedy posits that courage is universal and is an ability of persons to choose actions true to their values and beliefs about what is right. Similarly, Servan-Schreiber (1987) and Tillich (1952) both support
the universal nature of courage, and, they also assert that courage is existential—implying that it plays a role in all human choices and actions. The human becoming perspective of courage is that it is a universal lived experience—meaning that it is reasonable to assume that all humans experience it. This is different from the notion that courage is existentially present in every action or choice made by humans. In addition, the works of Tillich and Servan-Schreiber are not completely congruent with the ontology of human becoming, since Servan-Schreiber writes from a psychological perspective and Tillich from a theological perspective—with a psychological and a spiritual view of humans that is inconsistent with the belief of the unitary nature of humans.

So far, Bunkers (1999) is the only scholar who has begun to illuminate courage as a universal lived experience from a human becoming perspective. Bunkers does not, however, explicate courage in relation to the ontology of human becoming, since her work was not focusing on courage, but rather on the teaching-learning process.

Finally, many authors have focused on aspects of the phenomenon of courage in studies with a variety of participant groups. The investigators who conducted these various studies reported that courage included persistence, determination, tenacity, perseverance, hope and hopefulness, commitment to something valued, self-confidence, fearfulness, and overcoming fear. So far, only one study has been reported which used the human becoming theory as
its nursing perspective (Lawrence, 1993). The limitations of Lawrence's study were noted earlier. No studies have been reported which conceptualized having courage as a universal lived experience and which studied the phenomenon from a unitary perspective. Further research was needed to enhance understanding of the lived experience of having courage from the human becoming perspective (Parse, 1981, 1998).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The Parse research method (Parse, 1987, 1992, 1995, 1997b, 1998) was used to guide this study.

Background of the Parse Research Method

The Parse research method (Parse, 1987, 1992, 1995, 1998) is unique to the discipline of nursing. It was designed to be consistent with the principles of the human becoming theory (Parse, 1987, 1992, 1995, 1998). In constructing the methodology, Parse followed four principles derived from the works of Kaplan (1964) and Sondheim (1984). Influenced by Kaplan's work, Parse (1987) writes that "methodology is the description, the explanation, and the justification of methods; the methodology encompasses the techniques and principles of methods" (p. 173). Developing a methodology is also an art (Parse, 1987). In the lyrics of Sunday from Sunday in the Park with George, Sondheim (1984) speaks about artistic order, design, composition, balance, and harmony. According to Parse (1987),

The art of making science, just as the art of making art, requires order, design, composition, balance, and harmony. Order is a sequenced arrangement; design is a blueprint that reveals an overall pattern; composition is a blending in the creation of an integral whole. Balance is
symmetry, and aesthetic simplicity, and harmony is the congruence of
the constituent elements (p. 173).

Consistent with Kaplan (1964) and Sondheim (1984), Parse (1987) synthesized
and used the following four principles in constructing a research methodology
consistent with the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998).

The Parse research method:

1. Is constructed to be in harmony with and evolve from the ontological
   beliefs of the research tradition;

2. Is an overall design of precise processes that adhere to scientific rigor;

3. Specifies the order within the processes appropriate for inquiry within the
   research tradition;


The basic assumptions underlying the Parse research method are:

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-prerelective choices in connection with others and the
   universe that 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 adherence 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, 1998, p. 63).

**Rationale for Selection of the Parse Research Method and Description of the Method**

Methods of inquiry provide theoretically consistent processes for data gathering and analysis. The author’s values and beliefs about the human-universe-health process are consistent with the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998). The assumptions underpinning research consistent with the human becoming school of thought flow directly from the philosophical assumptions. For example, the human becoming theory postulates that humans are unitary beings in mutual process with the universe and that unitary humans are different from the sum of their parts (Parse, 1981, 1998). As such, research consistent with this perspective focuses on indivisible human experiences (see Table 1). The research approach is necessarily qualitative and the goal is to enhance understanding by explicating meanings and patterns of human experience.

The assertion that human experience is the paramount reality emerges from the assumption that humans are intentional beings who are free to choose meaning in situations (Parse, 1981, 1998). Epistemologically, this assumption leads to a focus on descriptions of lived experiences as the primary data. Qualitative research approaches consistent with this perspective assume that persons are able to accurately represent their personal experiences, and
methodologies are designed to elicit rich, in-depth descriptions of personal experience.

Table 1: The Human Becoming School of Thought: Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontological Assumptions</th>
<th>Epistemological Consequences</th>
<th>Methodological Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humans are unitary beings in mutual process with the universe. Unitary beings are different from the sum of their parts (Parse, 1981, 1998).</td>
<td>Focus is on indivisible human experiences.</td>
<td>Research approach is necessarily qualitative and the goal is to enhance understanding by explicating meanings and patterns of human experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans are intentional beings who are free to choose meaning in situations (Parse, 1981, 1998).</td>
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<td>Inquiry elicits rich, in-depth descriptions of personal experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Persons are able to accurately represent their personal experience]</td>
<td>[Participants' descriptions are considered credible without verification from other sources]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans exist and cocreate with others, ideas, objects, and situations at multidimensional realms of the universe (Parse, 1981, 1998).</td>
<td>Focus is on the intersubjective process of researcher with phenomenon</td>
<td>The inquiry event reflects the horizon of meaning—researcher with phenomenon.</td>
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</table>

The notion that humans exist and cocreate with others, ideas, objects, and situations at multidimensional realms of the universe implies a focus on the intersubjective process of the researcher with the phenomenon (Parse, 1981,
1998). The inquiry event reflects the horizon of meaning—of the researcher with the phenomenon.

Universal lived experiences, such as having courage, are the phenomena for study of nursing science rooted in the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1998). The phenomenological-hermeneutic Parse research method (Parse, 1987, 1998) was designed to be consistent with the ontology of human becoming. In keeping with the human sciences and the Heideggerian tradition of phenomenology, the Parse method aims to illuminate structures of lived experiences in light of unitary human beings’ becoming in mutual process with the universe. The method is hermeneutic in that the findings are interpreted in light of the principles and concepts of human becoming.

**Research Processes**

The processes of the Parse research method are: participant selection, dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation. Protection of participants' rights is integral to the Parse method—thus measures that were taken to ensure participants' rights were protected are included in this section.

**Participant Selection and Protection of Participants' Rights**

This study was approved by Loyola University Chicago's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (see Appendix A). Participant selection for the study involved inviting persons to participate in the
study who were willing to speak about having courage in English and who were willing to share with the researcher a symbol, picture, piece of music, poem, or metaphor which was an expression of their lived experience of having courage.

Participants were recruited through personal contacts in the community. Potential participants were provided with written information about the study (Appendix B). Persons who were 18 years of age and older were invited to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating. Those persons who contacted the researcher were given a detailed verbal description of the study and were informed of what participation in the study entailed.

It was explained to potential participants that whether or not they chose to participate would have no effect on any future healthcare services they receive. Persons were informed that the discussion would last between 20-60 minutes depending on how long they wished to discuss having courage; that the discussion would be audio and videotape recorded; that a photograph would be taken of the symbol or metaphor of having courage they brought to share; that confidentiality would be maintained; that their names would not be associated with the information shared; that there were no known risks; and that they could contact the researcher should they have uncomfortable feelings after the discussion. Participants were informed that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

Ten men 21 to 64 years of age agreed to participate. They were all living in the community with a spinal cord injury. Consent was obtained from all
participants. A consent form (Appendix C) was explained and given to each of them. On the consent form, the researcher's office phone number was given so that any further questions from participants could be answered. In nine instances, the consent was signed by the researcher and the participant. For the one participant who was unable to write his signature, verbal consent was obtained and audio-tape recorded. A copy of their signed consent form was given to each participant.

To ensure that participants' welfare and rights were protected, full disclosure of the study's purposes, procedures, and intent were given. Participants' rights of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were honored. To ensure privacy, participants chose where they felt comfortable speaking. Three of the participants chose to meet with the researcher in their own homes. Two participants chose to meet at a sports arena, and five participants invited the researcher to meet with them at their offices.

All descriptions given by the participants were audio-taped. Five participants also agreed to be videotaped. Eight of the participants explicitly used either a metaphor or a symbol in their description of their experience of having courage. A photograph was taken of the poster that one participant brought as a symbol of having courage. The other participants used metaphors that were not possible to photograph. To ensure confidentiality, the audio-tapes, videotapes, and transcriptions were kept in a locked cabinet. Four of the participants chose to sign a second, optional consent form (Appendix D)
authorizing the researcher to retain the audio and videotape recordings of their
dialogues for use in educational presentations. The remainder of the audio and
videotapes were erased and transcriptions shredded after completion of the
study. This was done to protect anonymity of participants. In addition, only code
numbers and names were used to identify participants during the research
process and in publications. However, participants were informed that
quotations and symbols/metaphors of having courage from their discussions
may be used anonymously in reports of the study.

**Dialogical Engagement**

Dialogue is a discussion between the researcher and the participant where the researcher lives true presence with the participant (Parse, 1987, 1998). The dialogue focuses on the phenomenon under study as it is described by the participant—it is not an interview where the researcher guides the participant to answer specific questions (Parse, 1987, 1995, 1998). Participants describe their experience of the phenomenon under study “through words, symbols, music, metaphors, poetry, photographs, drawings, or movements” (Parse, 1998, p. 63). For example, participants in Baumann’s (1996) study used drawings in their descriptions of the lived experience of feeling uncomfortable. Similarly, the participants in Kruse’s (1999) study used photographs to enhance their descriptions of the lived experience of serenity.

In this study, the researcher asked the participants to bring and to
describe a personal symbol, picture, piece of music, poem, or metaphor of
having courage during their response to the question, "Please tell me about your experience of having courage." The researcher then attended to, and went with the flow of, each participant’s description. In general, no other questions were asked—though participants were encouraged to say more about some things, or to speak about how something they said related to their experience of having courage. In some instances, the researcher reminded participants to speak about their metaphor or symbol of courage at the end of the dialogical engagement. The dialogues were 20 to 40 minutes in length. They were transcribed to typed format for the extraction-synthesis process (Parse, 1990).

**Extraction-Synthesis**

Extraction-synthesis is the process of moving the descriptions from the language of the participants across levels of abstraction to the language of science (Parse, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1997b, 1998; Parse, Coyne, & Smith, 1985). These transformational shifts in levels of abstraction occur through dwelling with the transcribed dialogues. This researcher spent time contemplating the transcribed discussions—which for this particular method required both reading the transcribed dialogue and listening to it on tape all-at-once. When the dialogical engagement was videotaped, the researcher also viewed the situation after reading about it and while listening to it so that the researcher was immersed with the dialogue in the extraction-synthesis process (Parse, 1987, 1995). Parse (1998) describes the extraction-synthesis process in following way:
1. Extracting and synthesizing essences from transcribed and recorded descriptions in the participants' language.

2. Synthesizing and extracting essences in the researcher's language.

3. Formulating a proposition from each participant's essences.

4. Extracting and synthesizing core concepts from the formulated propositions of all participants.

5. Synthesizing a structure of the lived experience from the core concepts (p. 65).

**Heuristic Interpretation**

Heuristic interpretation is the process of "weav[ing] the structure [of the lived experience] with the principles of human becoming and beyond to enhance the knowledge base and create ideas for further research" (Parse, 1998, p. 65). Heuristic interpretation involved two processes: structural transposition and conceptual integration (Parse, 1987, 1998). Structural transposition included moving the structure of the lived experience up another level of abstraction (Parse, 1998). Conceptual integration further specified the structure of the lived experience at the level of the theory (Parse, 1998).

**Rigor and Credibility**

A combination of the standards for qualitative research developed by Burns (1989) and Parse, Coyne, and Smith (1985) were used to ensure the rigor and credibility of this study. In addition, the author's dissertation
committee, including a methodological expert, provided ongoing critique to ensure adherence to these standards.

Burns (1989) created five standards for critiquing qualitative research: descriptive vividness, methodological congruence, analytical preciseness, theoretical connectedness, and heuristic relevance. The criteria for appraisal of qualitative research developed by Parse et al. (1985) fall into four categories: conceptual, ethical, methodological, and interpretive. Within each category, Parse et al. specify the dimensions: substance, clarity, and integration. Used together, these complimentary standards for critique provide a comprehensive way of ensuring the quality of qualitative research investigations.

**Conceptual**

This study met the conceptual criteria outlined by Parse et al. (1985). The phenomenon, having courage, was clearly stated and presented in chapter one as a universal lived experience of health that is significant to quality of life. The phenomenon is congruent with the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998)—the nursing perspective that guided this study. A conceptual definition of having courage was developed by the author and explicated using the principles and concepts of human becoming (Parse, 1981, 1998). The research question was clearly stated and flows from the nursing perspective that guided the study.
**Descriptive Vividness**

To ensure descriptive vividness (Burns, 1989), essential descriptive data are presented in a clear and concise manner for each participant. Audio and video tape recordings of the participants' descriptions of their experience of having courage were made to ensure accuracy. When appropriate, photographs were used to record participants' symbols, pictures, pieces of music, poems, or metaphors of having courage. The photographs were scanned into the report of the findings of the study.

**Methodological Congruence**

Burns (1989) and Parse et al. (1985) both specify methodological criteria for appraising qualitative research. Burns has four categories for methodological congruence: rigor in documentation, procedural rigor, ethical rigor, and auditability.

Rigor in documentation (Burns, 1989) is similar to Parse et al.'s (1985) methodological clarity. The standards specified by both authors were met by including clearly written descriptions of all elements of the study—including the phenomenon, purpose, research question, significance, nursing perspective, literature review, ethical implications, sample selection, data gathering and analysis strategies, findings, conclusions, and suggestions for future research and practice.

Procedural rigor (Burns, 1989), methodological substance, and methodological integration (Parse et al., 1985) were met by carefully following
the research processes of the Parse research method. An expert in the use of
the Parse research method ensured its proper utilization.

To ensure ethical rigor (Burns, 1989), this study was approved by an
institutional review board for the protection of human subjects (see Appendix
A). All participants signed an informed consent (Appendix C). Parse et al.’s
(1985) ethical criteria are similar to those specified by Burns, but also require
that the study contribute to nursing knowledge, that the significance for nursing
be clearly stated, and that researchers show they stayed true to the data. This
study, as reported, addresses and meets the first two of Parse et al.’s (1985)
ethical criteria. The third criterion, that the researchers show they stayed true to
the data, is similar to Burns’ criterion of auditability.

To ensure auditability, the researcher carefully documented the
decisions made in the transformation of the data through different levels of
abstraction to the language of human becoming so that another researcher,
following the same decision trail, could arrive at similar conclusions (Burns,
1989). Auditability was further evaluated by the researcher’s dissertation chair
and committee members.

Analytical Preciseness

The standard of analytic preciseness (Burns, 1989) requires the
researcher to record the decision-making processes through which
transformations in data were made. The current researcher carefully
documented the decisions made in the transformation of the data through
different levels of abstraction to the language of human becoming. This process was monitored by the nurse theorist who invented the Parse research method.

**Theoretical Connectedness**

Theoretical connectedness "requires that the theoretical schema developed from the study be clearly expressed, logically consistent, reflective of the data, and compatible with the knowledge base of nursing" (Burns, 1989, p. 50). This standard is captured under Parse et al.'s (1985) methodological criteria and was met in this study.

**Heuristic Relevance**

The final standard set forth by Burns (1989) is heuristic relevance. It is similar to Parse et al.'s (1985) interpretive criteria for appraisal of qualitative research. Heuristic relevance includes intuitive recognition, relationship to existing body of knowledge, and applicability (Burns, 1989). Parse et al. (1985) emphasize interpreting the findings in light of the conceptualization of the study, evaluating how well the interpretive statements correspond with the findings, appraising how well interpretations reflect heuristic conceptualizations, and ensuring the findings are clearly interpreted in light of nursing theory, research, and practice. In the discussion of this study's findings, the researcher ensured that the standard of heuristic relevance was met.

**Summary**

This chapter presented an in-depth discussion of the background, assumptions, and rationale for selecting the Parse research method. The
processes of the Parse research method were presented and illuminated in relation to how they were carried out for the purpose of this study. The chapter concluded with a discussion of how issues of rigor and credibility were addressed. In chapter four, the findings of this study are presented.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is the presentation of findings that arose using the dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation processes of the Parse research method to discover the structure of the lived experience of having courage, and to expand understanding of the human becoming theory. The participants in this study were 10 men between 21 and 64 years of age. They were all persons living in the community after having a spinal cord injury who agreed to share their experiences, metaphors, and symbols of having courage with the researcher during the dialogical engagement process. Presented first are the stories, essences, and propositions for each of the participants.

The participants' stories are extracted-synthesized summaries that reflect the core ideas and examples that each of them shared about their experiences of having courage. The stories are written using excerpts from the transcript of the dialogical engagement with each participant. The essences written in the participants' language represent the core ideas pertaining to having courage that were shared in the dialogical engagement process and captured in the participants' stories. The essences in the language of the
researcher are expressions of the key ideas contained in the participants' language conceptualized at a more abstract level. The propositions are non-directional statements conceptualized by the researcher to join the core ideas from the essences. The propositions contain the central meaning of having courage for each participant.

Following the presentation of the proposition from each participant, are the core concepts, the structure of the lived experience, and the heuristic interpretation processes. Core concepts are extracted and synthesized from the propositions. They are the central ideas about the experience of having courage that were described, in some way, by each and every participant. The structure of the lived experience of having courage is a statement, created by the researcher, that joins the core concepts and answers the research question: What is the structure of the lived experience of having courage? Finally, the structure is woven with the human becoming theory using the heuristic interpretation processes of structural transposition and conceptual integration. The extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretation are presented in detail in tables two to five.
Noah’s Story

Noah is 43. He says “courage is a metaphor…and a mystery.” It is like “a fading watercolor.” When Noah looks “at a picture of courage, it looks nice and clear and as he gets closer…it is kind of fuzzy. It doesn’t diminish, but it just isn’t as clear.” For Noah, having courage “is a choice and you make it all the time.” He compares it to hearing the words “I dare you” and feeling like a “line has been drawn in front of you.” You “have to…weigh out the pros and cons” and decide whether or not the line “is worth crossing.” The answer “depends what it means to you.” According to Noah, courage “can be a lot of things…Everybody thinks of courage as being able to stand up in the face of adversity,” and he says, “I guess that it is.” Noah adds, “I do not know what my experience of having courage is. I always picture courage as something you see in places like hockey arenas, battlefields, or in the coliseum, but to me, having courage is just being able to face the day and being able to do everything you’ve got to do to get through that day” despite “the stumbling blocks.” He thinks that “sometimes every day is courage, and sometimes every day is just another day.” When living “in a world that takes so much for granted, it takes a lot of courage to be able to stand up to the constant stupidity…that you face every day.” Having courage, for Noah, is “having faith” when people “tease and ridicule.” It is playing hockey “against a line that you know can kick your butt.” It is “going to the mall,” knowing that someone “is going to be in a disabled spot.” It is going “on with it” when you “don’t know exactly where you’re going,” and it is “looking doctors in the eye” and saying “yeah, go ahead” when they want to put steel rods in your back and you know it will “hurt like hell for a week.” Noah shares that since his spinal cord was severed in a motorcycle accident 12 years ago, he has lived with complete paraplegia. He says having courage is “getting up every morning and looking at a wheelchair beside your bed, because you always dream you’re walking.” Noah believes that courage is “there when you need it…to pull yourself through.” Everybody “needs a little…to get them through their life.” It is like you “draw from the well of courage, the well of faith, the well the Lord puts inside you. You keep filling [the well] up, putting a little bit into it every day…and then when it comes time to draw on it, if you’re pure of heart and if you have strong convictions, then you can reach into that well and you can draw on it.” “Sometimes you’re reaching into the well and you don’t even know you’re reaching until all of the sudden you’ve done something that you didn’t think you could do, or you were afraid to do.” Noah adds that his “courage comes from a very powerful source in the Lord.” He believes that “we all have courage and it just has to be brought out”—in “different portions” and in “different forms” for “different things.”
**Essences: Participant's Language**

1. Having courage is a mystery. It is like a fading watercolor painting that appears clear but gets fuzzy as you get closer.

2. Having courage is a choice that you make by weighing the pros and cons and deciding what crossing the line means, and whether or not it is worth it.

3. Having courage is being able to go on and do what you have to do when you do not know exactly where you are going—despite stumbling blocks, ridicule, or being afraid. It is waking up and seeing a wheelchair every morning after dreaming about walking.

4. Having courage is the well of faith that the Lord puts inside you. It is filling the well a little every day, being pure of heart, having strong convictions, and being able to draw from the well when you need something to pull yourself through.

**Essences: Researcher's Language**

1. Puzzlement surfaces with obscuring impressions.

2. Treasured possibles emerge with deliberation.

3. Triumphant tenacity amid disquieting ambiguity arises with disregard.

4. Fortifying reservoirs of potent confidence arise with sacred alliances.

**Proposition**

Having courage is triumphant tenacity amid disquieting ambiguity arising with disregard, as puzzlement surfaces with obscuring impressions, while treasured possibles emerge with deliberation in fortifying the reservoirs of potent confidence that arise with sacred alliances.
Jack's Story

Jack is 64. He says that having courage happens “every day” when you “get up,” and do “the things you have to do.” For Jack, this means “being up in the morning, saying prayers, taking a shower...watching television, and getting something to eat.” He adds, “I do not do foolish things” but sometimes “I will fall out of my chair by leaning over too far.” Having courage is “picking myself up.” Jack thinks “everyone has courage” and says, “my courage is wrapped around my whole family...and my friends. My family and friends mean everything to me.” He adds that they “give” him “courage” by “visiting,” “helping with shopping,” and “cooking.” Jack shares that he “must have a thousand pictures.” He “can give a whole resume” of his family and says, “that’s what keeps me alive—that and believing in the Lord.” Jack says that his spinal cord was injured in a car accident 34 years ago. He recalls, “I almost died and I feel very lucky the dear Lord saved me.” He adds that courage “gives me good health,” and says that “if I had bad health, I wouldn’t have...courage—I’d be down in the dumps all of the time.” Having courage is “living” and “enjoying” what you do. Jack says he “enjoys” his life. He “comes and goes” as he “pleases.” He feels that he “has courage” even though he “never had a gun except in the Navy.” Jack shares, “I hate being like this, but I am used to it and for being this way...I have it made.... What other people think of my life is their problem, it isn’t mine.”
Essences: Participant’s Language

1. Having courage is living, having good health, enjoying life, and believing in the Lord. It keeps you alive and is wrapped around family and friends—who visit, help, and mean everything.

2. Having courage is getting up every day, knowing you almost died, sometimes leaning too far and falling, picking up, doing what has to be done, and not feeling down in the dumps. It is hating being like this, yet being used to it, and feeling lucky—like you have it made—despite what other people think.

Essences: Researcher’s Language

1. Fortifying delight emerges with confident treasured affiliations.

2. Gratefulness surfaces with the precariousness of flourishing tenacity amid adversity.

Proposition

Having courage is fortifying delight emerging with confident treasured affiliations, as gratefulness surfaces with the precariousness of flourishing tenacity amid adversity.
Sam’s Story

Sam is 46. He says that “courage is living without fear” and that “being afraid of doing something keeps people from enjoying life.” Sam remembers, “the second day after my accident I was lying in bed, questioning whether to let myself slip into the next world...and I heard a voice in my head that said ‘if I’d wanted you, I’d have had you two days ago.’” He says, “I didn’t really have to think about it, I just went ahead and dealt with it.... Accidents happen, nobody’s to blame and you have just got to go ahead and live.” Sam says that “wallowing in self-pity is wasteful—if people allow that to happen...they are not moving forward and that is the only alternative to not wasting away. People have to decide if they are just going to curl up and die or if they are going to live.” Sam thinks that having courage is “choosing to live—and everybody can have courage...they just have to reach deep down.” He shares that he used to be a stunt man—so he always knew “that one false move” might put him in a chair. Sam says that that never mattered since, “I was doing what I wanted to do.” Sam thinks that “having the courage to live the next day and the day after that...starts with living now, with not being afraid of what you can’t do.” Having courage “means not letting your inabilitys overwhelm what you can do.” It is “looking forward to the future instead of living in the past.” It is “seeing something to do, and aiming for it.” Having courage gives Sam “something to live for.” Sam shares that he was in a car accident two and a half years ago. It left him with incomplete quadriplegia. He says that he needs assistance cutting his food and getting himself in and out of bed and that he thinks that having courage is “doing what is not necessarily easy and putting faith in somebody being there to help you.” It is learning to do new things—which, for Sam, has meant learning to work with computers. Sam’s metaphor for having courage “is a baby taking that first step.” Even though babies know they are “gonna fall, it doesn’t keep them from getting back up and taking that first step again. Sooner or later, they learn to walk.” Having courage is “falling down and getting back up.” Sam says that “regardless of how many times people fall, as long as they are willing to get back up and keep on trying—that’s courage.” “Falling off a mountain in a car is falling down pretty hard,” yet Sam has faith that “sooner or later there will be a breakthrough in science” and he will be “able to learn to walk again.” All he “can do between now and then is live.”
**Essences: Participant's Language**

1. Having courage is reaching deep down and choosing to live. It is looking forward to the future, seeing something to do, aiming for it, and learning to do new things. It gives you something to live for and includes having faith that someone will be there to help and that sooner or later science will help you learn to walk.

2. Having courage is like a baby taking a first step, falling down, and being willing to get back up and keep on trying. It is not letting fears or abilities be overwhelming and not living in the past, or wallowing in self-pity and wasting away.

**Essences: Researcher's Language**

1. Confident anticipation with benevolent alliances arises with enlivening ventures.

2. Tenacity surfaces with triumphs amid disquieting perils.

**Proposition**

Having courage is confident anticipation with benevolent alliances arising with enlivening ventures, as tenacity surfaces with triumphs amid disquieting perils.
Kevin’s Story

Kevin, who is 34, says having courage is “related to bad luck, or to being in a situation that you don’t want to be in...and you finally decide that you have to do something, even if it’s a risk that might cause you more injury or personal loss.” Kevin feels he has “had a pretty lucky life except for one second of bad luck that caused the accident.” He says he is lucky—he has “got a house, a good job, and lots of friends.” He adds, “I never really felt courageous for having lived through the accident, or for going on and doing things after my spinal cord injury 17 years ago.” Kevin says that he “always thought of courage as being something a lot more important than just going on with life.” Life “is precious...if you are alive, you should enjoy every minute of it.” He shares that he felt “a little disappointed ending up in this position,” but after “being bored at home for a couple of months” he “finished his degree,” “got a job,” and went out “doing things.” “There were obstacles...to being in a wheelchair” which he had to “overcome or work around,” but Kevin says he “learned real quick” not to go out without “being sure” he will “be able to get in” to a place. He shares that the “Americans With Disabilities Act” has made it a lot easier for him to “travel.” Kevin says that he “flies all over,” and “goes on cruises...without worrying.” He thinks that when there are problems, it takes courage “to confront someone about something I think needs to be done.” When Kevin thinks of having courage, he is “reminded of a black and white picture” he once saw. It was “a close up of two hands holding each other. They looked strong like they had been through a lot of things.” Kevin says, “that’s courage—two hands strong with a lot of experience.” He thinks his symbol of courage “goes back” to when he “was a kid.” Kevin shares, “I grew up with my grandparents and their brothers...who all made it through the war...knowing they might lose their lives, but still signing up, going over there, and doing something.” He says they would always say to look at the scars and wounds on their hands as they talked about “having it rough as kids,” “working outside,” and “fighting in the war.”
**Essences: Participant's Language**

1. Having courage is two hands holding each other—strong with a lot of experience. It is having been through a lot of things, overcoming barriers, and learning not to go out without being sure you can get into places.

2. Having courage is enjoying every minute of life, traveling without worrying, and feeling lucky to have friends, a good job, and a house. It is deciding to do something in a bad situation, or to confront someone about something that needs to be done—even if there is a risk of injury or personal loss.

**Essences: Researcher's Language**

1. Fortitude surfaces as triumph emerges with seasoned insightfulness amid the burdensome.

2. Deliberate resolve in precarious endeavors surfaces with assuredly savoring the treasured.

**Proposition**

Having courage is fortitude emerging as triumph arises with seasoned insightfulness amid the burdensome, while deliberate resolve in precarious endeavors surfaces with assuredly savoring the treasured.
Michael's Story

Michael is 35 years old and he says "courage is basically falling down and getting back up and turning all the negatives that happen to you in life into a positive." Michael shares, "I have had a lot of courage in my life...because I have been able to accomplish so much. I don't let quadriplegia knock me down—I have a family, a full time job and it is all because I don't dwell on what happened to me." Michael says that his symbol of courage is this poster.

Note. "The People of Colours." Copyright by Colours by Permobil, 1591 S. Sinclair St., Anaheim, CA 92806. Reproduced with permission (Appendix E).

It is "people from all walks of life doing what they can in life without letting anything stop them." Michael says "the poster tells it—whether you're quadriplegic, paraplegic, black, white, its what you make out of life—as long as you do something for yourself, that's what counts." Having courage is "believing in what you can do and doing it." It is "doing something you couldn't do...and conquering what's inside you keeping you back and making you fear everything, it is going ahead and getting beyond that." Michael says, "you need courage to not be embarrassed...to not hide behind your disability." He recalls, "after my accident I stayed home for a year watching television and didn't want to deal with anybody—I was embarrassed that all of a sudden I couldn't go to
the washroom, get dressed, or prepare food on my own." Michael says "every
day in my life, just trying to deal with life is being courageous—since I could just
sit at home, but it takes a little more from me to say 'hey, I'm going to work,' 'I'm
going to play sports, or 'I'm going to travel.'" Michael says that "you just have to
go for it...and hope for the best." It "takes a lot of courage to learn to adjust and
do what you can do...the best way that you can and leave it at that." He says,
"my biggest example of having courage was coming out to the work force, when
there is really no need for me to work, and proving to myself that yes, I could go
out and be somebody successful." Michael says "it is a lot of self-satisfaction to
come to work and be somebody productive...but it hasn't been easy." Having
courage "can be frustrating. It can be cumbersome on people." Michael knows
"its hard on my wife and kids to deal with the disability," but says "you can never
let that stop you, succeed in what you can do and deal with what you can't." He
adds that "you may not be the best at what you do...but at least you did it."

**Essences: Participant's Language**

1. Having courage is believing in what you can do and doing it. It is hoping for
and doing your best, going ahead, going to work, playing sports, and
traveling.

2. Having courage is falling down, getting back up, conquering fear or
embarrassment, and turning the negatives into a positive without letting
anything stop you or knock you down. It is frustrating and cumbersome—yet
self-satisfying to prove to yourself that you can be productive and
successful.

**Essences: Researcher's : Language**

1. Confident anticipation arises with earnestly engaging in cherished
endeavors.

2. Gratifying achievements emerge with triumphant tenacity amid trepidation
with the burdensome.

**Proposition**

Having courage is confident anticipation arising with earnestly engaging in
cherished endeavors, as gratifying achievements emerge with triumphant
tenacity amid trepidation with the burdensome.
Andy's Story

Andy is 21 years old and he says having courage is “standing up for what you believe and really pushing towards it...without letting other people...or outside things...get in the way and push you down.” Andy shares, “when I got home after my injury a lot of people I knew were telling me I was going to have problems, and I was not going to live the same lifestyle I used to.” He says “it took courage to tell them, ‘I’m going to be back to the way I was.’” Andy adds that, “my goal was to make sure that I would prove them wrong.... It took me a while to really go and push at it and make sure I did prove them wrong.” He says it is “tough to do it—sometimes it’s good and bad...because there are so many boundaries,” but when he “looks back and sees” that he “got over that,” it helps him “feel really good.” Andy says there are “a lot of ups and downs, but in the long run it’s always good.” He adds that if you “put forth the energy for the courage, then in the future you will have a lot of positive outcomes of it no matter what—so it’s worth it.” Andy’s symbol of having courage is “strength.” He says “if there’s strength, there is courage.”

Essences: Participant’s Language

1. Having courage is strength. It is putting forth energy, standing up for what you believe in, and really pushing toward positive outcomes in the future.

2. Having courage is tough. It is not letting bumps and boundaries and people push you down. It is telling them that you will be back to the way you were. It is good and bad—there are a lot of ups and downs, but when you look back and see you got over that, you feel really good.

Essences: Researcher’s Language

1. Vigorous resolve emerges with engaging cherished possibilities.

2. Heartening triumphs surface with oscillating confidence amid the burdensome.

Proposition

Having courage is vigorous resolve emerging while engaging cherished possibilities, as heartening triumphs surface with oscillating confidence amid the burdensome.
Josh's Story

Josh is 53 and he says, "having courage is doing something I am really afraid to do." He adds that he "is not afraid of too many things." For Josh, having courage is "overcoming big personal hurdles—or at least tackling them...whether you succeed or fail...it is honorable to at least attempt it." Josh’s symbol of having courage is "a purple heart. A purple heart means someone has been wounded in the military—to get a purple heart, people have to put their lives on the line." Josh shares that when he first injured his spinal cord "it was an absolutely horrible experience. I went through a period of depression...and it was a matter of stopping feeling sorry for myself—of just pulling myself by my bootstraps and...trying to rehabilitate myself." He says he had to "get up and start doing things." Having courage is "getting through every day and knowing you have to get up the next morning and go through it all over again." It "takes a combination of courage and love to do it." Josh says, "once I started getting on the mend again, I had a fantastic life...a wonderful son, wife, job, and home." Josh remembers, "one time I really had to pull myself together and show a little courage. I was shooting in a team pool tournament and it came down to the last two players." He had to represent his team and he "worried" that if he "missed he would let them down." Josh "vividly" remembers having courage. He recalls that he was "truly afraid because several hundred people were watching and it was a difficult shot." He "could not believe" that his "hand was shaking like a leaf," and he was "that unnerved by playing a stupid game." Josh says, "I could have tried to snooker the guy, but I made the choice of going after and making the shot" and adds that "it was exhilarating when I was done with it and I 'did it.'"
**Essences: Participant’s Language**

1. Having courage is attempting to tackle personal hurdles, or making choices like taking a difficult pool shot when unnerved and afraid, because to lose is letting others down. It is a purple heart that means you have been wounded putting your life on the line.

2. Having courage is exhilarating. It is stopping feeling sorry for yourself, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps, making difficult shots, getting up every day, getting on with things, and not being afraid of too many things. It is having a fantastic life with love, a wonderful wife, son, job, and home.

**Essences: Researcher’s Language**

1. Trepidation surfaces with deliberate venturing amid the perilous.

2. Inspiring treasured affiliations arise with assured triumphant tenacity.

**Proposition**

Having courage is trepidation surfacing with deliberate venturing amid the perilous, as inspiring treasured affiliations arise with assured triumphant tenacity.
Craig’s Story

Craig is 29 years old. He says having courage is “like a motivation, it is what keeps you going…and constantly jumping over hurdles.” For Craig, “courage and motivation are really the key…to moving forward and accomplishing goals.” He says having courage is “getting over the fear of knowing that you had an injury that took away your ability to walk.” Craig reveals that it “takes a lot of courage to put away fears of falling,” but once it is done “there’s nothing that can hold you back.” He adds that “it takes courage to do things a person who is paraplegic can do—like skiing or scuba diving.” Having courage is saying, “I can do it, I can do it—like the little engine that could—you try and go up the hill.” It is “thinking positive” and “building up that thing inside your heart to get you going.” Craig says that it takes courage for him to “get mad” and “decide” he is going to “jump out of this wheelchair” and “give an effort to walk,” yet he adds, “that is what I do everyday, every time I go to therapy—and it takes a lot of effort.” He says “its ok if somebody laughs, “since “I am doing it for myself, not for somebody else.” Craig shares that he has had to “find a way to continue my life….There were things I loved to do that I can’t anymore.” It “takes a lot of courage to appreciate the simple things in life you can’t do anymore.” Craig shares that he looks at the “advantages and disadvantages” of what he “can and can’t do” and “knows it’s just a part of life.” He says he “is alive” and he “enjoys it”—adding that he “would rather be alive in a wheelchair than dead.”
**Essences: Participant's Language**

1. Having courage is building up that thing inside your heart to motivate you to constantly jump over hurdles, do the things you love to do, and accomplish goals. It is getting mad, getting over fear, saying you can do it, and trying to go up the hill like the little engine that could.

2. Having courage is appreciating what you can and cannot do—knowing it is a part of life and that you would rather enjoy being alive in a wheelchair than be dead. It is something you do for yourself even if somebody laughs.

**Essences: Researcher's Language**

1. Triumph emerges with inspiring confidence in persistently pursuing the cherished amid trepidation.

2. Gratefulness surfaces with contentment amid blatant disregard.

**Proposition**

Having courage is triumph emerging with inspiring confidence in persistently pursuing the cherished amid trepidation, as gratefulness surfaces with contentment amid blatant disregard.
Daniel's Story

Daniel is a 47 year old who says having courage is “the ability to take things that are negative in your life...turn them around, and apply anything and everything that you know to survive and go forward.” For Daniel, having courage is “what you make of it.” It is “getting up one day at a time and giving it all you can—three hundred percent.” Daniel's symbol of courage is the wrestler “Stone Cold Steve Austin—the rattlesnake.” Daniel says, “I like the rattlesnake because I have dealt with a lot of people who have told me no and denied me, and the more I sit back in the picture and just every once in a while snap out and move ahead...the stronger I get...the farther I go...and the more courage I get about my attitude and abilities.” He says that “instead of people telling me no, I tell them no—no they can’t run over top of me, I have rights.” He adds that “it takes a lot of courage to go someplace you’re not especially liked.” Daniel also “likes Stone Cold because he seems to overcome all obstacles.” Daniel says that “if you look inside yourself and say ‘I know I can do it,’ there’s no obstacle that can stop you.” He adds that “what you have in your heart is the most important because that’s where all your courage comes from.” Daniel shares, “I keep focusing on that and apply it to my daily activities as I keep going, hoping to do the things I want to do on this planet—like walk again and get married.” Having courage is “facing that I might be like this for the rest of my life, getting out there trying to change it,” and “pushing myself.” Having courage can be a “rough...long, hard haul,” but it can also be “an exhilarating experience”—like when you have the courage to “do helicopter jumps,” or to “scale a mountain.” Daniel shares, “I especially like it when people bet against me—because they always lose.” He thinks that “lots of people are prone to giving up,” but to that he says, “excuse me, you can do anything that you want to do.” Daniel shares that right now he is waiting for surgery to remove scar tissue that is “real painful.” He says that he is “a little apprehensive after listening to the news...about people dying from surgery and mistakes being made in hospitals,” but it has “got to be done” so he can “get rid of the pain cycle,” and “move to the west coast” to live with his brother.
**Essences: Participant’s Language**

1. Having courage is overcoming obstacles, like Stone Cold Steve Austin, looking inside your heart, knowing you can do it, and going forward with what you hope to accomplish. It is focusing, pushing, and giving it all you can to try to change things—even when you are apprehensive or people tell you no and bet against you.

2. Having courage is like being a rattlesnake—sitting back, snapping out once in a while, and going farther as your attitudes and abilities get stronger. It can be both a long, rough haul and an exhilarating experience.

**Essences: Researcher’s Language**

1. Triumphs arise with confidently pursuing cherished possibilities amid the daunting.

2. Quiescent fortitude surfaces with animation amid the burdensome.

**Proposition**

Having courage is triumphs arising with confidently pursuing cherished possibilities amid the daunting, as quiescent fortitude surfaces with animation amid the burdensome.
Anthony’s Story

Anthony is a 37 year old who says having courage is “dealing with day to day.” It is “getting up there and getting out and doing something.” He says “courage stems from support—from having friends and family who stick with you…assisting you and saying they really want you to get up there and do something.” Anthony adds that “peer and family support” is a “motivator…to keep on going and pushing—because you want to…prove them right…and be a role model.” He says that having courage is “getting over barriers,” and doing “difficult things” like “dating and being intimate,” or “getting back in the water for the first time after almost drowning.” Anthony shares that his spinal cord was “injured in a diving accident,” and for him, having courage is “facing the fact that I have to depend on someone to give me assistance each day.” It is “letting your guard down at least once a day if you want to continue on as normally as possible in life.” Anthony shares that “it can be embarrassing and you have to swallow your pride.” For Anthony, having courage is “doing what you have to do to be independent.” It is “saying no,” and “refusing to allow” people “to give you assistance in a lot of areas…because you don’t want to depend on them and burn them out.” It “takes courage” to “tell your family to back off,” and to “be able to tell them you’re okay…and you can survive by yourself”—especially when there are “a lot of times when you feel alone…when they are not around you.” For instance, Anthony says that it takes courage for him to “transfer into and out of his van on his own,” since once “I blew the transfer and was in the back of the van for six hours waiting for someone to come and find me.” Before the next transfer he had “to build up the courage” and he remembers thinking, “alright, I know I can do it.” Anthony also says having courage is “trusting someone with your life.” There are times when he is “totally reliant” on others—like when “I get into a pool and depend on someone coming in after me if I can’t make it up by myself, or when the one time I went Christmas tree hunting and my friend hauled me through two and a half feet of snow and left me in the middle of a field as he tromped off to find a tree.” In both instances Anthony “put a lot of trust in others,” and he says, “that’s my choice.”
**Essences: Participant's Language**

1. Having courage is a choice to trust someone with your life. It is letting your guard down, thinking you can do it, getting over barriers, doing difficult things, swallowing your pride, and facing the fact that you have to depend on some assistance. It is being motivated by the support of family and friends.

2. Having courage is being independent and dealing with the day to day by getting out, doing something, pushing, and being a role model. It is refusing to allow people to give you assistance in a lot of areas, telling your family to back off, yet feeling alone when they are not around.

**Essences: Researcher's Language**

1. Confidence in inspiring treasured alliances surfaces with achievements amid the humility of embracing the burdensome.

2. Discomforting isolation emerges with guardedly persisting with autonomous endeavors.

**Proposition**

Having courage is confidence in inspiring treasured alliances surfacing with achievements amid the humility of embracing the burdensome, while guardedly persisting with autonomous endeavors that emerge with discomforting isolation.
Propositions

Noah  Having courage is triumphant tenacity amid disquieting ambiguity arising with disregard, as puzzlement surfaces with obscuring impressions, while treasured possibles emerge with deliberation in fortifying the reservoirs of potent confidence that arise with sacred alliances.

Jack  Having courage is fortifying delight emerging with confident treasured affiliations, as gratefulness surfaces with the precariousness of flourishing tenacity amid adversity.

Sam  Having courage is confident anticipation with benevolent alliances arising with enlivening ventures, as tenacity surfaces with triumphs amid disquieting perils.

Kevin  Having courage is fortitude emerging as triumph arises with seasoned insightfulness amid the burdensome, while deliberate resolve in precarious endeavors surfaces with assuredly savoring the treasured.

Michael  Having courage is confident anticipation arising with earnestly engaging in cherished endeavors, as gratifying achievements emerge with triumphant tenacity amid trepidation with the burdensome.

Andy  Having courage is vigorous resolve emerging while engaging cherished possibilities, as heartening triumphs surface with oscillating confidence amid the burdensome.

Josh  Having courage is trepidation surfacing with deliberate venturing amid the perilous, as inspiring treasured affiliations arise with assured triumphant tenacity.

Craig  Having courage is triumph emerging with inspiring confidence in persistently pursuing the cherished amid trepidation, as gratefulness surfaces with contentment amid blatant disregard.
Daniel  Having courage is triumphs arising with confidently pursuing cherished possibilities amid the daunting, as quiescent fortitude surfaces with animation amid the burdensome.

Anthony  Having courage is confidence in inspiring treasured alliances surfacing with achievements amid the humility of embracing the burdensome, while guardedly persisting with autonomous endeavors that emerge with discomfiting isolation.

**Core Concepts**

Three core concepts emerged with the dialogical engagement and extraction-synthesis processes: *fortifying tenacity* (see Table 2), *triumph amid the burdensome* (see Table 3), and *guarded confidence with the treasured* (see Table 4).

**Structure of the Lived Experience**

The structure of the lived experience of having courage is: *Having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured* (see Table 5).

**Heuristic Interpretation**

The structure of the lived experience of having courage was raised, through structural transposition to: *Having courage is an invigorating steadfastness in prevailing with the arduous, as certainty-uncertainty emerges with the revered* (see Table 5). Through conceptual integration, the structure
was further specified at the level of the human becoming theory: *Having courage is powering the enabling-limiting of originating valuing* (see Table 5).
Table 2: First Core Concept as Evident in Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept:</th>
<th>Fortifying tenacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Transposition:</td>
<td>Invigorating steadfastness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Integration:</td>
<td>Powering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>Tenacity...fortifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Fortifying delight...tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Enlivening...tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Fortitude...deliberate resolve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Gratifying tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Heartening...resolve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>Inspiring...tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>Inspiring...persistently pursuing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Fortitude...pursuing...animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Inspiring...persisting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Second Core Concept as Evident in Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept:</th>
<th>Triumph amid the burdensome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Transposition:</td>
<td>Prevailing with the arduous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Integration:</td>
<td>Enabling-limiting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noah</th>
<th>Triumphant...with disregard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Flourishing...amid adversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Triumphs amid perils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Triumph...amid the burdensome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Achievements...triumphant...amid the burdensome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Triumphs...amid the burdensome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>Triumphant...amid the perilous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>Triumph...amid blatant disregard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Triumphs...with the burdensome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Achievements...amid humility...b burdensome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Concept:</td>
<td>Guarded confidence with the treasured</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structural Transposition:</td>
<td>Certainty-uncertainty with the revered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Integration:</td>
<td>Originating valuing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>Puzzlement...disquieting ambiguity...treasured possibles...potent confidence...with sacred alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Confidence in treasured affiliations...precariousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Confident anticipation...benevolent alliances...disquieting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Assuredly savoring the treasured...precarious endeavors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Confident anticipation...cherished endeavors...trepidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Cherished possibilities...oscillating confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>Assured...treasured affiliations...trepidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>Confidence...the cherished...trepidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Confidently...cherished possibilities...amid the daunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Guardedly...confidence...treasured alliances...discomforting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Progressive Abstraction of the Core Concepts of the Lived Experience of Having Courage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept</th>
<th>Structural Transposition</th>
<th>Conceptual Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fortifying tenacity</td>
<td>• Invigorating steadfastness</td>
<td>• Powering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Triumph amid the burdensome</td>
<td>• Prevailing with the arduous</td>
<td>• Enabling-limiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guarded confidence with the treasured</td>
<td>• Certainty-uncertainty with the revered</td>
<td>• Originating valuing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structure**

Having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured.

**Structural Transposition**

Having courage is an invigorating steadfastness in prevailing with the arduous, as certainty-uncertainty emerges with the revered.

**Conceptual Integration**

Having courage is powering the enabling-limiting of originating valuing.

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CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is a discussion of the findings that emerged using the Parse research method to study the lived experience of having courage. Three core concepts—fortifying tenacity, triumph amid the burdensome, and guarded confidence with the treasured—were extracted and synthesized from dialogical engagements with 10 persons living with spinal cord injuries in the community. The core concepts are the central ideas that were described in some way by all participants. When synthesized and joined together by the researcher, the core concepts form the structure: The lived experience of having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured. The structure of the lived experience of having courage was structurally transposed to: Having courage is an invigorating steadfastness in prevailing with the arduous, as certainty-uncertainty emerges with the revered. It was conceptually integrated with the human becoming theory as: Having courage is powering the enabling-limiting of originating valuing. In this chapter, each core concept is described and further explicated in light of human becoming and relevant theoretical and research
literature for the purpose of enhancing understanding of having courage and contributing to the knowledge base of nursing.

**Fortifying Tenacity**

The first core concept, *fortifying tenacity*, is unyielding and enlivening willfulness to persist; it is the way participants described their experiences of *having courage*. Participants talked about things like “choosing to live,” “facing the day,” “doing what you have to do to be independent,” “going ahead and living,” going for it,” “pushing,” “surviving and going forward,” or “getting up, getting out, and doing something.” The participants also described feeling, for instance, “alive,” “exhilarated,” “motivated,” “self-satisfied,” “really good,” and “strong.” One participant offered that, “everybody needs a little courage to get them through their life. It is like you draw from the well of courage...when you need it to pull yourself through.”

The words of other participants also illustrate the core concept *fortifying tenacity*. For example, one participant used the metaphor of a baby learning to walk to describe how having courage is “falling down and getting back up.” He said that “regardless of how many times people fall, as long as they are willing to get back up and keep on trying—that’s courage...and it gives you something to live for.” Similarly, another person offered, “courage is basically falling down and getting back up. It is people from all walks of life doing what they can in life without letting anything stop them.... It is what you make out of life...and it gives you a lot of self-satisfaction.” The idea that having courage is related to “what
you make out of life” was echoed in the words of another participant who offered, “having courage is what you make of it. It is getting up one day at a time and giving it all you can—three hundred percent. It is getting out there and pushing myself. It can be an exhilarating experience.”

The core concept, fortifying tenacity, captures ideas from the participants’ descriptions of a sustaining and enlivening resoluteness to persist and to go on with their lives. At the structural transposition level, the ideas captured by the core concept fortifying tenacity, are conceptualized as invigorating steadfastness. Invigorating steadfastness is conceptually integrated with the human becoming theory as powering. Discussion of fortifying tenacity as powering sheds light on the meaning of powering and adds further depth and clarity to knowledge about the lived experience of having courage.

Powering, according to Parse (1981, 1998), is the continuous pushing-resisting rhythm of affirming-not affirming being with non-being. It is cocreated with the human-universe mutual process as humans “live with the known of the now and the unknown potentials of the yet-to-be” (Parse, 1999, p. 4). Powering, “the force of human existence” (Parse, 1998, p.47), is the “[incarnation of] intentions and actions in moving with possibilities” (Parse, 1998, p. 47) inherent in all human-universe engagements. As humans live the pushing-resisting rhythm with all engagements, tensions are cocreated and ways of changing emerge. Humans can choose among the possibilities as they shape unique
ways of reaching beyond what was and is with what is not-yet (Parse, 1981, 1998).

In this study, the participants' descriptions of having courage that led to the core concept fortifying tenacity, make explicit the ways in which humans reach beyond while affirming-not affirming being in spite of the possibility of nonbeing. The notion of affirming being in spite of the possibility of nonbeing surfaced in all participants' descriptions of pushing and persisting with their possibilities. For example, they talked about, "going ahead," "giving an effort," and "doing what you have to do to move forward," as an alternative to "dying." "wasting away," "being bored at home," "wallowing in self-pity," or "not learning new things." One person offered that having courage is "going ahead and pushing for all of these things—when it would be easy to stay home and not to try to walk." Another said that having courage was going to work "when there was really no need for him to work." In affirming and moving with possibilities that involved, for instance, "facing the day," or "applying anything and everything to survive and go forward," the participants were simultaneously not affirming the possibility of "not walking again," "not taking a shot," or "not living." In each of these examples, the participants described the pushing-resisting of affirming being as the dominant rhythm, yet acknowledged the tension and the struggle with the ever-present possibility of non-affirmation and nonbeing.

Fortifying tenacity, is also consistent with, and contributes to understanding about, Parse's (1981, 1998) assertion that powering is the force
of human existence. For example, the participants in this study all described experiences that can be conceptualized as *fortifying tenacity*. They spoke of being able to go on and to persist with doing what they had to do in life. The experience of having courage was fortifying, invigorating, and inextricably related to the participants’ being tenacious and steadfast in their endeavors—just as *powering* is a force inextricably connected to ways humans necessarily affirm-not affirm being with nonbeing as they “turn toward the future” (Parse, 1998, p. 47) while moving with possibilities.

The core concept *fortifying tenacity* is consistent with and further illuminates some of the ideas about courage that are found in other literature. The notion that courage is associated with moving with possibilities is consistent with the work of others who have written that courage is being all you can be (Schimel, 1990), having the capacity to move ahead (May, 1975); and moving on (Lawrence, 1993). In addition, several authors (Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; May, 1975; Oppenheim, 1996; Rankin, 1988; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952) have written about courage in ways congruent with the idea that it is connected with affirmation of being in spite of the possibility of nonbeing. For instance, courage has been related to affirming and choosing actions true to deep-seated beliefs in oneself (Kennedy, 1955/1961); being able to act in ways that affirm and live out a vision (Oppenheim, 1996); and affirming life (Rankin, 1988; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952) in spite of the presence and certainty of death (Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 1952).
Consistent with Parse (1981, 1998), both Tillich (1952) and Servan-Schreiber (1987) believe that the being-nonbeing paradox is not only about living life amid the certainty of death—it is also connected with the day-to-day birthings and dyings of ideas, relationships, hopes, and actions that are affirming—not affirming. The participants’ descriptions that led to the core concept fortifying tenacity show the way people experience having courage with day-to-day affirmation-non affirmation of possibilities for moving beyond and choosing to live—all-at-once. This study also illuminates that it is fortifying to have the courage to affirm-not affirm emerging possibilities.

Similarly, previous literature has associated having courage with vigor, spirit, liveliness, vital force, energy (Murray et al., 1989; Rogers, 1993); strength (Aquinas, 1964; Bologna, 1996; Frankl, 1959/1984; Rorty, 1988); the juice that makes things happen (Lucas, 1994); thriving (Finfgeld, 1998); and willpower (Desmond, 1927). It has also been called an internal force (Kohut, 1992) that is empowering (Kohut, 1992), impelling (Servan-Schreiber, 1987), and sustaining (Asarian, 1981). Each of these notions are consistent with the core concept fortifying tenacity—which arose from the participants’ dialogues. Examples provide details about the ways people experience having courage as enlivening and helpful for enduring and persisting with day-to-day life.

The majority of the literature on courage—from the earliest (see for example, Aquinas, 1964; Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985; Desmond, 1927; Plato, 1961, 1977) to the most recent (see for example, Bolster, 1996; Bunkers, 1999;
Cuff, 1993; Finfgeld, 1992, 1998)—suggests that the experience has something to do with being tenacious. Descriptions of dogged perseverance (Rankin, 1988), long-term determination and commitment (Finfgeld, 1992), persistence (Tillich, 1952), and refusal to give in (Asarian, 1981) are common, consistent with the core concept fortifying tenacity, and refer to humans' experiences of enduring living with the difficulties of the day-to-day. This notion is integral to the second core concept triumph amid the burdensome.

**Triumph Amid the Burdensome**

The second core concept, triumph amid the burdensome, captures the participants' descriptions of achievement and success amid the tribulations they encountered in day-to-day living. When they talked about their experiences of having courage, the participants each shared how they managed to surmount situations, events, or relationships that they found difficult or troublesome. They described, for example, "overcoming" and "conquering" "stumbling blocks," "obstacles," "teasing," "ridicule," "embarrassment," "frustration," and "barriers." One person offered, "I have had a lot of courage in my life...because I have been able to accomplish so much. I don't let quadriplegia knock me down. I have a family, a full time job and it is all because I don't dwell on what happened to me." The same person went on to say that having courage can be "frustrating" and "cumbersome on people," but it is about "conquering what is keeping you back...and not being embarrassed and hiding behind your
disability because all of the sudden you can’t go to the washroom, get dressed or prepare food on your own.”

Similarly, another participant described his experience of having courage in relation to what his life was like after he injured his spinal cord. He shared that, “it was an absolutely horrible experience. I went through a period of depression and it was a matter of stopping feeling sorry for myself.” He added that having courage is “overcoming big personal hurdles…and I did it!” A different person, who also described the experience of having courage in relation to overcoming obstacles, said his symbol of having courage is “the wrestler Stone Cold Steve Austin,” who “seems to overcome all obstacles.”

The core concept, triumph amid the burdensome, also emerged with other participants’ illustrations of having courage in relation to the adversity they encountered and “stood up” to in the attitudes and actions of others. For instance, one person shared that courage is “standing up in the face of adversity. When living in a world that takes so much for granted, it takes a lot of courage to be able to stand up to the constant stupidity, teasing, and ridicule that you face every day.” Another individual said, “it is ok if somebody laughs. Having courage is accomplishing goals and getting over…knowing that you had an injury that took away your ability to walk.” Someone else added that having courage is not “letting other people or outside things get you down. When I got home after my injury a lot of people I knew were telling me that I was going to
have problems. It was tough and there were boundaries but I made sure I did 
prove them wrong. Now I look back and I see I got over that.”

The core concept *triumph amid the burdensome* is conceptualized as 
*prevailing with the arduous* at the structural transposition level. *Prevailing with 
the arduous* is conceptually integrated with the human becoming theory as 
*enabling-limiting*. Discussion of *triumph amid the burdensome* in light of the 
concept *enabling-limiting* contributes to the general understanding of *enabling-
limiting* and furthers knowledge about the lived experience of having courage.

Enabling-limiting refers to the infinite opportunities-restrictions inherent in 
all choices made by humans (Parse, 1981, 1998). Based on the existential-
phenomenological concept *situated freedom*, Parse posits that humans are free 
to choose the ways they will be with situations. Every situation holds options 
and possibilities and humans must continuously make choices, since they 
cannot engage all of the possibilities that arise in living their lives (Parse, 1981, 
1998). Humans are enabled and limited with what they choose and what they 

The participants’ descriptions of having courage which culminated in the 
core concept *triumph amid the burdensome*, illuminate the way opportunities 
and restrictions exist simultaneously in all choices in all situations. The 
participants all described burdensome situations that seemed restricting, yet in 
all instances they also talked about the triumphs with the opportunities in those 
same situations. The core concept *triumph amid the burdensome*, as *enabling-

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limiting, is particularly clear in the following excerpt from a dialogue with a participant who almost drowned when he injured his spinal cord in a diving accident. He said,

Having courage is getting over barriers and doing difficult things like dating and being intimate, or getting back in the water for the first time…. It is facing the fact that I have to depend on someone to give me assistance each day and letting my guard down at least once a day if I want to continue on as normally as possible in life. It can be embarrassing and you have to swallow your pride.

For this participant, there were explicit opportunities and restrictions inherent in the choices available to him in this situation. He acknowledged the opportunity to continue his life “as normally” as possible if he let his guard down at least once a day in order to be assisted with his personal hygiene. He also spoke about the restrictions with that choice—namely that it meant he regularly had to “swallow his pride” and be “embarrassed” with someone else giving him care. In this particular situation, this participant could have chosen not to “let his guard down.” This choice would also have had inherent opportunities-restrictions—since life would not be “as normal” as possible, but he would not have to “swallow his pride” or “be embarrassed.” Understanding the core concept triumph amid the burdensome in light of Parse’s (1981, 1998) concept enabling-limiting illuminates that having courage is connected with the victories and defeats of the opportunities-restrictions intrinsic with all choices people make about the ways they are with situations.

Other theoretical and research literature on having courage is generally congruent with the idea that it is connected with complex, difficult, or painful
situations, ideas, or relationships (see for example, Aquinas, 1964; Bologna, 1996; Bunkers, 1999; Desmond, 1927; Finfgeld, 1992, 1998; Haase, 1985; Kennedy, 1955/1961; Lawrence, 1993; Lucas, 1994; May, 1975; Plato, 1977; Rachman, 1978; Schimel, 1990; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Walton, 1986). Also consistent with the core concept triumph amid the burdensome, is the way several authors (Asarian, 1981; Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; Lucas, 1994; O'Brien, 1950) have written about having courage in ways that suggest it is intertwined with triumphs (Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; Lucas, 1994) and accomplishments (Asarian, 1981; O'Brien, 1950) amid the hardships encountered with day-to-day living. For example, Kennedy (1955/1961) says having courage happens “in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures” (p. 246). He also writes that, “the courage of life is a magnificent mixture of triumph and tragedy” (p. 246).

Similarly, Lucas (1994) reported that the participants in her study connected courage with triumph over adversity and overcoming obstacles. The findings from this current study add clarity to the understanding that having courage is integrally related to the cocreation of triumphs amid the opportunities-restrictions in every situation. It adds to the understanding that all situations, even those that seem burdensome or arduous, are replete with opportunities and restrictions all-at-once. In living with having courage, humans make choices to move with the opportunities-restrictions of the possibilities they cherish—an
idea central to the third core concept of this study, *guarded confidence with the treasured*.

**Guarded Confidence With the Treasured**

The third core concept, *guarded confidence with the treasured*, captures the ways the participants in this study described, with hesitant assuredness, their expectations of cherished people, activities, hopes, and ideas. As they spoke about their experiences of having courage, the participants each talked about what was important to them—for example, some focused on "learning to walk again," "having surgery to relieve pain," "having the help of family and friends," "having a house and a good job," "traveling," "playing sports," or "getting married." In speaking about what was important to them, the participants said, for instance, that having courage was "having faith," "trusting," and "believing" in what they cherished. Simultaneously, they also described "being afraid," "apprehensive," "knowing there is a risk," or "worrying" about what might happen.

The core concept *guarded confidence with the treasured* is illuminated in the words of the following participant who said, "having courage is having faith when you don't know exactly where you are going. It is like hearing the words 'I dare you' and feeling like a line has been drawn in front of you. You have to weigh out the pros and cons and decide whether or not the line is worth crossing. The answer depends on what it means to you." Similarly, another
person offered that having courage is "believing in what you can do and deciding you are going to work, or travel, or play sports. Even though you fear everything, you just have to hope for the best."

For another participant, having courage is "trusting someone with your life." He talked about times that he was "totally reliant" on others—like when "I get into a pool and depend on someone coming in after me if I can't make it up by myself, or when the one time I went Christmas tree hunting and my friend hauled me through two and a half feet of snow and left me in the middle of a field as he tramped off to find a tree. All kinds of things are going through your mind. You are thinking 'is he coming back?' And if he doesn't come back how do I make it 50 meters back to the truck through all the snow?"

The notion of guarded confidence with the treasured also emerged in one person's account of having courage in relation to his desire for independence. He shared,

It is saying no...and refusing to allow people to give you assistance in a lot of areas...because you don't want to depend on them and burn them out.... It takes courage to tell your family to back off and to be able to tell them you're okay...and you can survive by yourself when there are a lot of times when you feel alone...when they are not around you.

This same participant also talked about what it was like to have courage to transfer into and out of his van on his own. He shared, "once I blew the transfer and was in the back of the van for six hours waiting for someone to come and find me." Before the next transfer he had "to build up the courage" and he remembers thinking, "alright, I know I can do it."
The core concept *guarded confidence with the treasured* signifies the participants' expressions of cautious sureness with what was important to them. At the structural transposition level, the ideas central to *guarded confidence with the treasured* are conceptualized as *certainty-uncertainty with the revered*. *Certainty-uncertainty with the revered* is conceptually integrated with the human becoming theory as *originating valuing*. Exploration of *guarded confidence with the treasured* in light of the theoretical construct *originating valuing* enhances understanding of the meaning of originating and valuing and adds further depth and clarity to knowledge about having courage.

According to Parse (1998), originating is “inventing new ways of conforming-not conforming in the certainty-uncertainty of living” (p. 49). It is related to the ways humans choreograph ways of distinguishing and living their personal uniqueness while simultaneously designing ways to go along with and to be like others. As humans originate ways of being the same yet unique they are both sure about the choices they make and unsure what the outcomes of those choices will be. Parse (1981, 1998) posits that in every choice certainty-uncertainty exists as a paradoxical pattern of human experience, since there is always ambiguity about how situations will unfold. The choices humans make are an incarnation of the valuing process. Valuing, “is confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs” (Parse, 1998, p. 37). From among imaged options, humans make choices about what they value. Value priorities guide life choices and
shape patterns of relating (Parse, 1981, 1998). The choices humans make are their cherished options.

The theoretical construct *originating valuing* best captures the meaning of the core concept *guarded confidence with the treasured* at the theoretical level. *Originating valuing* is incarnating the cherished. It is choreographing ways of distinguishing personal uniqueness yet also striving to go along with being like others, while living prized priorities with certainty amid the uncertainty of how life will unfold.

In this study, the descriptions of having courage that led to the core concept *guarded confidence with the treasured*, show that the participants made choices, with certainty, about what was of value to them and about ways they wanted to live. The descriptions given also make explicit that while the participants were certain about their preferences, they did not know for sure how things would turn out. In the example given earlier, the participant desired to be independent, yet he knew there was a chance he could “blow the transfer into his van.” He believed he could make the transfer safely, but acknowledged not knowing that he would always be successful. Having courage, for him, is related to confirming his value for being as independent as possible. Similarly, another participant said, “it takes a lot of courage to put away fears of falling and it takes courage to do things a person who is paraplegic can do—like skiing or scuba diving.” He added, “having courage is saying ‘I can do it, I can do it, like the little engine that could, you try and go up the hill. It is thinking positive.”
The originating valuing of having courage involves living and confirming-not confirming one’s value priorities with confidence amid the ambiguity of the unknown not-yet. Other authors have also written about courage in ways that allude to its connection with confidence (Bologna, 1996; Finfgeld, 1998; Haase, 1985; Lucas, 1994; Rachman, 1978; Rorty, 1988); values (Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985; Asarian, 1981; Desmond, 1927; Finfgeld, 1998; Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; Lucas, 1994; O’Brien, 1950; Schimmel, 1990; Servan-Schreiber, 1987); ambiguous outcomes (Bunkers, 1999; Kennedy, 1955/1961; May, 1975; O’Brien, 1950; Tillich, 1952); and individual uniqueness (Kohut, 1992; May, 1975; Tillich, 1952).

Similar to the core concept guarded confidence with the treasured, Rachman (1978), Lucas (1994), and Bologna (1996) suggest that having faith and confidence is necessary for having courage. In contrast, Rorty (1988) connects confidence with military courage and cautions that confidence may create more conflict since, Rorty believes, it diminishes the likelihood that persons will try to reach a compromise. Rorty’s view is in contrast to the findings reported here which suggest that persons’ value priorities guide the choices that they make about how they will be. The confidence inherent in having courage for the participants in this study related to the certainty with which they decided on and committed to living out what was important for them.

The notion that having courage is related to personal beliefs and values, which is inherent in guarded confidence with the treasured, is well supported in
the literature (Aristotle, 384-322BC/1985; Asarian, 1981; Desmond, 1927; Finfgeld, 1998; Kennedy, 1955/1961; Kohut, 1992; Lucas, 1994; O'Brien, 1950; Schimel, 1990; Servan-Schreiber, 1987). Less often written about, however, is the way courage is connected with the ambiguity of living the “unknown yet-to-be” (Parse, 1999, p. 4). When describing social courage, May (1975) suggests that “intimacy with others involves risking oneself since one cannot know how relationships will turn out. Similarly, Kennedy (1955/1961) maintains that having courage relates to remaining faithful to one’s beliefs and values. He implies that the outcomes of having courage are far from certain and that the ultimate judge of something being courageous has nothing to do with the ultimate rightness or wrongness of a cause. Kennedy also says that having the courage to live a commitment to one’s values and beliefs does not guarantee the eventual vindication of one’s beliefs. This current study contributes further clarity to the notion that certainty-uncertainty is inherent in having courage. People cannot predict how life will turn out, but they can live a commitment to what is important to them.

Finally, guarded confidence with the treasured, conceptualized as originating valuing, is consistent with Tillich’s (1952) assertion that it requires courage to live as oneself and with the universe simultaneously. This connects with Parse’s (1981, 1998) position that in the process of originating humans strive to conform-not conform all-at-once. Tillich’s view, in a way, is like Parse’s in that he posits that humans necessarily live an interdependent balance of this
paradoxical pattern since, to conform only would mean "becoming a thing within the whole of things" (p. 155) and never to conform would mean "losing oneself in an empty self-relatedness" (p.155).

Guarded confidence with the treasured, signifies the certainty-uncertainty of conforming-not conforming while living a commitment to one's value priorities. When connected with the first two core concepts of this study—fortifying tenacity and triumph amid the burdensome—it cocreates the structure, The lived experience of having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured. This structure substantiates the researcher's conceptualization of having courage as a universal lived experience of health significant to quality of life.

**Having Courage, Health, and Quality of Life**

This study's findings demonstrate the significance of having courage for health and quality of life. According to Parse (1990), health is a process that incarnates personal values as persons become who they want to be. It is cocreated with the universe and defined uniquely by each human—thus, it cannot be compared with predefined norms. Health is simply the unitary human's view of quality of life—it is the way humans live a personal commitment (Parse, 1990) to what is important for them day-to-day.
The findings from this study illuminate that having courage is integral to living a personal commitment to what one considers important. The participants all talked about their personal commitment to living quality in their lives. The structure having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured, was discovered from the participants’ dialogues and it shows that having courage is an invigorating experience of steadfastly going on and doing what they wished in order to affirm themselves. The dialogues also yielded information about health as cocreating successes amid the opportunities-restrictions inherent with all situations. The findings illuminate that having courage is inextricably connected with living in ways true to one’s values, thus they show that having courage is integral with humans living health (Parse, 1981, 1998).

**Summary**

The findings of this study are unique and present the following ideas that do not appear in the extant literature on courage:

1. The definition, having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured;

2. The idea that the living of value priorities with certainty-uncertainty is inherent with having courage; and

3. The notion that having courage is an experience of health significant for quality of life.
The findings of this study on having courage, as evolved and interpreted in light of human becoming and other theoretical and research literature, contribute new knowledge and understanding about the human experience of having courage which enhances nursing knowledge and provides insights for future research and practice. The insights for research and practice gleaned from this study, along with the researcher's conclusions about the study, are addressed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study used the Parse research method to explore the lived experience of having courage with 10 persons living with spinal cord injuries in the community. The study was guided, from inception to completion, by the human becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998). The purposes of the study were to discover the structure of the lived experience of having courage, and to expand understanding of human becoming. These purposes have been fulfilled. In this chapter, conclusions and recommendations for future research and practice are presented.

Conclusions

Three core concepts of having courage emerged with the research process. They are fortifying tenacity, triumph amid the burdensome, and confidence with the treasured. When woven together, the core concepts comprise the major finding of this study—the structure, the lived experience of having courage is a fortifying tenacity arising with triumph amid the burdensome, while guarded confidence emerges with the treasured. The structure of having courage is the answer to the research question. At the theoretical level, the structure of having courage is powering the enabling-
limiting of originating valuing. The structure of having courage was described and discussed in light of human becoming and in relation to other theoretical and research literature on courage. Listed and discussed below are the researcher's conclusions about the process of coming to know more about the lived experience of having courage using the Parse research method.

First, this study provides new knowledge about having courage and human becoming. Knowledge gained from this study informs general knowledge about human lived experiences and also enhances a general understanding about human becoming that can be used to guide future research and practice. This particular study is also the first to investigate the lived experience of having courage with persons who have spinal cord injuries—thus, the second conclusion is that the findings will be useful for nurses and other healthcare professionals who are concerned with the health and quality of life of this group of individuals.

Third, the Parse research method was an appropriate choice. It provided a rigorous process for data analysis-synthesis that enabled the researcher to capture in-depth descriptions about having courage, generate the structure of having courage, and answer the research question guiding the study. The Parse research method also provided guidelines for integration of the findings with human becoming—thus contributing to nursing knowledge.

The fourth conclusion that emerged with the process of conducting this study is that using metaphors and symbols in the dialogical engagement
process is a challenge. The researcher found that the use of symbols and metaphors to aid in descriptions of lived experiences provided a different way of describing human experience; however, different was not necessarily better. The descriptions were adequate even when some of the participants chose not to use symbols or metaphors. Researchers using the Parse research method with mediums other than words must be comfortable going with the flow of the ways participants choose to describe their experiences.

Finally, the notion of going with what the participant chooses also applies to whether or not dialogical engagements should be videotape recorded. In this study, only half of the participants were videotaped—the other half were uncomfortable with the idea. The videos, while useful for extraction-synthesis, were not necessary. They are, however, good instructional aids for future researchers who will be learning about the dialogical engagement process.

Methodological Insights

In this study, the researcher proposed, and the participants agreed, to use a symbol or a metaphor to describe the experience of having courage during the dialogical engagement. Only eight participants actually went on to do so—even though the researcher, immediately prior to beginning each dialogue, reminded each of them to include their metaphor or symbol of having courage. This was an unanticipated challenge for this researcher who found that expecting all participants to bring and describe a symbol or a metaphor of
having courage during the dialogical engagement process created some difficulties with maintaining true presence.

In at least half of the instances where a metaphor or a symbol was used, it was because the researcher again reminded the participants to speak about them when it seemed that the dialogical engagement was otherwise over. This raises some concerns, since the researcher refocused the dialogue instead of going with the flow of what the participant was saying.

Participants will always choose what they will say or not say about their experiences in the dialogical engagement process. This researcher believes that participants can be invited to use symbols, metaphors, or other mediums to describe their experiences; however, in order to remain in true presence throughout the dialogical engagement process, the researcher must be comfortable leaving it up to each participant whether or not s/he wishes to embrace the invitation.

**Recommendations for Research**

The goal of qualitative research guided by human becoming is to enhance understanding by explicating meanings and patterns of human experiences (Parse, 1981, 1998). This study has enhanced understanding about the human experience of having courage with 10 people. The findings, while similar to some of what has already been written about courage by other authors, provide a view of having courage that reflects a unique horizon of
meaning—cocreates uniquely by this researcher and these participants. Further research on having courage will cocreate different horizons of meaning, each with unique insights for understanding having courage.

In addition to further research on the lived experience of having courage, many possibilities for future investigations can be gleaned from the core concepts that emerged in this study. The first core concept, *fortifying tenacity*, might lead one to investigate universal lived experiences such as feeling strong, being persistent, or refusing to give up. Understanding of the second core concept, *triumph amid the burdensome*, could be further enhanced by investigating universal lived experiences like being successful, accomplishing a goal, or doing something difficult. The third core concept, *guarded confidence with the treasured*, might lead to further investigations on feeling unsure, feeling confident, trusting someone, or being afraid. Research on any of these phenomena, has the potential to add to a general understanding about having courage and to contribute to knowledge about human becoming.

**Recommendations for Practice**

The findings of this qualitative study are not meant to be generalized and used to create interventions that lead to specific outcomes, since those interventions would be meaningless for practice with humans who, from this researcher's perspective, make choices to live uniquely and unpredictably in ways they value. The findings from this study enhance knowledge about the
human becoming theory. The human becoming theory is a knowledge base that, when understood and embraced, circumscribes the intent and the purpose of the nurse-person process.

The values and beliefs underpinning human becoming guide nurses to honor individuals' values; respect individuals' freedom to make choices about what is best for themselves; bear witness to persons' changing health patterns; seek to understand, without judging, individuals' perspectives of health and quality of life; honor the person as the expert about quality of life issues; and let the concerns, needs, wishes, and expectations expressed by individuals guide practice (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1996c, 1998). In true presence, nurses demonstrate their availability to learning about individuals' perspectives by “listening with the other intently...and going with the flow of the person as the person illuminates meaning, synchronizes rhythms, and mobilizes transcendence” (Parse, 1996c, p. 183).

The findings from this qualitative study on having courage, when interpreted and woven with the human becoming theory, contribute to the repertoire of knowledge nurses guided by human becoming have when they are truly present with people in practice (Parse, 1996a). According to Parse (1996a), "this knowledge guides the nurse in true presence with the person to follow the paradoxical rhythms as the person talks about what might be" (p. 14). For instance, the findings from this study may help the nurse who is guided by human becoming to be available for bearing witness to the tensions and the
struggles persons describe in connection with confirming-not confirming cherished options. Nurses may have a better understanding of ways that persons persist with the pushing-resisting of moving beyond. They may also be more readily available for appreciating the person's perspective of the opportunities-restrictions inherent in all situations.

When Parse (1981, 1998) created the human becoming school of thought, she gave birth to the ideas, the values, and the beliefs necessary to guide a way of practicing nursing as a human science—a way, described above, which incarnates a basic and genuine respect for the dignity and situated freedom of all humans. This research study—like others guided and interpreted in light of Parse's assumptions, principles, and concepts of human becoming—contributes to a general understanding of several of the major concepts of the theory. By making explicit the connections between the core concepts of this study and the concepts powering, enabling-limiting, originating, and valuing, this study adds depth and clarity which can help nurses to understand the theory in more concrete ways and to be better able to live it in practice.

Summary

This study achieved its purposes. The researcher discovered the structure of the lived experience of having courage and the findings contribute unique insights to the growing knowledge base about human becoming that can
be used to guide future research and practice endeavors. The challenge now is to continue the quest to expand understanding of nursing’s unique knowledge base in the hope that it will inspire more and more health professionals to learn about the ways of living human becoming that can make a difference to human health and quality of life.
APPENDIX A:

LETTERS OF APPROVAL FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPENDIX A:

LETTERS OF APPROVAL FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 2, 1998

Debra A. Bournes

Dear Ms. Bournes:

Thank you for submitting the research project titled "Having Courage: Research Guided by the Human Becoming Theory" for review by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. 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 renewal form. If you return this form, the IRB will at that time review your responses and, if appropriate, renew your approval for a further twelve month period. If you do not return that form by November 1, 1999, however, your approval will automatically lapse.

This review procedure, administered by the IRB, in no way absolves researchers from the obligation to inform the IRB in writing immediately if they propose changes in aspects of an approved project which involve human subjects. Researchers are respectfully reminded that the University’s ability to support them in litigation is dependent upon conformity with continuing approval for their work. Should you have questions regarding this letter or general procedures, please contact me by letter or telephone as indicated on the letterhead above. Kindly quote File #71951 if this project is specifically involved.

With all best wishes for the continued success of your work,

I am,

Matthew E. Creighton, S.J.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse
    Max Caproni, Assistant Dean, Graduate School
October 26, 1999

Debra Bourne

Dear Ms. Bourne:

Thank you for requesting an extension to IRB file # 71951, titled “Having Courage: Research Guided by the Human Becoming Theory.” After careful examination of the materials you have submitted, we have renewed this project as described for a period of one year from the date of this letter.

Approximately eleven months from today, you will receive a letter which will ask whether you wish to apply for renewal of IRB approval of your project. 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 October 26, 2000, 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 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 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.

Best wishes for your research.

I am,

Matthew Creighton, S. J.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo parise, Nursing
May 25, 1999

Debra A. Bourne

Dear Ms. Bourne:

Thank you for requesting an amendment to IRB file # 71951, titled “Having Courage: Research Guided by the Human Becoming Theory.” After careful examination of the materials you have submitted, we have approved the change in your research project as described through the end of the current approval period for the project.

At the end of this approval period, you will receive 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; this refers to any changes made after the approval of this amendment until the time of your renewal. 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 November 1, 1999, 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 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 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.

Best wishes for your research.

I am,

Mathew Creighton, S. J.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A RESEARCH STUDY ON HAVING COURAGE:
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

You are being asked to participate in a study conducted by Debra Bournes, a doctoral student at the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago. This study is about the experience of having courage.

Participation will involve one audio tape-recorded and videotape recorded, discussion between you and Ms. Bournes. You will be asked to bring and to include a description of a personal symbol, picture, piece of music, poem, or metaphor of having courage as you talk about your experience of having courage. If your symbol or metaphor of having courage is an object, a photograph of it will be taken. This discussion will take place in a setting where you feel most comfortable. It will last approximately 20-60 minutes, depending on what you want to share.

The information you share will be strictly confidential, and the tapes 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. The transcriptions will be shredded at the completion of the study. There are no known risks or real benefits to participation. You may find it helpful to discuss your experience of having courage and to know you will be contributing to nursing knowledge. You may stop the discussion and withdraw from participation at any time, for any reason, without penalty. You are free to talk with Debra Bournes at [redacted] at any time, about any concerns or questions you may have regarding this study.

Thank-you for considering participating in this study.
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

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APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

I am willing to participate in this study on having courage being conducted by Debra Bournes, doctoral student, Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University 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 bring a personal symbol, picture, piece of music, poem, or metaphor of my experience of having courage and that I will be asked to describe it as part of my description of my experience of having courage. If possible, a photograph will be taken of the symbol, picture, piece of music, poem, or metaphor of having courage that I bring to share. I understand that the discussion will last from 20 to 60 minutes depending on what and how long I want to participate. The discussion will be audio and video tape recorded, and these tapes will be erased once the study is complete. I also understand that a transcript of the discussion will be made and that the transcript will be shredded when the study is complete. I have been told that my name will not appear on the written transcripts, reports, or any published papers. However, quotations and symbols, pictures, pieces of music, poems, or metaphors of having courage from our discussion may be used anonymously in reports of the study.

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

I understand that I am free to not 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 Debra Bournes at [REDACTED] 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

Date

Researcher’s Signature
APPENDIX D: OPTIONAL CONSENT FORM
APPENDIX D: OPTIONAL CONSENT FORM

Optional Consent to Use Audio and Videotapes for Educational Purposes

I have agreed to participate in the study on having courage that is being conducted by Debra Bournes, doctoral student, Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago. The discussion I have with Ms. Bournes will be audio and video-tape recorded.

I am willing to let Debra Bournes keep the audio and videotapes of our conversation after the study is complete. I understand that she will use them in presentations for educational purposes only.

________________________________________  _______________________
Participant’s Signature  Date

________________________________________
Researcher’s Signature
APPENDIX E: COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER
January 25, 2000

To: Loyola School of Nursing
c/o Debra Bournes

From: Colours by Permobil

RE: Use of Poster

To whom it may concern,

This is to certify that Colours by Permobil gives our permission for Debra Bournes to use our poster entitled "The People of Colours" for educational purposes.

If you should have any further questions please call us at [redacted] Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Regina Chamberlain
Customer Service
REFERENCES


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Parse, R. R. (1997b). The human becoming theory: The was, is, and will be. *Nursing Science Quarterly, 10,* 32-38.


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VITA

Debra Bournes is originally from Toronto, Canada. She graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1990 and a Master of Science in 1997. In 1997 she was also inducted into the Lambda Pi chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nurses.

In August 1997 Debra began the nursing PhD program at Loyola University Chicago—where she received a Graduate Tuition Fellowship and the Niehoff Chair Graduate Assistantship in 1997, 1998, and 1999.

In 1999, Debra also received the Dissertation Proposal Award from the Midwest Nursing Research Society Qualitative Research Section as well as the New Investigator Award from the Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation. During this time her dissertation was also funded by the American Association of Spinal Cord Injury Nurses. Debra completed her PhD in nursing in 2000.
DISSEYATION APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Debra Ann Bournes has been read and approved by the following committee:

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

Carroll Gold, RN; PhD
Associate Professor of Nursing
Loyola University Chicago

William K. Cody, RN; PhD
Associate Professor of 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 Doctor of Philosophy.

[Handwritten Date: March 24, 2000]  [Blank]  [Director's Signature]