

## BOOK REVIEW

**Sitzman, K. & Watson, J. (Editors). 2014.**  
**CARING SCIENCE, MINDFUL PRACTICE: IMPLEMENTING WATSON'S HUMAN**  
**CARING THEORY. New York: Springer.**

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Caring science, mindful practice: Implementing Watson's human caring theory, is a welcome addition to the growing pool of literature on human caring. It is of significance to all persons interested in, and concerned with, human caring or caritas practice. Theorists, researchers and clinical practitioners will find this volume a guiding light in whichever area of practice Watson's Human Caring Theory is being applied. Even if the theory is not being applied, this book clearly indicates practical ways in which both individuals and groups can arrive at a more authentic, human caring level of practice and of living life moment-to-moment. The guidelines and guidance provided in this book will serve those informed about Watson's theory as well as lay persons to embrace mindful reflective care and caring (caritas), be it in formal institutional settings or community and private home settings, making caring an embodied self-caring experience. To quote Watson's Author's Note to this edition: "Renewed attention and intentions are created for contemplation, reflections, and simple 'pauses' to move from ego-head-fear mindsets, to love, open heart-centered compassion, accessing sources of inner knowing and interbeing [sic] in relation to all of life."

Although the impression might be that the spiritual religious undertones of the contents are rooted in Eastern philosophy and religion, it is equally true that the term caritas has a strong Christian Catholic foundation and stems from the 19th century Latin word for charity. In addition, as the authors indicate, Hanh's mindfulness approach as applied to caritas and Watson's theory, corresponds closely with both Newman's and Watson's work.

Thich Nath Hanh's practice of mindfulness, as applied to the implementation of Watson's Theory of Human Caring, consists of five mindfulness trainings: reverence for life, true happiness, true love, loving speech with deep listening, and nourishment and healing. The mindfulness training sections are briefly defined in Chapter 3, and as a "stand alone" are useful in everyday living. However, the text is not merely another self-improvement fad. It is a long-awaited practical application and implementation of a highly philosophical and theoretical construction of nursing and the innate human

attribute of care and caring – “an attribute choked to death in an ever increasing materialized, soul-hardened and superficial ‘bounce-off-of-life’ attitude”. It is practical and offers a way towards enhancing the caring aspects of nursing.

The contents of the book might be considered by some readers to be “for the already academic and scientifically privileged”. If anyone reading this book has such an attitude on reading this book, then this book was definitely intended for that person. One should allow oneself to open up, to centre and to apply the universal principles: an appeal to individual morality, human and humane conduct. Within the African tradition of Ubuntu, Hanh’s mindfulness framework has an uncompromising fit.

The text makes for easy and enjoyable reading of sophisticated human sciences in operation.

In the first section, the use of mindfulness to cultivate an understanding of Watson’s Theory of Caring is presented, followed by a chapter providing an overview of Watson’s 10 caritas practices, Thich Nhat Hanh’s five mindfulness trainings and a chapter on moment-to-moment living according to the Watson theory.

In the second section of the book, one chapter is devoted to each of the ten caritas issues. After a brief orientation to the caritas, one or two abstracts reflect the way in which coaches, participating in the Caritas Coach Education Program Project, have gone about “operationalising” and involving the caritas processes in practice in different clinical contexts. About twenty caritas coaches from different clinical settings and of diverse professional and academic standing contributed towards the published abstracts. The discerning reader will recognise the vast research possibilities, especially for a project and cooperative research undertaking. Not only will such research, and eventual practices founded on these research results, focus on clinical practice, but also on nursing education and management – on each individual professing to caring.

For nurse educators, the book suggests interesting liberal and creative teaching strategies for caritas in line with the talent development of student nurses. The latter is a requirement for wholeness of being and authenticity, for the knowing self, but is an aspect often absent from curricula.

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