

Margaret Newman's Memorial
Delivered at the Memorial Service January 10, 2019

by

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Margaret was a mentor and inspirational presence in my life, and like all of you, it is important for me to be here to remember and honor both Margaret Newman, the renowned nursing scholar, but also Margaret Newman, the person. I'm here to share a little about who Margaret is to me, to thank her for her many gifts to the discipline and profession of nursing, and to remind all of us that her legacy lives on.

I first met Margaret when I worked as an Instructor for Penn State in 1981. By then, Margaret was a well-known nurse theorist. I was a doctoral student at New York University from 1980-1985 and her work on consciousness was fascinating to me. She was reading books about by Isaac Bentov, David Bohm, Ilya Prigogine that influenced my ideas. I had heard her stunning, revolutionary speech at the Nurse Educator Conference in 1977 where she unveiled her ideas that became the theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness. She loved telling the story that she was invited to the conference to present her theory of nursing. She didn't have a theory of nursing, but since she recognized that all the other presenters were theorists she developed a presentation called, "Toward a Theory of Health". The next year she was at an informal gathering talking to one of the planners of that conference who let it slip that they had made a mistake in inviting Margaret to speak...The Neuman that they had intended to invite spelled her name with a U and not a W. I believe that Health as Expanding Consciousness would have eventually been born, but how fortunate that this mistake that induced this early birth of the theory.

Later, I got to know Margaret through attending the Society of Rogerian Scholars meetings where she led “dialogues” inspired by David Bohm’s book “On Dialogue”. Dialogues had no agenda and were conducted with the intention and faith in what he called “meaning flowing through”, that we would make important connections if we listened and responded from the heart. In 1997 several faculty interested in the unitary world view from the University of Colorado held a Dialogue in the Rockies with Margaret. It was so memorable, meeting in the Fall in a beautiful lodge in the mountains, in dialogue for several days, star gazing and walking through the forest. Through this experience we built a collegial friendship that was mutual; she encouraged and supported my work and asked for my opinions about her evolving work. I spent my sabbatical in 1998 studying with her, and in 2008 Maggie Pharris, Dottie Jones and I wrote an article with her. She was a loving, generous mentor and friend.

Margaret was honored by the American Academy of Nursing in 2008 as a Living Legend. Her lifework unequivocally reflects the spirit of this recognition. She has made truly legendary contributions to the discipline of nursing. She was inducted into one of the first cohorts of fellows in the American Academy of Nursing. Margaret Newman was a pioneer and a trailblazer, pushing the boundaries of our disciplinary discourse with provocative and innovative thinking. She was a “mover and a shaker”, challenging us to see things differently and to question tradition and established thought. For example, she identified the focus of the discipline of nursing as “caring in the human health experience” and she identified three different paradigms to guide research and practice. Her theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness offers a revolutionary perspective on health, a view that health encompasses both disease and non-disease, feeling “well” and “ill”. Health is the pattern of living life, and through reflections on this evolving pattern of the whole, it is possible to have insights that may lead to different life choices. This is expanding consciousness. These novel theoretical formulations about health and

nursing have reshaped nursing knowledge around the world, guiding over 100 research studies including doctoral dissertations and masters theses. HEC is studied and used to guide practice across the US as well as in Canada, Japan, Norway, Iceland, Guatemala, Taiwan, Colombia and New Zealand. The impact of the theory has grown as more scholars engage in its development. Newman's last book, *Transforming Presence: The Difference that Nursing Makes*, was published in 2008. In this book she says that the essence of nursing is being present in the moment with another in a dynamic partnership, engaged in a dialogue about their evolving pattern, meaning, insight and action, attending the birth of something new at choice points. This is transforming for both the nurse and the client. Nursing is honoring the other's journey and having faith in continuous mutual process of change and expanding consciousness. The goal of nursing is not to make people well or prevent disease it is to be a transforming presence for expanding consciousness. She said, "It is time to break with the paradigm of health that focuses on power, manipulation and control and move to one of reflective, compassionate consciousness". Margaret Newman has made extraordinary and sustained contributions that will endure to inspire generations of nurse scholars and practitioners.

But I will miss her in her human form. She was a passionate and visionary person, a role model for courageous scholarship and leadership. She modeled a resolute commitment to a direction that came from her internal compass, a True North within the center of her being. Margaret was brilliant, warm, welcoming, humble, honest, authentic, creative, and affirming, genuinely interested in others. She is a nurse who walked the talk. At a conference I attended one of the participants shared that when she had received a diagnosis of breast cancer she emailed Margaret, and Margaret offered to be her nurse. She told us what a gift it was to have Margaret accompany her on this difficult journey. Margaret admonished us to "stand in the center of your truth"...I hear Margaret's voice telling me this. It is one of simplest and yet most

difficult lessons that I've ever learned from Margaret. She told us that Absolute Consciousness was unconditional love. I choose to see Margaret soaring freely embraced by the transforming presence of our love for her. Margaret, thank you for all your gifts to us personally and professionally. May you be in love and peace.