With the potential to be both leaders and advocates for their communities, nurse coaches seek to increase wellbeing, improve health, and imbue the lives of others with a sense of wholeness. To this end, the services nurse coaches contribute must emanate from the ethical fiber of moral imagination in action – a sacred space of interconnectedness that accepts people as they are and where they are. This shared mutuality honors each person’s individuality while understanding that we are all integral to each other’s journeys. The term moral imagination has taken on various interpretations and meanings throughout history. In recent years, a non-profit global venture fund known as Acumen (2016) has advanced the concept of moral imagination to new levels, defining it in terms of global leadership as “the humility to see the world as it is and the audacity to imagine the world as it could be.” Jacqueline Novogratz (2009), Acumen founder and CEO, writes, “The first step for each of us is to develop our own moral imagination, the ability to put ourselves in another person’s shoes. It sounds so simple, and yet it is perhaps the most difficult thing we can do. It is so much easier to pretend that others are different . . .” (p. 283).

**Partners in Interpersonal Evolution & Caring Relationships**

Moral imagination infuses nurse coaching with an intersubjective
mutuality as a foundational pillar of practice. It is a moral-ethical reminder that nurse coaches and their clients are partners in interpersonal evolution, co-creators of an emerging reality that embraces health and wellbeing. The pressing need to uncover the ethical fiber of moral imagination within nurse coaching is essential in order to actualize the core professional tenets of healing, leadership, and global action identified by Nightingale (Dossey, Selanders, Beck, & Attewell, 2005). While Nightingale believed that each nurse is a leader, Dossey, Luck, and Gulino-Schaub (2015) elaborate that nurse coaches are in fact leaders in their own right, possessing both a moral imperative and inherent privilege to guide the nurse coach-client experience with authentic, mindful, empathic integrity.

Ushering in transparency between nurse coaches and clients is an essential facet of effective communication in leadership. It helps to promote accountability within the relationship, creates trust, and facilitates changes in behavior (Studer Group, 2010), which are cornerstones of the nurse coach-client dyad. Before nurse coaches commence an effective relational process with clients, they must put their very sense of self in the clients’ shoes in order to engage from the clients’ worldview, not their own. They must remember that each client is a being of process with a vibrant sense of individualism.

In humanizing the theoretical framework of a caring or caritas relationship, nurse coaches create the space for moral imagination to flourish. Methodologies for sustaining such a relationship include:

- practicing reverence for each person,
- verbally and non-verbally communicating without judgment,
- maintaining a heart-centered and compassionate approach,
- centering and stilling the self,
- acknowledging the collective transpersonal nature of all beings, and
- bowing to the notion that we are each integral to each others’ journeys. (Watson, 2008)

This is, indeed, the art of nurse coaching. In this instance, when nurse coaches practice as Caritas Coaches, they are functioning as partners in their clients’ self-healing explorations and gently aiding them in “connecting with his or her inner spirit and authentic longings for self” (Watson, 2008, p. 127). When nurse coaches embody a caritas way of being, an evolution of both mind and heart consciousness occurs, in which self-care is modeled, vulnerabilities are recognized and honored, people are accepted as they are, loving kindness is valued, and respect and human dignity are central to an interaction (Watson, 2008). Nurse coaches become a representation of interconnectedness and the shared experience of the human journey.

**Deepening Connection through Self-Assessment**

Being of service to others in the role of the nurse coach requires that we understand who we are, confront personal health challenges and dilemmas, and refine our intentions in working with clients. Nurse coaches may utilize the Integrative Health and Wellness Assessment (IHWA) to translate the energetic, transpersonal loci of the nurse coach-client relationship into personalized data for clients to assess, reference, and apply their continued self-development work (Dossey et al., 2015). The IHWA addresses...
eight areas that heavily impact an overall experience of healing and wholeness: life balance and satisfaction, relationships, spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, environmental, and health responsibility. When nurse coaches integrate the IHWA into their own self-care, they are demonstrating moral imagination in action. They place themselves in the shoes of their respective clients to personally understand the self-assessment process, ask themselves the questions they hope to inquire of their clients, and reflect on self in a manner congruent with the education they provide for others. As a result, nurse coaches develop a deeper appreciation for their clients’ growth processes and foster a compassionate regard for all client experiences along the way. They will be better able to respond to client needs with authenticity through a lens of interconnectedness.

Moral Imagination & the Global Village
The importance of beginning from this insightful space of awareness is acknowledged by Novogratz (2009):

But empathy is only our starting point. It must be combined with focus and conviction, the toughness to know what needs to get done and the courage to follow through. The world needs more than humanitarians. (p. 284)

We are currently experiencing a devaluation of personal, professional, and systemic integrity within our healthcare infrastructure. The overt medicalization of human beings to diseases and the loss of dignity in the health delivery exchange leaves much to be desired. The abuse of the term “noncompliance” seeks to blame patients for their outcomes as opposed to evaluating how transdisciplinary and collaborative teams can better achieve effective education and goals. In these challenging times, the nurse coach’s ability to employ moral imagination has never been more vital to the health and wellbeing of the global village.

The nurse coach’s ways of doing must grow accurately and be sensitively attuned to the heart of the human condition. What we do is not nearly as significant as how we do it (Tolle, 2005). The messages must be given in a way that can be heard, and the guidance must be shared in a way it can be received. We must reflect and continue to ask ourselves:

• Am I creating a healing environment?
• Am I fostering a relationship of empathy and understanding?
• Am I being gentle?

The answers to these questions may help us identify where we have become disconnected and fragmented in providing whole-human care.

As the realities of outpatient care become increasingly complex and more centrally nurse-managed, nurse coaches are in a unique position to be both leaders and advocates, embodying interconnectedness and sustaining relationships rooted in dignity. It is almost as if Novogratz (2009) beckons the nurse coaching community to evolve toward their greatest selves, celebrate their aptitudes, and engage the world with their entire beings when she writes:

We need individuals who know how to listen and who have real and tangible skills to share. We will succeed only if we fuse a very hardheaded analysis with an equally soft heart. There is cause for optimism. (p. 284)

Practices that promote and remind us of our mental-emotional-spiritual interconnectedness require both courage of head and vulnerability of heart. Moral imagination reminds professional nurse coaches that, as Iyanla Vanzant says, “I am not my brother’s keeper. I am my brother.” Out of the practice and application of moral imagination emerges a universal truth that our liberation is bound up together. Seeking that liberation is a transpersonal human journey that requires our sensitivity, compassion, and determined attention. Working to unleash that liberation is a human birthright, and moral imagination is just one paradigm that promotes its realization.

REFERENCES:

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