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Layperson Summary

When I reflect on the academic, professional, and personal experiences that have transpired over the course of my undergraduate years, the concept and general theme of mattering stands at the forefront of my mind. Mattering is a sense that you have a place in this world. In this project I seek to explore the twofold nature of mattering: how have I made people feel as though they matter, and how have I engaged in things that matter? I will also investigate what I believe is my role in life. I explore the impact on others and myself of possessing a caring attitude and an inherent motivation to care, as well as the impact of engaging in meaningful work. My project will examine the experiences and revelations that I have had in college that have led to the formation and maturation of this simple but extraordinary sentiment.

Jean Watson’s Theory of Caring serves as the theoretical framework to support my theme. As a nursing student, I am intrigued by Watson’s conceptualization of nursing. Watson depicts Ten Caritas Processes that guide the transpersonal caring relationship between patient and nurse. Altruism and developing trusting relationships are two processes that resonate with me. Whether I am helping in the construction of a Habitat for Humanity house, working with patients in the hospital, or interacting with friends and family on a daily basis, I feel compelled to express empathy and make people feel valued, as well as involve myself in worthwhile activities.

I have compiled seven artifacts that relate to and convey my overarching theme of mattering. I reflect on the genesis of my service identity, devotion of time to building with Habitat for Humanity, recognition of the impact of intrinsic motivation, being humbled by experiences as a Certified Nurse Aide, possession of a caring attitude, my religious belief about dignity, and the anchoring of a support system. Together, these artifacts represent how I incorporate and exemplify this theme in two regards: I yearn to help people achieve a sense of purpose, and I have a personal expectation of dedicating my time to things that matter. I will share what I have learned in aiming to evoke a sense of mattering for other people and for myself.