Abstract for oral presentation

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*The child is the father of the man* - what is health promoting when you look upon the *inner child’s* presence through life?

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Introduction
The objective of this work is to gain knowledge about the health promotion that takes place as a result of the presence throughout life of the *inner child*. For this purpose, older persons were interviewed about their childhood experiences. The study comprised three sub-themes: ‘When something bad becomes good’; ‘A source for development’ and ‘How I became who I am’.

Method
Data in this presentation was processed using a phenomenological analysis. The work is based on a study of 13 older persons 70-91 years old from an organization for senior citizens, who were interviewed. They narrated about their childhood and experiences they brought with them through life.

Results
The older persons experienced how they developed their own strength when growing up with strong or even authoritative parents, who were guiding them how to cope with difficulties. The older persons experienced how fear felt as a child turned out to be an asset or strength later in life and could serve as an inspiration for others when they felt scared and did not know how to handle a situation.

The older persons described how they gained strength in the form of curiosity and eagerness to learn new things and welcomed new ideas that did not follow the same paths as those of their parents.

Conclusions
The results of this study show that the *inner child’s* experiences during childhood are maintained throughout life and relate to the well-being of older persons and the idea that we are all ages at the same time. The older persons described how they possessed a strong will or interest, which made it easier for them to overcome difficulties and challenges. They had learned how to change something bad into something good already early in life. The older persons described how they became
the people they are today due to a safe upbringing with a supporting social network which helped them feel secure, even in difficult situations. *The child is the father of the man - The inner child* whether healthy or wounded has an impact on how human beings express themselves in the world.