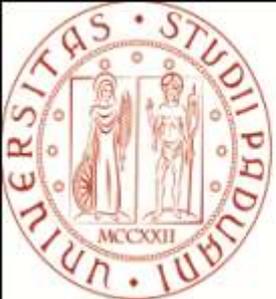


Hi and Thank You for Coming!  
My Name is Marco Ius



# **RESILIENCE - WHY BOTHER?**

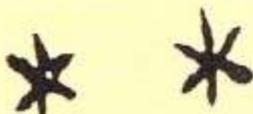


UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA

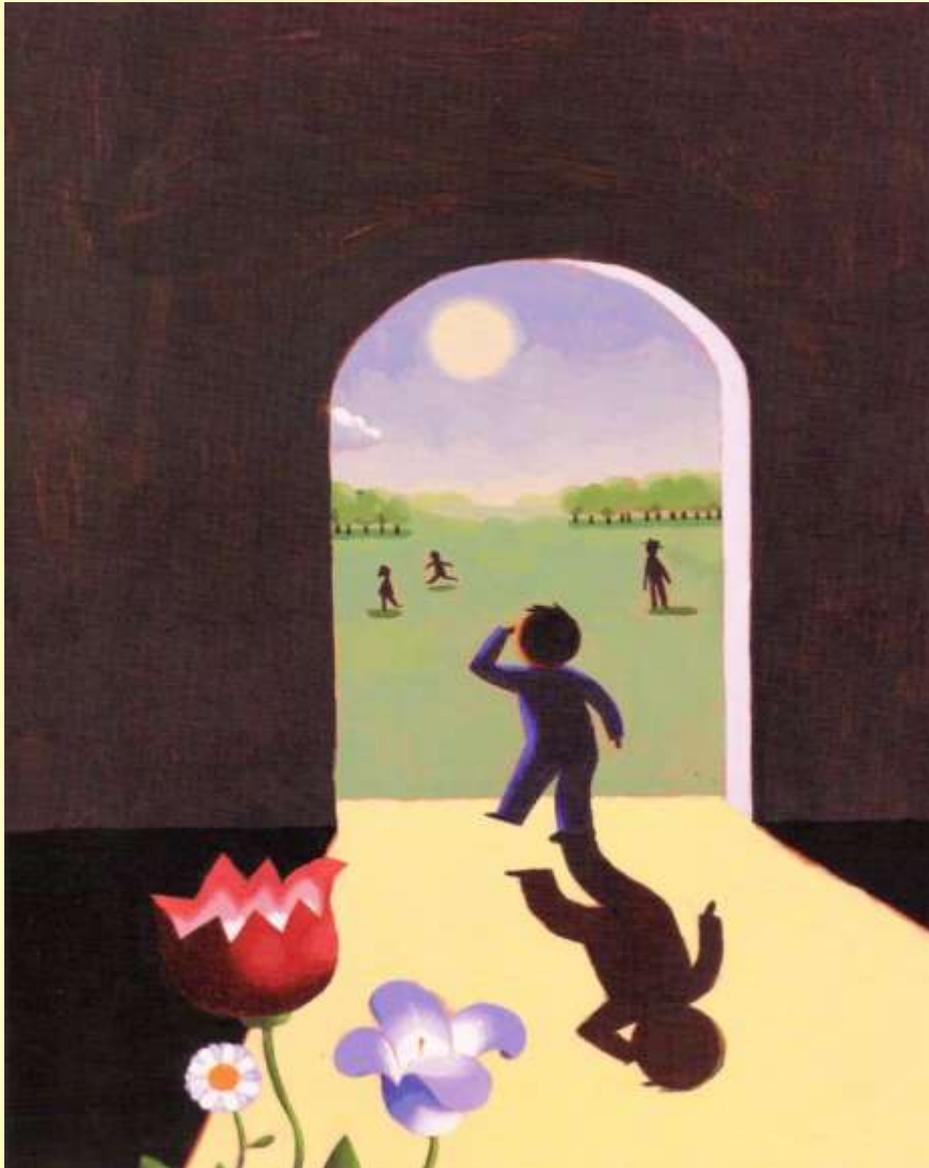
# THE RESILIENCE TUTOR: from hidden child survivors of the Holocaust to nowadays children out-of-home

**Marco Ius PhD, Paola Milani PhD**

Department of Educational Sciences  
University of Padua, Italy  
[marco.ius@unipd.it](mailto:marco.ius@unipd.it)



**RESILIENCE:** making flowers out of your “dark” past and going towards a “sunny” future



**Not despite  
But through**



**Basics** - this potion conjures up the basic necessities needed for life

**Belonging** - this potion is about ways to help a child make good relationships with family and friend

**Coping** - the remedies in this potion help children get by in everyday life

**Learning** - includes school education as well as ways of helping with their life skills, talents and interests

**Core self** - the spells here work very deeply to help shape a child's character



## RESILIENT THERAPY: ORDINARY MAGIC

Angie Hart &/Derek Blincow©

# Resilience as: (M. Ungar, 2011)

- The capacity of individuals to **navigate** to resources that sustain well-being
- The capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide resources
- The capacity of individuals, their families, and communities to **negotiate** culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared

## Object

Hidden Child Survivors of the Holocaust experienced one or more traumatic events during and after the WW2: separation, hiding, parents' changing, parents' deportation or death, multiple attachments, family reunification, identity issues (i.e. Jews raised as gentiles who later discovered their Jewish roots), "residential care", adoption, life with traumatized parents, financial and social instability emigration, ...



# Focus on Child Survivors of the Holocaust

- **Hiding** – to hide yourself and/or your personal identity
- **Separation** – from your whole family, one parent and/or your social context (a break in the personal story)

# AND...



- who **are Resilient**... whose today outcome of life is not a mental illness or disease but it's a **wellbeing level**: emotional, familial, working and financial stability, and active role within the community.
- who **feel Resilient** **Personal Representation** they represent themselves and their story of life as resilient - we shared the concept of resilience and they agreed with it.
- who are **felt Resilient** **Social Representation** they are recognized in their social context and community as resilient.

Not to compare! ---- these life experiences can teach us something about

- children living in **vulnerable families**
- children who suffered the trauma of being **separated from their families** for a defined period of life (foster care or residential care) or definitively (adoption), immigrant or illegal families
- children going through traumas (war, violence, repeated separation..., abandonment, etc.) and sometimes extreme situations **where reality hurts filiation bonds**

Learning  
Teaching  
Studying

**the**

Holocaust

Learning

**from the**

Holocaust

Cohen, 2007, Feldman 2009

Society was traumatised by the  
Holocaust

Society can show R by using  
the stories of life to learn from  
them

– History belongs not only to  
historians but also to  
psychologists, social  
workers and anthropologist:  
it means looking for the  
influence of collective  
history on the identity  
construction of Jewish  
children hidden to avoid  
deportations during WW2

# GOAL

To study 21 stories of Hidden Children (0 - 15 y.o. → Child Survivors, Kangisser, 2005 ) in order to learn from them and to identify and understand Protective Factors that enabled them to develop and grow and that can be used-reflected by social care practitioners working with vulnerable children and families

<i>Textual Material</i>	<i>Where</i>	<i>n.</i>
Semi-structured Interviews (2h)	Italy	4
	U.S.H.M.M. Washington, D.C.	8
	Yad Vashem, Jerusalem	7
Published Biographies	<i>Il bambino nascosto, Crossing the Borders of Difference</i>	2

# Method

**Qualitative** approach in social work (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Lodico *et al.*, 2006)

**Narrative and autobiographic method** “to meet life stories” of resilient child survivors and learn from them. Narration can help people to recognize their own development and contribute to scientific research for understanding life processes

Focus on the individual’s subjective perspective – what is the image of self, others and reality? ---- **SUBJECTIVE TRUTH**

Qualitative and Quantitative Content Analysis (Atlas.ti)

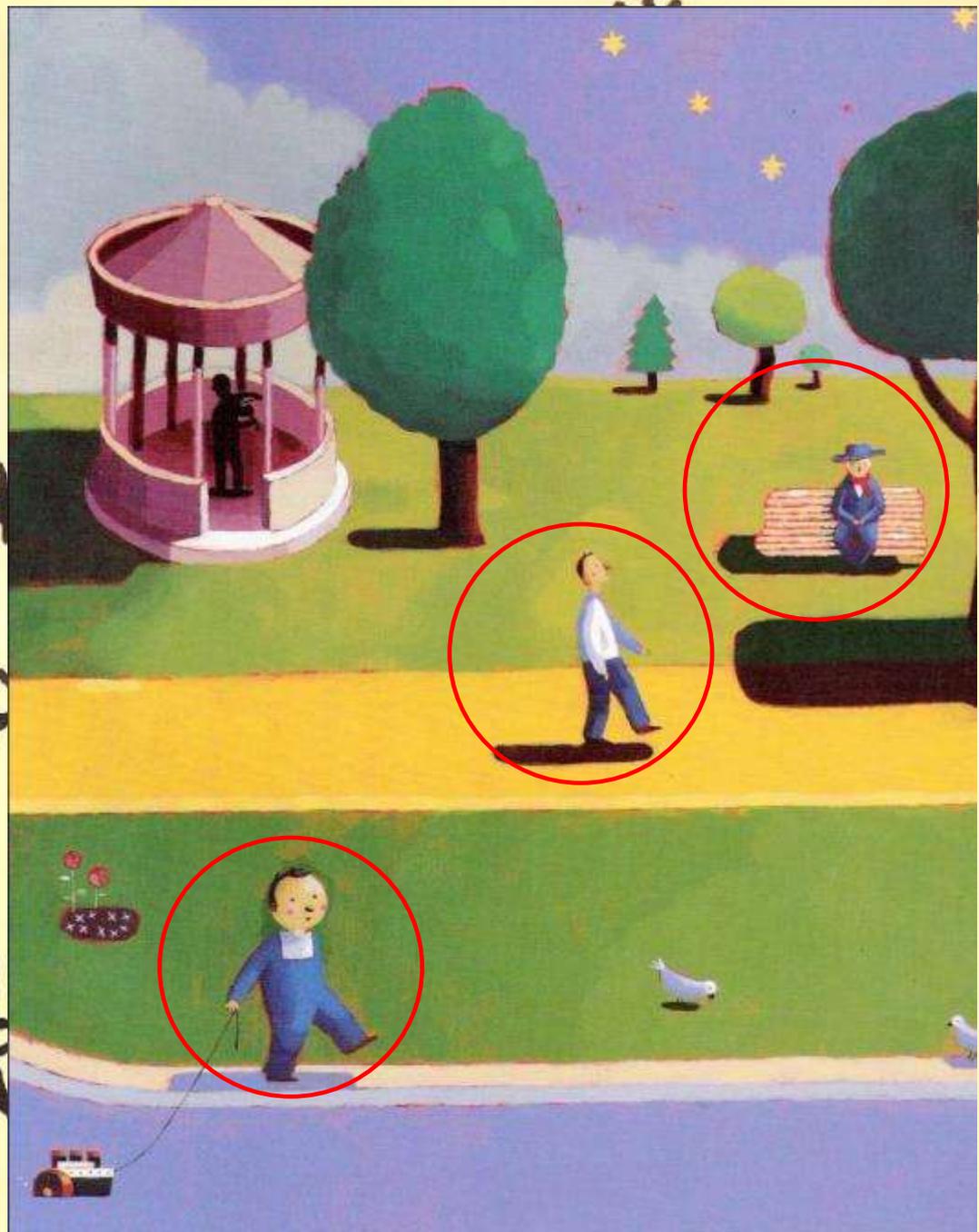
Longitudinal – Long term oriented approach VS Short term oriented approach (to consider the **development**: not the being but the **becoming** of human person)

Longitudinal –  
Long term  
oriented approach

VS

Emergency –  
Short term  
oriented approach

Life trajectories



# Findings

MARYSIA: "I had 3 mothers"

My really first multiple attachments  
separation generative sequence



FF  
Rightios  
among  
the  
Nations  
by  
Yad  
Vashem



father  
killed  
a  
bomb



the love  
ng

sure of myself I was secure I was

her  
ures

ct with FF



The  
beginning



At first, he was happy, he  
was proud. He thought it  
was nice to be a star



*It was almost Easter. There was a lot of excitement*  
Louise



*It is a warm memory of a winter day, icecles on windows. I'm sitting together with my father. He is teaching me Hebrew.*

Hadassa



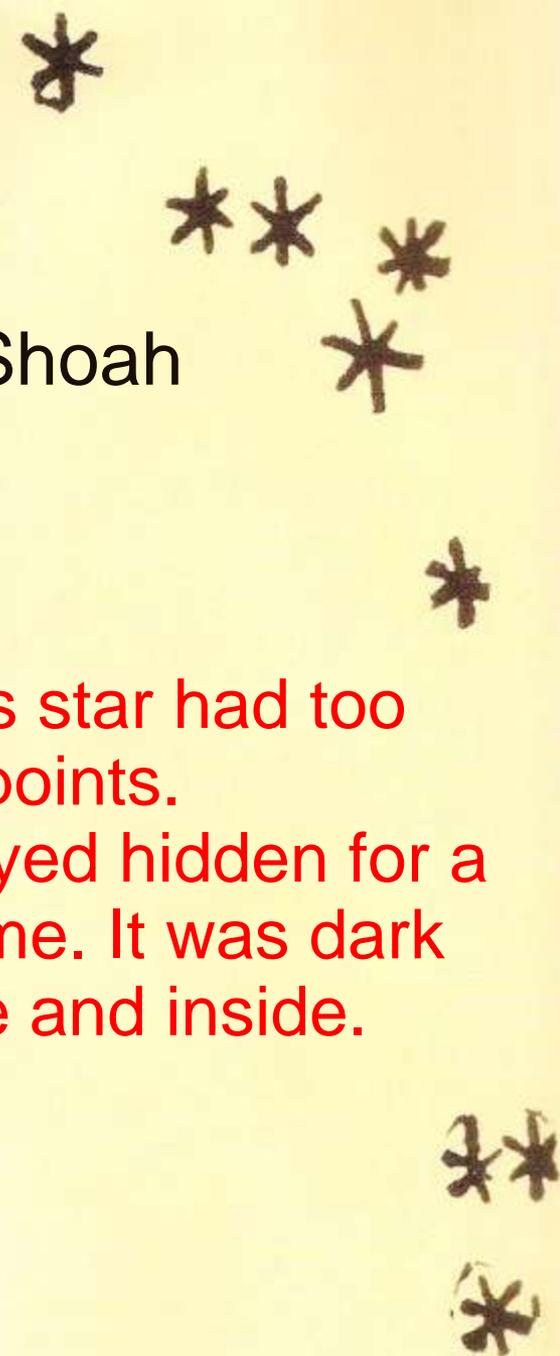


*We used to run to him, to hug him and he gave us a cookie, and played with us ... he was a very affectionate father Bianca*



## The Shoah

But this star had too many points. He stayed hidden for a long time. It was dark outside and inside.



Experience		With whom?	
Hiding	17	8	unique member
		4	whole family (parents - siblings)
		2	Mother
		2	parental figure (uncle, housekeeper "the 2nd mom")
		1	Sister
Deportation	3	2	mother in Bergen Belsen
		1	sister in Auschwitz, separated from F.
Refugee	1	1	first with whole family – after alone in institution



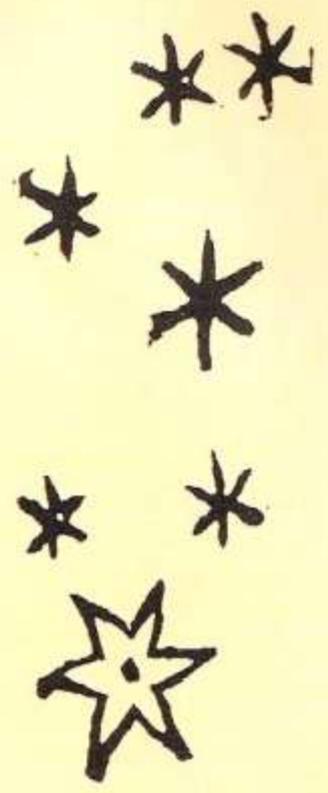
*I only remember I  
was scared*  
Josiane

*I was hidden in a big box for bread, I was hidden together with those loaves, already dress, with the coat, so they could immediately take me out, and I thought the coat was bulletproof David*



*It was very difficult, it was  
a nightmare. My life in the  
forest was absolutely  
horrendous*

Charlene





*My really first memory is separation the first thing I remember, she is pushing me away, because she want me to get out of that place, ... and you know "what child wants to leave mother?" ... she kindly finally convinced me to and set somewhere on the steps. I was setting there and I remember when they loaded them in the tracks and there were like black covers on the tracks, And I was left there, probably two and a half I just was left very*

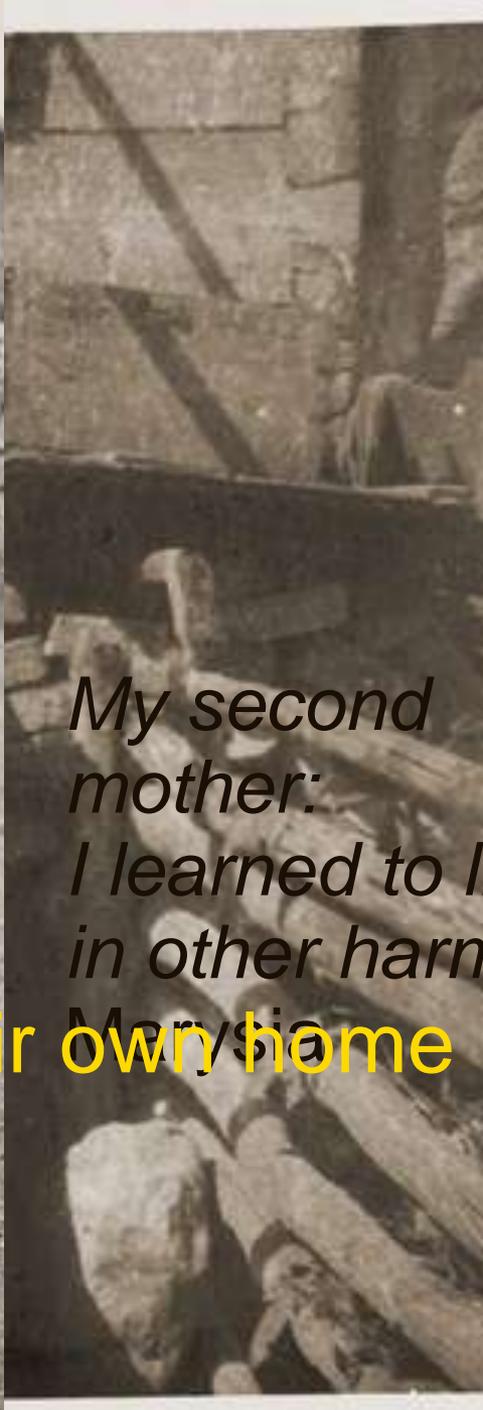
He/She can be: foster parent, uncle, relative, neighbour, friend, nanny, etc, significant adults, good-natured, supportive.

He/She is a “insuffleur d'ame / soul-blower” (Cyrulnik, 2008), a relational talented person who has worked out

### **a grammar of relationship**

***R.T. Listens, talks, allows the tale: so that the child gives to the same difficulty or trauma different meanings (Tomkiewicz, 1999)***

The child sharing his/her narrative identity with a listener can master the meaning attributed to the fact (the past): the meaning is not in the fact (Cyrulnik, 2007).



They bring me with them, in their own home

*My second  
mother:  
I learned to live  
in other homes  
Marysia*



\*  
\*\*  
\*

**R.T. acts in an ethic-moral direction,** you will find your own face when you answer the question of the other (Lévinas, 1961):

*The man said “could you sacrifice your all family for this child?” and then the farmer’s wife said “could you sacrifice this small child?” [...] he is here and now he stays here!*

\*  
David



*I had been helped as a child by many people, and I think one needs to be the helper of other people, I think you need to be your brother's keeper, you have to be involved, you have to be ready to be a human*

Josiane

**R.T. allows the re-building of a broken story into a single unitary story which becomes a “novel”** (the concept of narrative identity elaborated by P. Ricoeur)

**R.T. offers a thread** the child can use to weave the different elements of his/her entire life plot.

Children are allowed and enabled to know, comprehend and remember their story without any “black holes” in it.

A secret is often a gap the child does not know how to fill or he/she can fill with imagination which is sometimes more difficult to manage than the traumatic situation itself.

“Telling is not the past coming back. It is the reconciliation with your own story”

(Cyrulnik, 2008b, p.18).

**Reminiscence is not  
Reviviscence**

**R.T. spends time with, knows and recognizes/** the child, regards the invisible child, meets the need every child has - being recognized in his/her own identity and not just identified; to allow an emotional tuning

*“My parents didn’t talk, no religion in the house, they didn’t want to talk about that, I had to ask them, because my conscience was Selma I asked her “what is a Jew”, I didn’t even know, I’m Jewish but I don’t know what is a Jew. She explained and when I was 16 I wanted to continue with the religion” Louise*



**R.T. not only tutors the child but allows and supports peer-tutoring** because children, brothers and sister can help each others.

Within their peer informal networks there are several resilience potentials.

*They had 2 children and then the 2 of us.*

*They did their best to keep me and my sister together,*

*They treated us in the same way Shlomo*

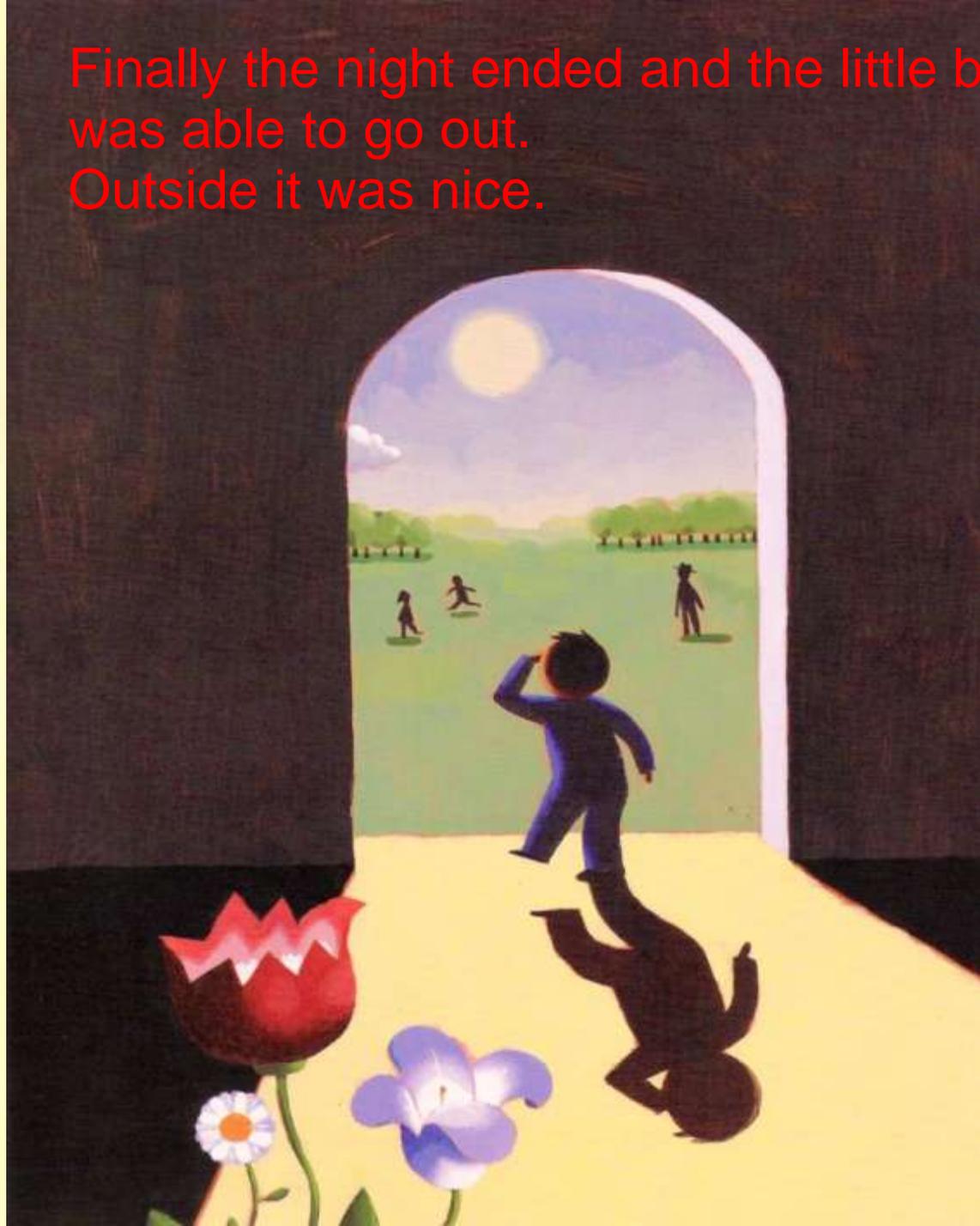




*I didn't spend this period as an abandoned child, because I always had with me a person I had known from the beginning, before my birth, she was for me as my mother, not the same, but almost like my mother Stefan*

# The aftermath

Finally the night ended and the little boy was able to go out. Outside it was nice.



# The Resilient Tutor (R.T.)

He/She can be: foster parent, uncle, relative, neighbour, friend, nanny, etc, significant adult-other.

He/She is a “insuffleur d'ame / soul-blower” (Cyrulnik, 2008), a relational talented person who has worked out

**a grammar of relationship**

***R.T. Listens, talks, allows the tale: so that the child gives to the same difficulty or trauma different meanings (Tomkiewicz, 1999)***

The child sharing his/her narrative identity with a listener can master the meaning attributed to the fact (the past): the meaning is not in the fact (Cyrulnik, 2007).

- **R.T. allows the re-building of a broken story into a single unitary story which becomes a “novel”** (the concept of narrative identity elaborated by P. Ricoeur)
- **R.T. offers a thread** the child can use to weave the different elements of his/her entire life plot.
- Children are allowed and enabled to know, comprehend and remember their story without any “black holes” in it.
- A secret is often a gap the child does not know how to fill or he/she can fill with imagination which is sometimes more difficult to manage than the traumatic situation itself.
- “Telling is not the past coming back. It is the reconciliation with your own story”
- (Cyrulnik, 2008b, p.18).

**Reminiscence is not  
Reviviscence**

- **R.T. spends time with, knows and recognizes/** the child, regards the invisible child, meets the need every child has - being recognized in his/her own identity and not just identified;
- *“My parents didn’t talk, no religion in the house, they didn’t want to talk about that, I had to ask them, because my conscience was Selma I asked her “what is a Jew”, I didn’t even know, I’m Jewish but I don’t know what is a Jew. She explained and when I was 16 I wanted to continue with the religion” Louise*



- ***R.T. Builds meaning through words (text and context)***
- Building around the child an affective, meaningful and structured niche of familial tales gives an active sense to the wound
- **Overcoming the conspiracy of silence, of secrets**
- *We humans are meaning seekers* (Frankl)
- This is possible when children feel they are allowed
- to tell (meso and macro-system)
- “It’s possible to change the deep inner feeling working on the tales surrounding the child, on what is told and on how this is told:” (Cyrułnik, 2008b, p.11).

## **R.T. allows the questions**

*I have no answers except from my friend Selma, I spent my summers with her and I knew I couldn't ask my parents, they didn't want to answer so I asked Selma and she answered. Louise*

**Support Family!**





**R.T. Joins the C., stands** on his/her side and doesn't replace/substitute parents  
**(co-parenting)**

**R.T. offers a real, stable and abiding presence in time - a solid and not a liquid relation** (Bauman, 2003, 2005) - the value of continuity

**R.T. improves and encourages abilities and curiosity,** promoting the learning process and the discovering of the child's own passion and interest:

*"I'm very lucky I had very good teachers, from each of them I was able to absorb, to get the best I could"*  
Aurelio

## R.T. is an *passeur*

a mediator between children and parents, inside and outside,  
public and private,

he is the one who makes the right pass to the parents and to  
the children – a pass of relationship that doesn't replace the  
role of the parents, but supports it.

These R.T. were present in the informal network,

they established light attachment bonds with children who lost  
their main caregiver.

## ...QUESTIONS

Since Resilience is not a product but a complex process co-determined by several factors,

Can social intervention look for R.T.s in informal networks ?

What is being today an Intentional R.T.? Is it a skill or a social worker's professional identity?

Focus on making children become resilient or on enhancing their well being through resilience?

# The approach of Social worker as I.R.T. is based on

- working **directly** with the child and with his/her family in order to help them to re-work their own *internal working model* (micro-system)
- **processing** each **narrative** (personal representation) and attributing a positive meaning to the fact and to the development path after it (individual characteristics and micro-system)

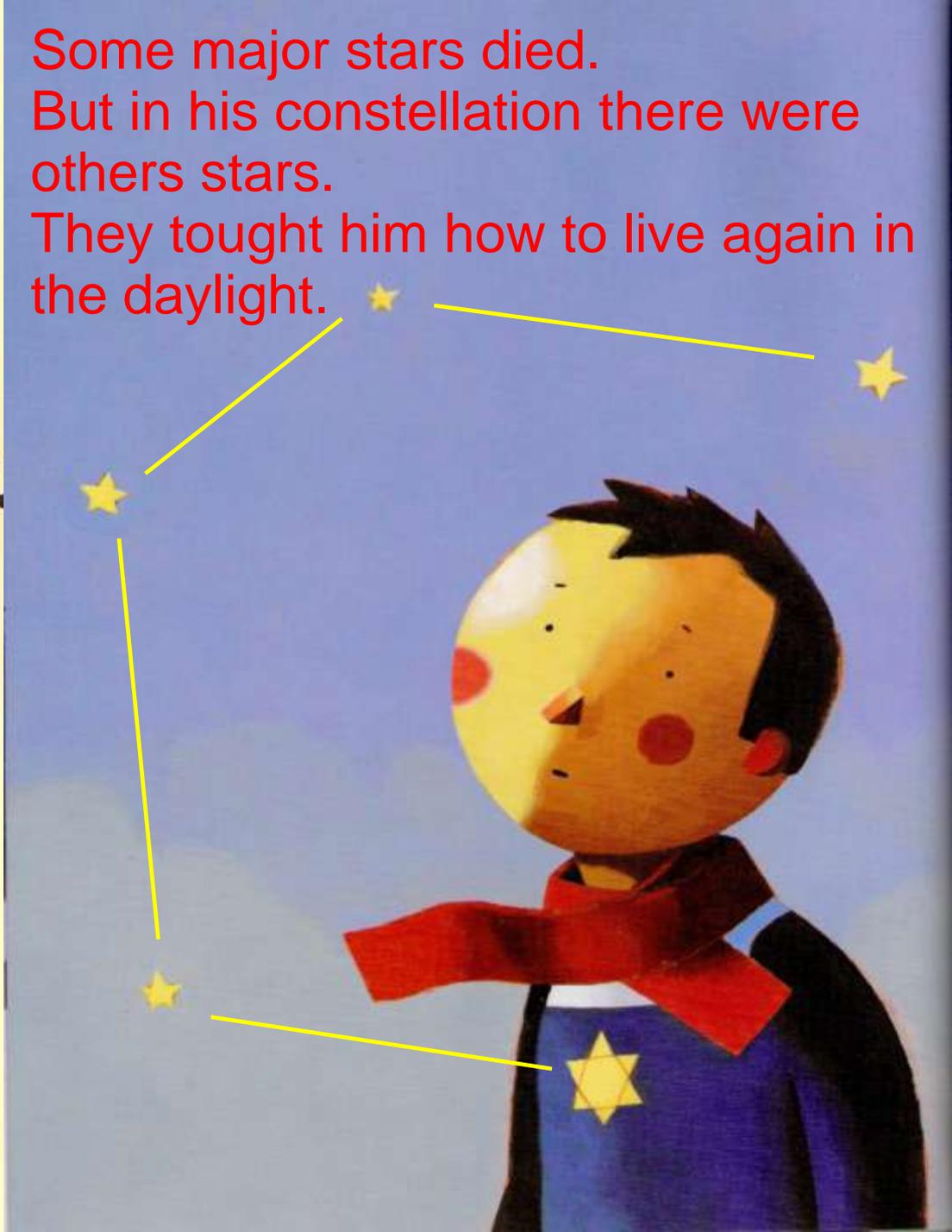
- working within the children's community and surrounding society where vulnerable children and family live so as to possibly change the ***external working model EWM*** (meso and ecosystem);
- helping and supporting people of the community (youth leaders, sport leaders, religious leaders, volunteers, ...) to **became significant adults** for children (meso and ecosystem), to help the child to become part of the community, school and small groups ...
- taking care of building different types of continuity within the child's ecological niche (from micro to macrosystem) - *meaningful placements out-of-home, co-planning, care evaluation, policy making*

If the absence of tale hurts the child, it's important

-to work on the personal - social representation of trauma (micro-meso-and macro system), i.e. re-think placement out-of-home care as a jointly planned opportunity to protect child-family relationship and not as an abandonment

-to guarantee the child not only a family, but an unitary story and a global care plan

Some major stars died.  
But in his constellation there were  
others stars.  
They taught him how to live again in  
the daylight.



Now, he knows he is a star. And he shines.



Images da Hausfater R. Latyk O., *The little boy star*,  
Milk&Cookies

Pictures: [www.usmmm.org](http://www.usmmm.org)

**Thank you!**

[marco.ius@unipd.it](mailto:marco.ius@unipd.it)