The aim of this hermeneutic study was to seek the essence of motherliness. This was done in order to find ideas for further development of professional care and caring science today. The empirical material of the study consists of 12 texts from the book *Min Mor* (My Mother) published in Sweden 1946. According to the Eriksson theory of caritative caring, caring is something natural and the core of caring is motherliness. Ericsson claims that the motherly core of caring was clearly expressed in professional care 1880–1920, the period called pre-theoretic in the history of caring science.

The research questions were: What is the essence of motherliness. What is the essence of the motherliness in the stories about the mothers? Which ideas can be found behind this good care? In which way could these ideas be brought into the professional care and caring science of today? These ideas were studied using content analysis. These ideas are discussed in relation to professional care and caring science today.

Results: The essence of motherliness is the answer to human longing for confirmation. Motherliness is giving birth and fostering, excellence in household and education. Motherliness is also shown in, in religious practice, in aesthetics in everyday life and in something mythical around the mother’s gestalt. The contextual circumstances of motherliness in the texts analyzed are: the presence of death, economic shortage and collective responsibility for the care of the children. The results can give inspiration to the professional care of today. The results, for professional care and caring science, emphasises the importance of confirming the patient, the importance of a solid base of values, personal commitment to the collective responsibility, and the importance of aesthetics in daily life and continuous improvement.