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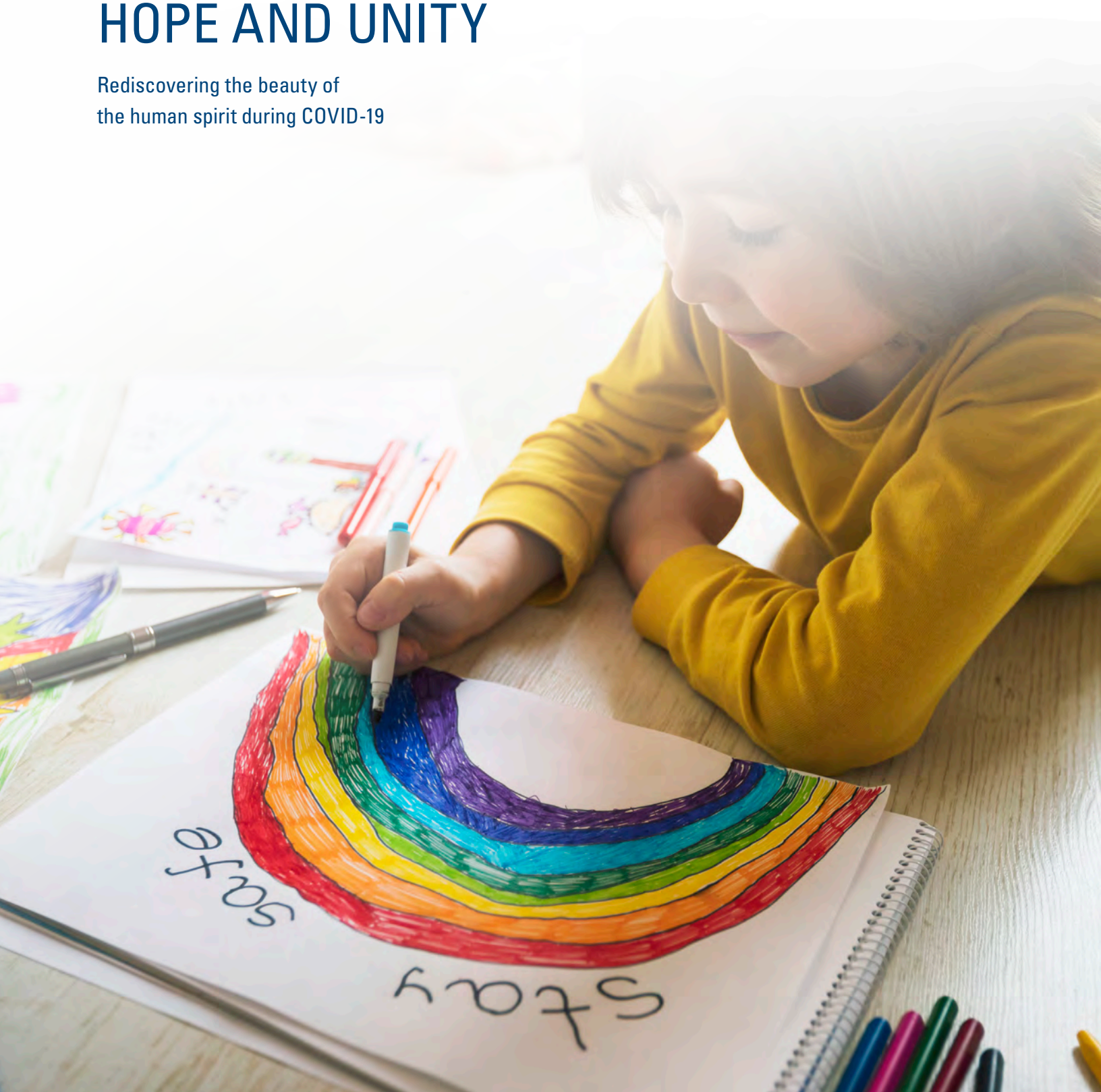
SEASON OF HOPE AND UNITY

Rediscovering the beauty of the human spirit during COVID-19



With all that is happening in the world, it is easy to get caught up in the feelings of fear, anxiety and frustration and to allow those emotions to settle in our hearts.

As we are sheltering in place, we have witnessed the seasons change from winter to spring, but with it we also saw a transformation in the world, in our neighborhoods and even in our own homes. Adapting to the effects of the pandemic has proven once again that along with human fragility there is also strength. We hope this collection of ideas gives you inspiration on ways to stay resilient and positive during these challenging times.

Be kind and gentle with yourself

Rather than feeling the pressure of acquiring new skills, think about what new habits you can form or bad habits you can break. Perhaps you have no intention to learn a new skill (how to bake bread), but this could be an opportunity to form new habits, such as waking up at a set time or lessening your coffee.

Accept that there will be days you will feel okay, and days when you don't. Know when to ask for help and focus on what you can control. Find ways to alleviate negative thoughts and emotions:

- If you are worried about your finances due to job loss or changes in the market, keep working with your financial advisor to find solutions and options for your current situation.
- Add more positivity in your life by watching and reading uplifting news, documentaries and movies.
- In this imposed pause, find quiet pockets of time during the day to check in with yourself and look inward through meditation or practicing mindfulness. Think about what you're grateful for.
- If being on lockdown has changed your fitness routine, go for a walk or run while practicing physical distancing.
- Find a workout that you've always wanted to try, like bootcamp exercises, kickboxing or yoga.
- Enjoy and appreciate the simple but beautiful details of everyday life. Throw yourself into otherwise mundane chores like washing dishes or cleaning out the car.

Recommendations

Movies

- The King's Speech
- The Pursuit of Happyness
- Midnight in Paris
- The Secret Life of Walter Mitty
- The Trip

Podcasts

- Home Cooking with Samin Nosrat
- Blank Check with Griffin and David
- Harvard Business Review

Books

- Atomic Habits, by James Clear
- 12 Rules for Life, by Jordan Peterson
- The Happiness Project, by Gretchen Rubin
- Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, by Yuval Noah Harari

Shows

- Salt Fat Acid Heat
- Jack Whitehall: Travels with My Father
- Formula 1: Drive to Survive

Workouts apps

- ClassPass
- Freeletics
- Aaptiv
- Obe

Create boundaries and structure

It may be challenging to leave work at work when you're working from home. Think about enforcing dedicated email hours and setting up an auto-reply so that people know when to expect a reply. Set limits on phone use and screen time to focus on family time where you can be fully present.

Prioritize sleep in the schedule you've created for yourself. This would mean keeping electronics out of the bedroom and having a set bedtime. Sleep gives you the strength you need to be resilient and combat stress effectively during the day.

Be discerning of social media and disengage from the news, limiting yourself to just a few minutes daily using trusted sources. Mute chat groups or negative chat rooms.

Get your market information from your financial advisor and trust the plan you have in place.

Warm up your space

Studies have shown that making changes to the home can lift your mood and provide immediate satisfaction. Completing tasks such as tidying the basement or garage can boost spirits and provide a great sense of accomplishment.

Change up small details by displaying sentimental items in the corners of your home or bringing out candles or serving ware that you would normally use for special occasions to spruce up your meals.

Create a bright and cheerful atmosphere by creating memories. Have at least one meal together every day, organize a game or movie night.

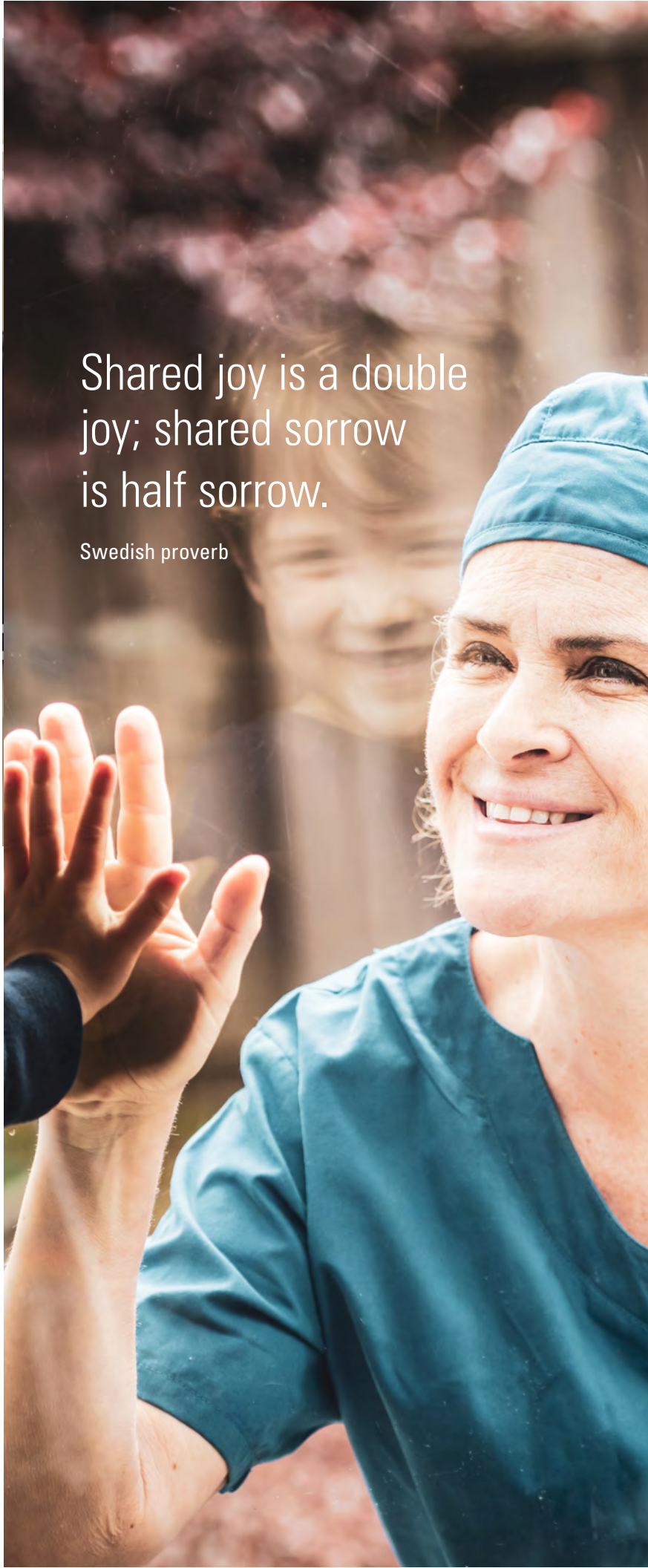
Take care of others

Studies have shown that altruism or acting with concern for others can significantly impact one's own emotional-well being. Though this crisis is global, taking care of others can start in our own homes. There are probably moments of frustration and difficulty as everyone is settling into their own rhythm at home, processing their feelings and adjusting to the changes and personalities. As in any household, collectively solving problems, determining new routines, schedules and activities you could do together will strengthen bonds.

We are all experiencing different realities. For some, this is a much needed pause. For others, this time is challenging, disruptive and scary. Think about reaching out to friends or family who are:

- Living in virus hot spots
- Frontline workers
- Suffering from grief due to the loss of a loved one
- Now at home full-time with their children
- Disappointed by cancelled or postponed milestone events (wedding, graduation, retirement party etc.)
- Newly unemployed or whose businesses are impacted
- Living alone or suffering from depression or anxiety

Reassure them that you support them. Acknowledge their situation, share in their joys and consistently stay in touch.



The technological options we have today allow us to adapt the way we meet and socialize.

People have used these means to continue on with their gatherings:

- Happy hour / wine night
- Karaoke
- Game nights (through Jackbox or Playstation)
- Book club
- Knitting club
- Sip and see's, baby showers, birthday parties

Besides technology, there are other more tangible ways to show you care for others and your community:

- Sending snail mail and care packages
- Delivering groceries
- Lending books or toys to those who need them (disinfected, of course)
- Making and sharing extra when you cook or bake
- Supporting local businesses by purchasing gift cards or ordering take-out once a week
- Volunteer your time to create masks, donating any extra, much-needed items that you have at home

In the last few months, we all have experienced some kind of loss, some more than others. We continue to wrestle with these external effects and with our own emotional turmoil.

History, however, demonstrates over and over again that with the bad we have always been able to draw out the good. This crisis has allowed us to re-evaluate what is most important to us, and to find greater meaning and purpose. The human spirit is strong and we will all come out of this stronger and more united.

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