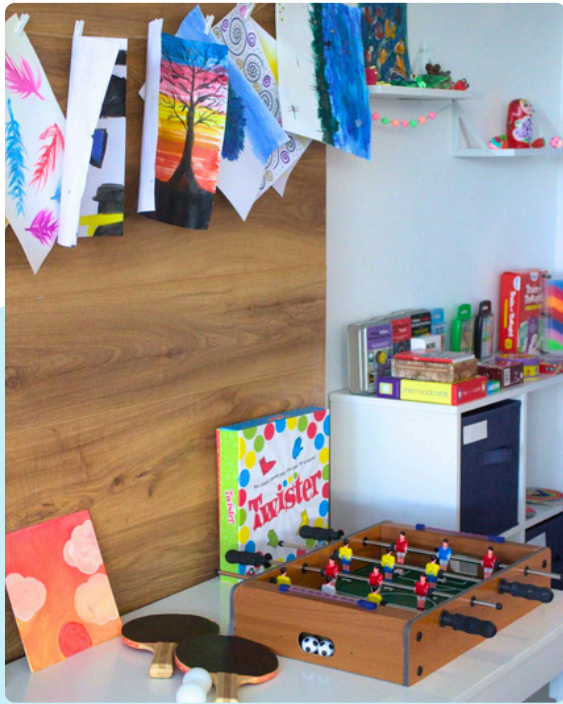


MINDFULMOMENTS

WYIM Newsletter

January 2026

**The Healing Power of Patience:
Beginning Your New Chapter
Softly**



What to Expect

As we step into January, we move away from the pressure of drastic overhauls and toward a softer, more sustainable way of being. This month, we explore how kindness acts as the ultimate resolution, shifting our inner dialogue from criticism to compassion. We delve into the psychology of "soft starts," prioritising tiny, manageable steps over overwhelming leaps, and look at how identifying our deeper emotional needs can make our goals more meaningful. From combating the January blues with gentle habits to using our "What Do I Need?" check-in tool, let's begin this new chapter with patience.

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The Listening Room:

Why Kindness is the Strongest Resolution

Every January, we are bombarded with "new year, new you" rhetoric. It is a season of rigorous overhauls where we are encouraged to view ourselves as a collection of flaws to be corrected. We set rigid resolutions, and the moment we slip, the inner critic pounces, labelling us as "weak" or "failures."

But what if the most radical change you could make had nothing to do with external habits? What if the strongest resolution was simply to change the way you talk to yourself?



The Architecture of the Inner Critic:

The inner critic is often a protective mechanism that has gone into overdrive. It believes that by being harsh, it can drive us toward success or protect us from the judgment of others. It speaks in absolutes: "I've ruined it now," "I'm useless," or "I'll never change." When we operate under this internal lash, we live in a state of constant high cortisol. Our brains perceive our own self-criticism as an external threat, triggering a "fight or flight" response. It is incredibly difficult to grow, heal, or learn when your nervous system feels like it is under attack from within. Real change doesn't flourish in a climate of shame; it requires the fertile soil of safety.

The Shift to Compassionate Honesty:

The "new chapter" in therapy often begins when a person changes the vocabulary of their struggle. There is a profound difference between saying "I failed" and saying "This is a struggle." The first is a verdict that shuts down growth. The second is a compassionate observation. It validates your effort and moves the focus from a perceived lack of character to a realistic assessment of a difficult moment. This isn't "positive thinking"; it is compassionate honesty. It allows you to ask: "I'm overwhelmed—what do I need right now to move forward?"

Kindness as Strength:

We often mistake kindness for weakness, but being kind to yourself during a struggle takes immense grit. It is easy to beat yourself up; it is a reflex. It is much harder to pause, breathe, and offer yourself grace. True transformation happens through the work of self-acceptance. By making kindness your resolution, you change the very foundation of your life.

How Counselling Can Help:

In the counselling room, we work to dismantle the critic's power by bringing the compassionate voice to the foreground. This helps in several ways:

- **Externalising the Critic:** By vocalising thoughts, you begin to see the critic as a "part" of you rather than absolute truth.
- **Modelling Empathy:** Hearing a counsellor offer non-judgemental curiosity helps you slowly internalise that same tone for yourself.
- **Data over Catastrophe:** Therapy treats setbacks as valuable data. We explore the "why" behind the struggle, leading to solutions instead of shame cycles.

The Psychology of 'Soft Starts': Why Small Steps Beat Big Leaps

As the calendar turns to January, many of us feel a surge of motivation to "fix" our lives. We set grand, sweeping resolutions: "I will go to the gym every single day," "I will never eat sugar again," or "I will master a new language by spring."

While these big leaps feel inspiring in the moment, they often lead to a predictable crash by mid-February. In the world of psychology and habit formation, we are increasingly finding that the secret to lasting change isn't the size of the leap, but the gentleness of the start.



The 'All-or-Nothing' Trap:

Traditional resolutions rely on "all-or-nothing" thinking, which strains our willpower. Our brains are wired for stability; a massive change can trigger the amygdala's threat response, leading to resistance and procrastination. When we fail, we fall into a "shame spiral," wrongly believing we lack discipline when we actually just overwhelmed our nervous system.

The Power of the 'Soft Start':

A "soft start" focuses on micro-goals. Rooted in Kaizen (continuous small improvement), this approach bypasses the brain's fear response because the task feels "too small to fail." The Big Leap: "I'll meditate for thirty minutes daily." (High resistance). The Soft Start: "I'll take three deep breaths at my desk." (Zero resistance).

Why Small is Kinder

Micro-goals are an act of self-compassion. They acknowledge your finite energy and allow for "off days" without the goal collapsing. Success breeds confidence, which fuels the next step.

How Counselling can help:

In counselling, we often help individuals unpick the hidden motivations behind the urge to take "big leaps," which are frequently attempts to outrun deep-seated feelings of inadequacy. By working with a counsellor, you can begin to identify your true "why"—uncovering the emotional needs that drive your ambitions—while learning to navigate internal resistance with curiosity rather than force. Instead of fighting the part of yourself that is afraid of change, therapy provides the space to celebrate "the micro," shifting your focus away from a distant, daunting finish line and toward the immense value of each small, kind step you take today.

Latest Blog

The Winter Low-Down: 5 Small, Kind Habits to Combat the January Blues

As the festive lights come down and the grey skies of a West Sussex winter settle in, many of us find our energy dipping. The "January Blues" are a common experience, often leaving us feeling sluggish, unmotivated, and emotionally weary. At With You in Mind Counselling in Rustington, we believe that the best way to navigate this season isn't by forcing ourselves into high gear, but by leaning into gentle, restorative habits.

Combatting the winter low-down isn't about grand gestures; it's about the small, kind choices we make every day. Here are five simple ways to nourish your mental health this month. Winter is nature's time for hibernation, yet we often try to maintain a [..READ MORE](#)



Opening the Door to Counselling

The Heart of the Matter

New Year's resolutions usually focus on external corrections: start running, earning more, or decluttering. In the counselling room, we view these as the "surface layer." If you peered behind the scenes of a session this January, you wouldn't see a coach pushing for results. Instead, you would see a counsellor helping to uncover the deeper emotional needs driving those goals.

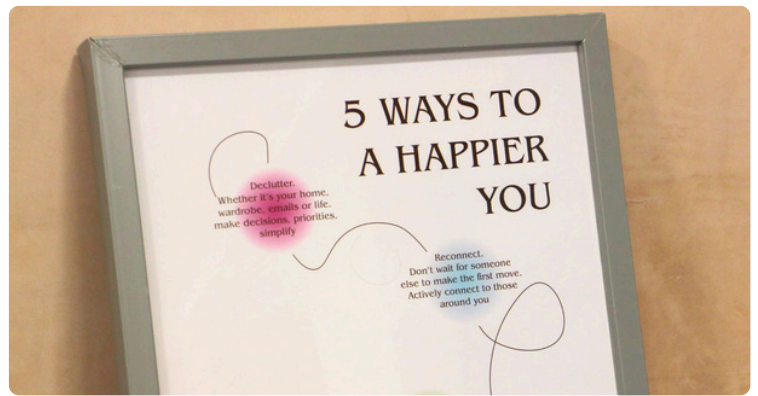
Peeling Back the Layers

Imagine a client wants to "finally get fit." On the surface, it's a standard health goal. In therapy, we peel back the layers to find the root. Is the desire driven by a feeling of being "invisible"? Is it a belief that worthiness is tied to appearance? Or is it a vital yearning for the energy to play with grandchildren?

By identifying the underlying emotional need—whether it is self-worth, or vitality—the goal changes shape. It moves from a "should," which feels like a burden, to a "want," which feels like a choice.

Making Goals Gentler

Goals fuelled by self-criticism are fragile; the moment we slip, the inner critic uses the goal as a weapon. In counselling, we work to make goals kinder. If a fitness goal is actually about "self-care," it becomes flexible. On an exhausted day, "self-care" might mean a nap instead of a run. You haven't failed; you have simply fulfilled the underlying need for care in a different way.



Why This Lasts

Sustainable change isn't born from self-loathing; it grows from a commitment to wellbeing. Through this exploration, you gain:

- Clarity: Distinguishing between social expectations and your heart's needs.
- Resilience: Creating goals that bend without breaking during tough weeks.
- Self-Worth: Realising you are worthy of care exactly as you are, before any resolution is met.

Behind the counselling door, we aren't just reviewing your list. We are ensuring your next chapter is written in the language of kindness.

Your Discovery Tool

To find the emotional root of your goals, begin with a surface resolution like "I must work harder." Use a "why" chain to peel back the layers: ask why this matters, then ask again until you reach a core value. For example, wanting to work harder might actually stem from a desire for security or a need for self-worth.

Once you identify that underlying need—be it connection, vitality, or peace—rewrite your goal as a "soft start." Instead of a rigid rule, try a kinder version: "Because I value my mental peace, I will finish work on time today." This replaces the pressure of a "should" with the sustainable motivation of a "want."

Recognising long-ignored needs can sometimes trigger "backdraft"—a temporary surge of difficult emotions. In the safety of a counselling space, we can process these feelings together, ensuring your goals remain a source of support.

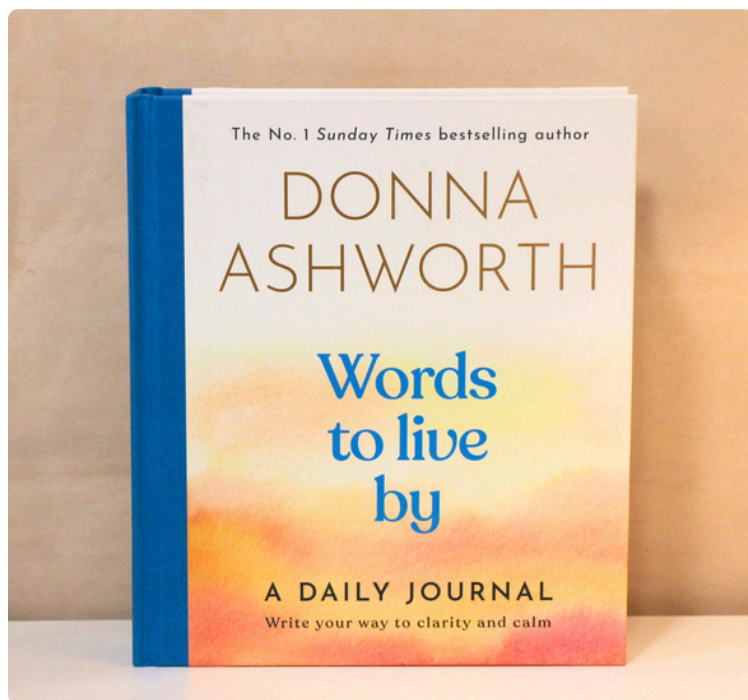
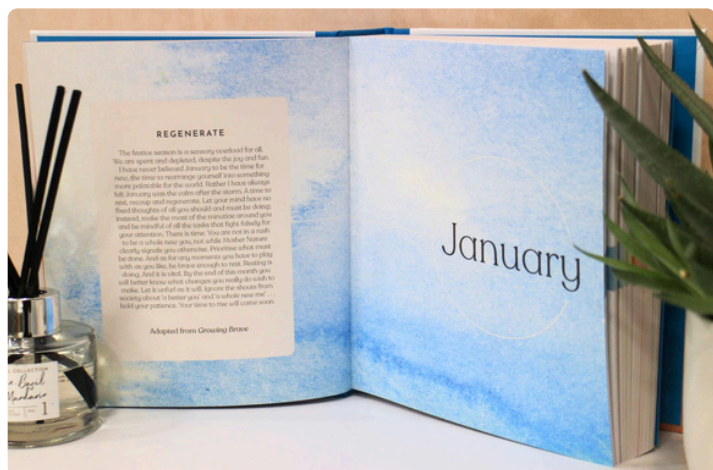
Our Recommendation

Words to Live By - Donna Ashworth

In the depths of winter, when our internal resources can feel as depleted as the daylight, we often need more than just "advice." We need a gentle companion for our thoughts. Donna Ashworth's *Words to Live By* is exactly that—a daily journal that serves as a soft place to land when the world feels loud or the inner critic is particularly vocal.

In the counselling room, we often discuss the importance of "micro-moments" of reflection. While deep therapeutic work happens in scheduled sessions, the work of maintaining mental wellbeing happens in the quiet spaces in between. This journal bridges that gap, providing a structured yet non-pressured way to check in with oneself. Ashworth's poetry and prompts mirror the therapeutic process by encouraging us to acknowledge our feelings without judgment, helping to move us from a state of "doing" into a state of "being."

The journal fosters a sense of common humanity. By reading Ashworth's reflections, you are reminded that your anxieties, joys, and uncertainties are shared experiences. For anyone navigating the path of counselling, this book acts as a daily reminder that growth is rarely linear, but a series of small steps toward self-understanding.



Journaling Starters:

To begin, identify the internal weather of your mind. Rather than just saying you are stressed, describe the atmosphere: is it a heavy fog, a restless wind, or a quiet chill? Using imagery helps you name your state without being consumed by it, reminding you that emotions are passing seasons rather than permanent identities.

Next, reflect on overlooked victories. Mental health is sustained by tiny acts of courage, like choosing a kind word or taking five minutes to rest despite a long to-do list. Acknowledging these small moments reinforces the truth that you are worthy of your own care, even when progress feels invisible.

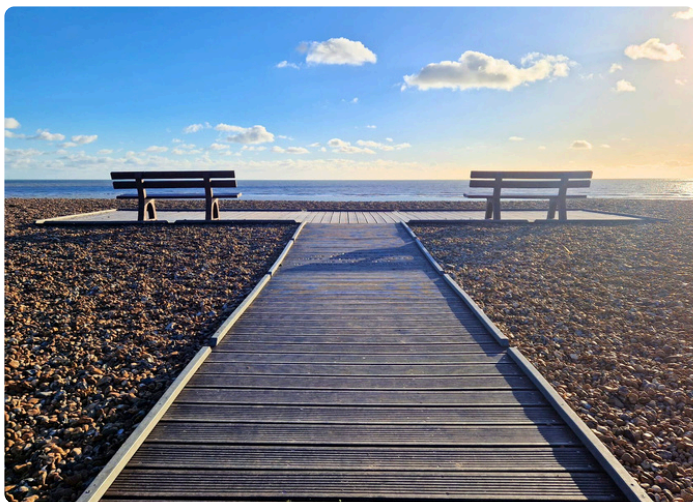
Finally, ask: "What would a compassionate voice say?" If your inner critic is loud, write down the supportive words a dear friend would offer you right now. This practice bridges the gap between pain and comfort, shifting you from self-judgment toward the resilient honesty that lies at the heart of the therapeutic journey.

Thought-full

"Be patient with yourself. Self-growth is tender; it's holy ground. There is no greater investment." - Stephen Covey



In mental health, true change requires a delicate approach rather than rigorous management. Counselling invites us into "tender ground" where healing cannot be rushed by willpower. By viewing emotional struggles as sacred opportunities for understanding rather than flaws to be fixed, we shift from self-correction to self-investment. Nurturing our own resilience is a profound use of resources; this gentle commitment to staying with ourselves builds a foundation of strength that no external achievement can match.



Helpful Tool

The 'What Do I Need?' Check-In: A Tool for Self-Compassion

The next time you feel a wave of anxiety, frustration, or exhaustion, follow these three steps:

- 1. Pause and Connect:** Stop what you are doing. Place one hand firmly but gently on your chest or over your heart. This physical touch signals to your nervous system that you are safe and supported, helping to lower your heart rate.
- 2. Identify the Feeling:** Take a deep breath and simply name the emotion without judging it. For example, "I am feeling very overwhelmed right now" or "I am feeling quite lonely."
- 3. Ask the Question:** Direct your attention inward and ask: "What does this feeling need from me right now?"

Listening for the Answer

The answer is rarely a massive life change; it is usually a small, physiological or emotional requirement. Common answers include:

- **Physical:** A glass of water, five minutes of fresh air, or a nap.
- **Boundaries:** Saying "no" to an extra task or stepping away from a screen.
- **Emotional:** A kind word to yourself, such as "It's okay to feel this way," or reaching out to a friend.

Urgent Help

If you are experiencing an immediate mental health crisis, feel unsafe, or require urgent help, please contact the following services for immediate assistance:

- **999** for emergency services.
- **NHS 111**: for urgent advice
- **The Samaritans**: Call 116 123 for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Shout 85258**: Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to connect with a trained volunteer for free, confidential crisis support via text, anytime.
- **Your GP**: Contact your GP during surgery hours for an urgent appointment or advice.

Your safety and well-being are the absolute priority. Please do not hesitate to reach out to these services if you need immediate help.

Contact Us

[Email Us](#)

[Call Us](#)

[WhatsApp Us](#)

