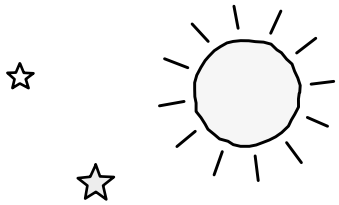
Small Steps

15 DAYS OF GENTLE SELF-CARE



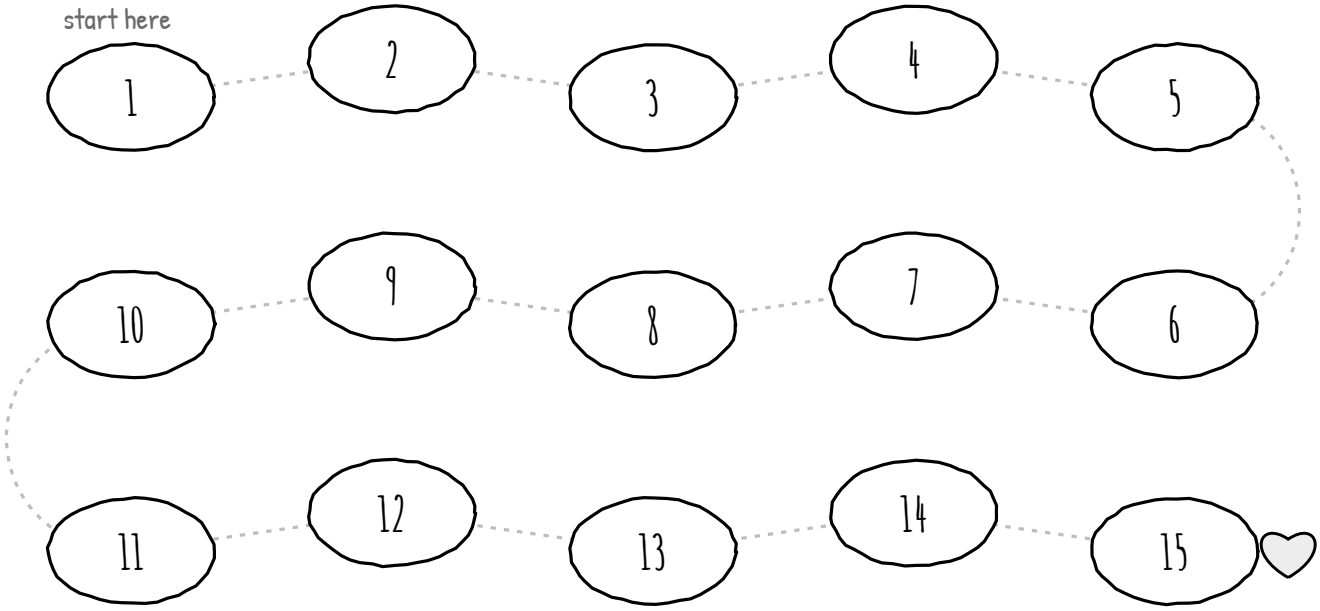
How to use it

- One page a day. Each one takes about 10 minutes.
- There are no right or wrong answers. Write, draw, doodle or colour in.
- Missed a day? That's okay. Pick up where you left off, or go in any order.
- Each page ends with a little check-in to see how you're doing.

These pages are a gentle support for everyday life. They aren't therapy and don't replace professional care. ***If things feel harder, turn to the last page.***

My 15 steps

Colour in a stone each day you finish.



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DAY 1 OF 15

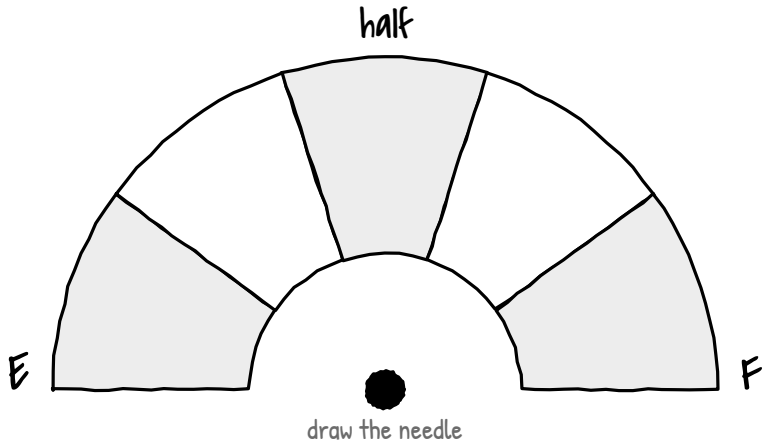
How full is my tank?

★☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Like a car, we can only run on empty for so long. Stress, worry, illness, caring for others and busy days all use up fuel. Rest, connection and the things we enjoy fill us up again. Today is simply about noticing where you are, with no judgement.

Today's small step

Draw a needle on the gauge to show how full your tank feels today.



draw the needle

What's been using up my fuel?

What used to fill me up?

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 2 OF 15

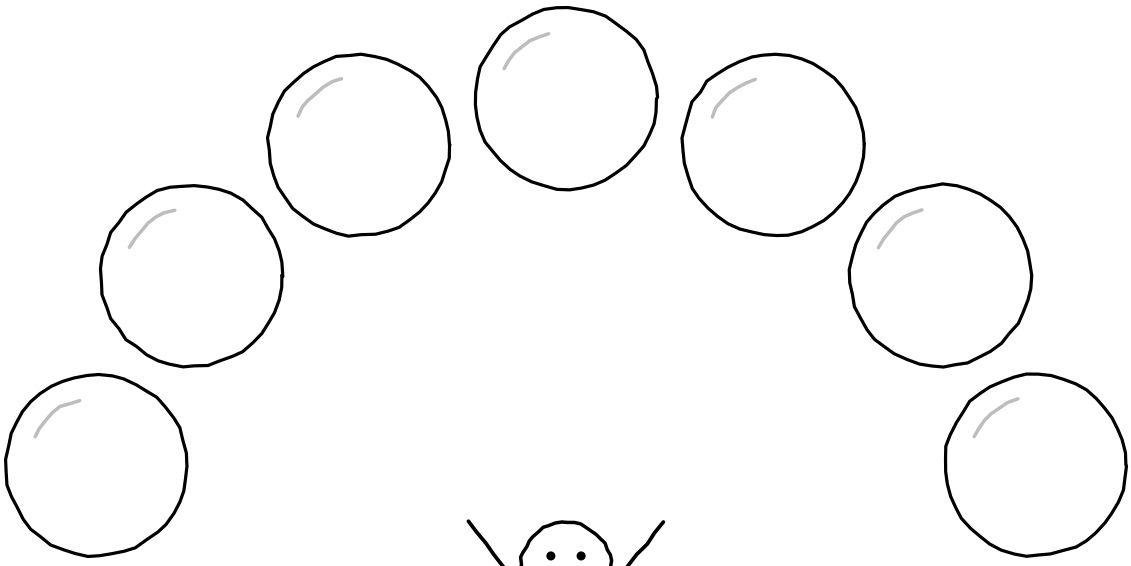
What am I juggling?

☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Most of us keep many balls in the air: work, family, health, money, a home, other people's needs. Some balls are ***glass***. If we drop them, they break, like our health or the people we love. Others are ***rubber***. They bounce back, like a tidy house or a reply to every message. When you're running low, it's okay to let a rubber ball drop for a while.

Today's small step

Write one thing you're juggling in each ball. Draw a star on the glass ones.



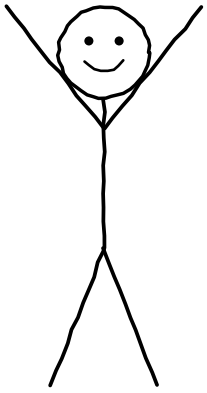
My glass balls

handle with care

.....

.....

.....



Rubber balls

I could put these down for now

.....

.....

.....

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star 

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 3 OF 15

Looking after the basics

☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

When life gets hard, the basics are often the first things to slip. Sleep, regular meals, water, moving and daylight all affect how we feel, and when they slip, everything feels harder. You don't need to fix them all. One tiny change is enough.

Today's small step

Circle a face for each one, then jot down one tiny thing you could try.

Sleep

one tiny thing I could try:

Meals

one tiny thing I could try:

Water

one tiny thing I could try:

Moving

one tiny thing I could try:

Daylight

one tiny thing I could try:

Rest

one tiny thing I could try:

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star

How I feel:

One kind thing I did for me:

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DAY 4 OF 15

Winding down for sleep

☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Our minds need time to slow down before sleep, a bit like a plane coming in to land. A short, calm routine before bed tells the body it's time to rest. Keep it simple, and repeat it most nights.

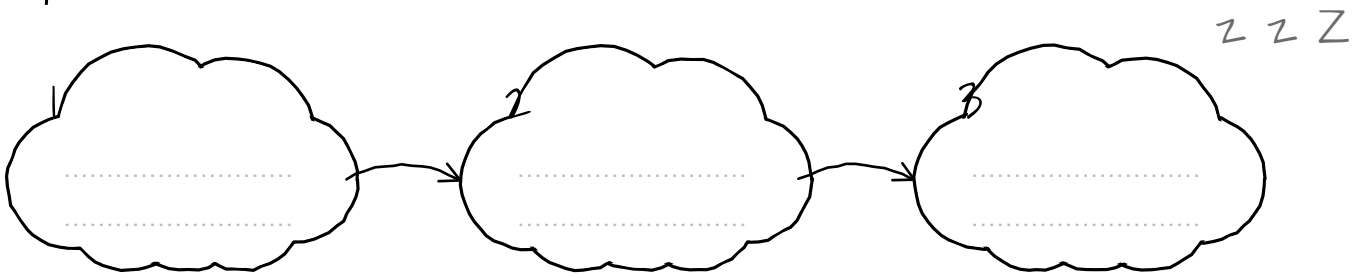
Today's small step

Colour in the stars you'd like to try, then plan your wind-down.



- ☆ Put screens away an hour before bed
- ☆ Dim the lights in the evening
- ☆ Jot tomorrow's to-do list down
- ☆ Read something gentle
- ☆ Keep the room cool, dark and quiet
- ☆ Get up at the same time each day
- ☆ Take a warm shower or bath
- ☆ Do some slow breathing
- ☆ Have caffeine only before lunch
- ☆ Can't sleep? Get up and do something calm

My wind-down routine



Tonight I'll start with: .....

If your sleep has been poor for several weeks, mention it to your doctor.

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel:



One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 5 OF 15

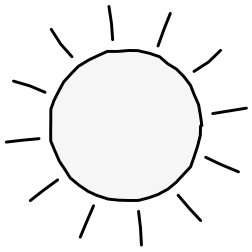
What fills me up, what drains me

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

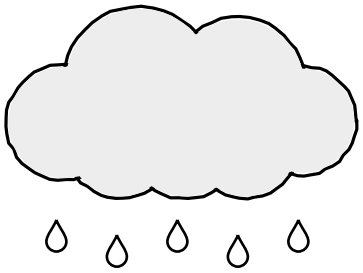
Some people, places and activities leave us feeling lighter. Others leave us tired or tense. We can't avoid every drain, but seeing them clearly helps us make small choices: a little less of what drains us, a little more of what fills us up.

Today's small step

Write what fills you up under the sun, and what drains you under the rain cloud.



Fills me up



Drains me

A little less of .....

A little more of .....

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star 

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 6 OF 15

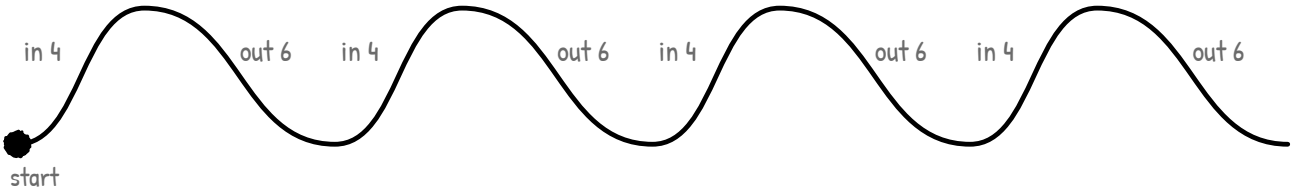
A breath of calm

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

When we're stressed, our breathing gets fast and shallow. Slowing the breath, especially the out-breath, tells the body it's safe to settle. It's a skill, so it gets easier with practice. Try it when you're fairly calm, so it's ready when you really need it.

Today's small step

Trace the wave slowly with your finger: breathe in going up, out going down.

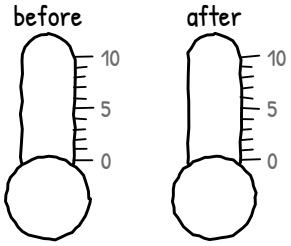


5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

Look around you and notice...

5	4	3	2	1
things I can see	things I can feel	things I can hear	things I can smell	thing I can taste

How tense? 0 calm, 10 very



What I noticed

.....

.....

.....

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel: 😢 😟 😐 🙂 😄

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 7 OF 15

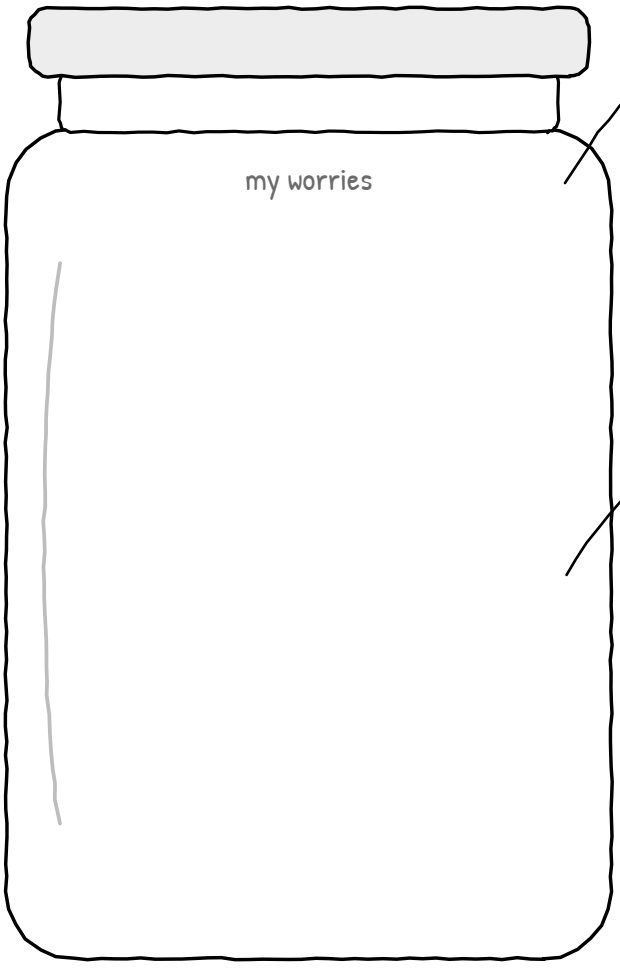
EMPTYING MY WORRY JAR

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Worries feel bigger when they keep going round in our heads. Writing them down gets them out of your head and onto paper, where you can sort them. Some worries we can act on. Others we can't control, and we can practise setting them down for now.

TODAY'S SMALL STEP

Empty your worries into the jar. Then sort them on the right.



I can do something

My first small step: .....

I can't control

so I'll let these rest for now

TODAY'S CHECK-IN

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel:

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 8 OF 15

Speaking to myself kindly

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Many of us speak to ourselves in ways we would never speak to a friend. That harsh inner voice often grows louder when we're struggling. Try answering it the way you'd answer someone you care about.

Today's small step

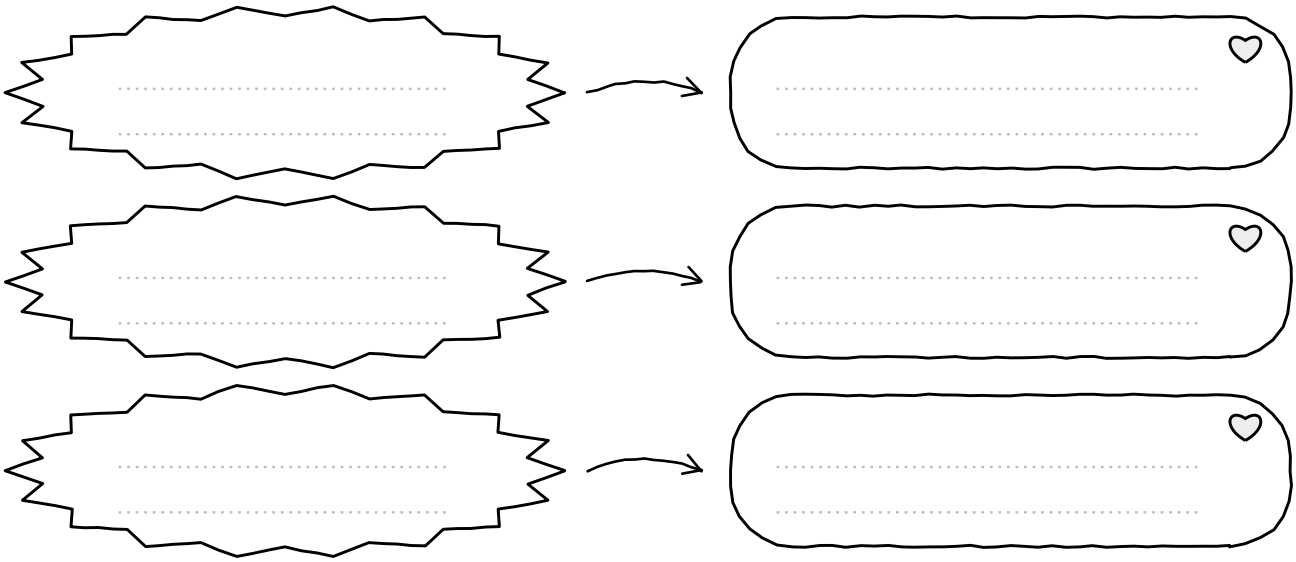
Write what your inner critic says in the stormy bubbles, then answer it kindly.

My inner critic says...

e.g. "You're useless, you can't even cope."

What I'd say to a friend...

e.g. "You're carrying a lot. Of course it's hard."



A kind sentence for me today



Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star 

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 9 OF 15

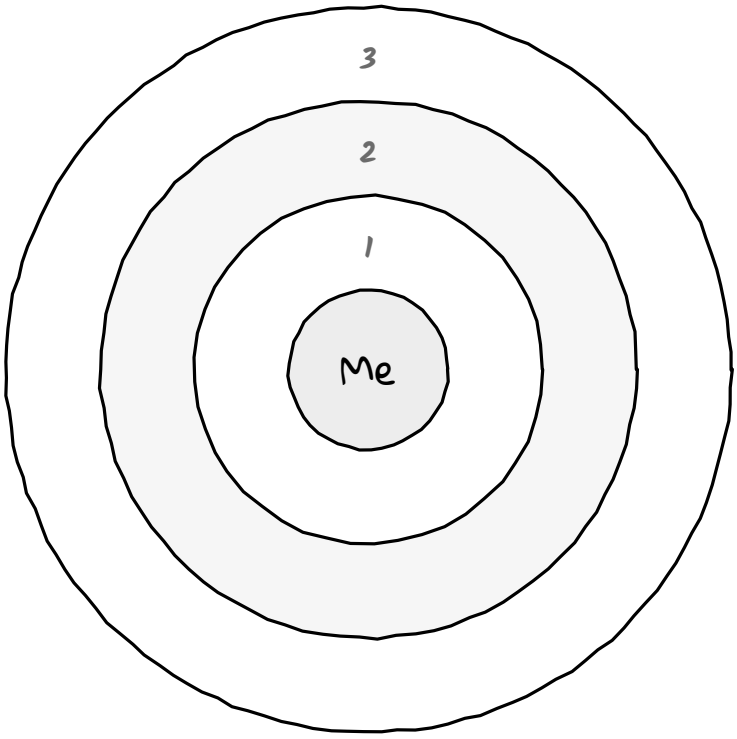
Who lifts me up?

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

We're not meant to carry hard things alone. Connection is one of the strongest protections for our mental health, even a short message or a cup of tea with someone. Today, notice who is in your corner.

Today's small step

Write names in the circles. The closer someone feels, the nearer to the middle.



1 Closest to me
people I can be fully myself with

2 People I can call on
friends, family, neighbours, colleagues

3 Others who help
groups, faith community, my doctor, a pet

Someone I could reach out to today: .....

What I could say or do: .....

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 10 OF 15

Remembering how to play

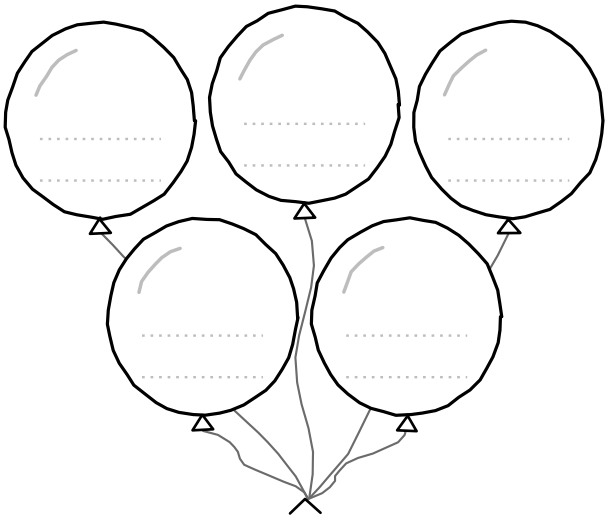
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Play means doing something simply because it's enjoyable, not because it's useful. As adults we often lose touch with it, yet play lowers stress and brings back a sense of lightness. Childhood is a good place to look for clues.

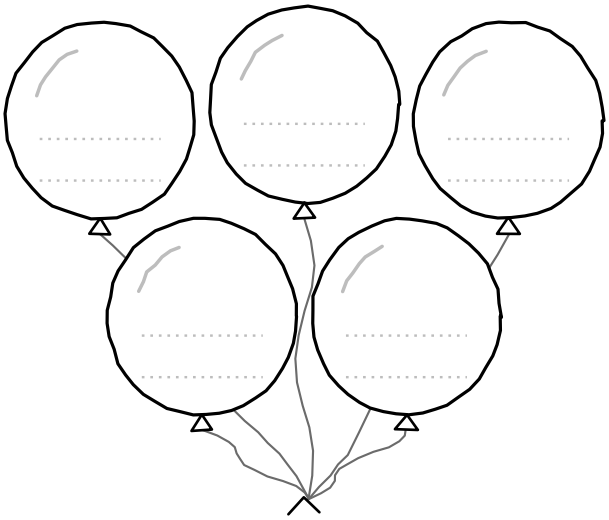
Today's small step

Fill in the balloons, then pick something playful to do today.

As a child I loved...



Grown-up versions to try



Circle any that make you smile:

colour in a puzzle

dance to a song

sing out loud

bake for fun

potter in the garden

board games

play with a pet

Today I'll play for 10 minutes by .....

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 11 OF 15

Moving and getting outside

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Gentle movement and daylight can lift mood, ease tension and help with sleep. It doesn't need to be exercise, and any body and any ability counts. If you have a health condition, move within what your body allows today.

Today's small step

Colour in a footprint for each one you try.

- A 10-minute walk
- Stretch for 5 minutes
- Sit outside in the morning sun
- Dance in the kitchen
- Some gardening
- Chair stretches or gentle yoga
- Walk to the shop
- Play outside with a child or a pet

What I did

How I felt afterwards

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel:

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 12 OF 15

My comfort list for hard days

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

On a hard day it can be difficult to think of anything that helps. Writing your comforts down now, on a calmer day, means they're ready when you need them. Think about each of your senses.

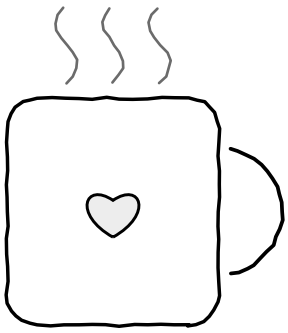
Today's small step

Fill in your comfort list. Keep it somewhere you'll see it.

Something to look at

A soothing smell

Something to listen to



my comfort list

Something to taste or sip

Something to hold

A place that feels safe

People who comfort me

Words that help me

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel: ☹ ☹ 😐 🙂 😀

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 13 OF 15

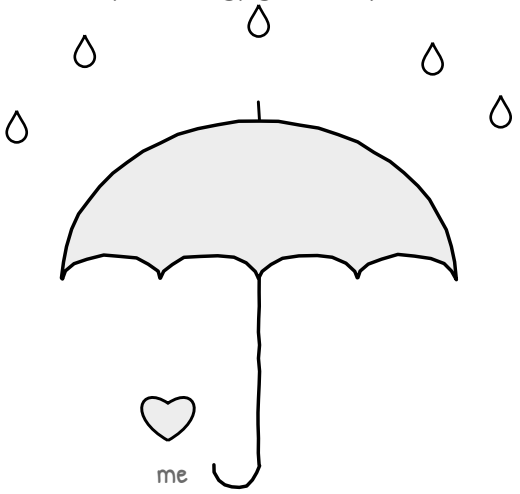
Protecting my energy

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆ ☆

When our energy is low, saying yes to everything can leave nothing for ourselves. Saying no, or not right now, isn't selfish. It's a way of looking after what you have. Small boundaries count too.

Today's small step

Notice where your energy goes, and practise a kind, clear no.



Where am I saying yes when I'd like to say no?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Kind ways to say no

circle one you could use

"I'd love to help, but I can't take that on right now."

"Let me check and get back to you."

"I can't do Saturday, but I could do a quick call next week."

"Thank you for thinking of me. I need to sit this one out."

One small boundary I'll try this week: .....

.....

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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DAY 14 OF 15

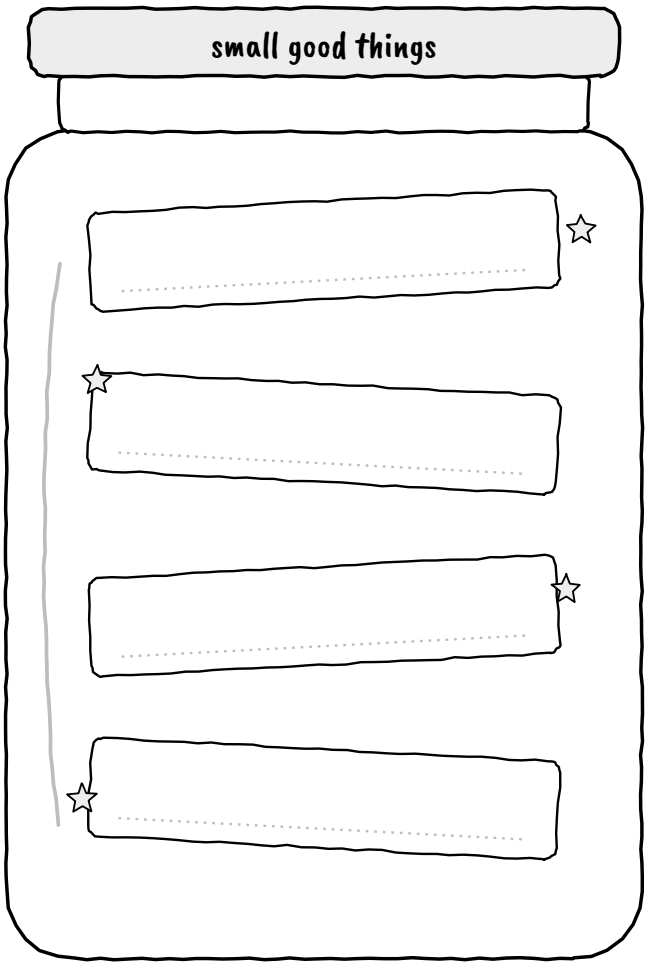
Small good things

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★ ☆

Our brains are wired to notice what's wrong more than what's right. That kept our ancestors safe, but it can leave us missing the small good moments. Noticing them doesn't deny the hard things. It just gives a fuller picture.

Today's small step

Write a small good thing from the past two weeks on each slip of paper.



Something I'm proud of, however small

What I've learnt about what helps me

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel:

One kind thing I did for me:

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DAY 15 OF 15

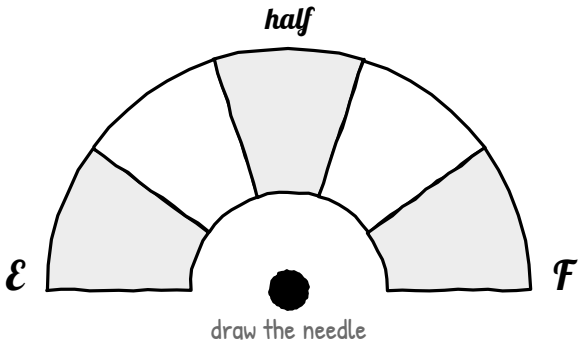
Looking back, looking ahead

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ★

You've reached day 15. Well done for showing up for yourself. Take a moment to see how you are now, what has helped, and what you'd like to keep doing.

Today's small step

Draw today's needle and compare it with Day 1.



What helped most

.....

.....

.....

I'll keep doing

.....

.....

.....

My self-care promise

I promise to keep looking after myself by

.....

.....

Signed: .....

Today's check-in

Did my small step? Colour the star ☆

How I feel: 

One kind thing I did for me: .....

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When self-care isn't enough

Self-care helps, but it can't fix everything, and it isn't meant to. Needing more support isn't a failure. It means you're carrying something heavy.

Reach out for more help if...

- you're feeling worse, not better, for two weeks or more
- it's hard to get through the day: work, eating, washing or caring for others
- your sleep or appetite has changed a lot
- you're relying on alcohol, drugs or other things to get through
- panic, low mood or worry feels out of control
- something frightening or overwhelming has happened

If you need help right now

- **SADAG Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0800 567 567** (free, 24 hours)
- **LifeLine: 0861 322 322** (24 hours)
- **SADAG WhatsApp: 076 882 2775** (8am to 5pm)
- **In an emergency**, go to your nearest hospital emergency unit, or call **112** (ambulance **10177**).

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of ending your life, please reach out straight away.

Other ways to find support

- See your doctor or local clinic.
- Talk to a counsellor or psychologist.
- Tell someone you trust how you're really doing.

You showed up for yourself. That matters. Be gentle with yourself.

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