



a year of sea  
and kindness

daily life refreshment from *Sea* soul blessings

sea soul  
journal



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and kindness

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january

## Our January focus

This month is about settling in and getting started.

We're becoming curious about the year ahead. Asking how we might navigate our way through it with greater kindness, a deeper connection to the sea, and more mindful moments of peace.

Together, we're learning how to create more of those little moments of quiet, compassion and reflection in our busy days.

So take it gently - especially if some of these activities are unfamiliar.

Choose one journal prompt, or one screensaver to pop on your phone. Start one morning with a meditation. Take one moment to experiment with speaking to yourself with kindness.

Offer yourself the same tender care you offer others. Sometimes, just pausing to breathe in a little extra kindness is enough.





## may you begin

The moment you sight the sea;  
breathe in the salty air;  
touch the very edge.

When you taste the promise of renewal;  
hear the fear and the questioning.

In the anticipation of beginning,  
you have already begun.

Step in.

May your fears evaporate as the sun rises.

May a deep breath move you forward.

May you take the next step,  
as if it has already been taken.

## What are you receiving in January?

If you're signed up for postal goodies, your first little package contains our "inspiration for sea-lovers" keepsake tin.

This little tin is a place to gather all your postcard prints and store your own notes of sea inspiration.

You might like to imagine your tin as a mini altar to connect you to the sea, adding ocean treasures like sea glass, pebbles or shells. Or as a precious little vault in which to store and nurture your commitment to kindness.

When you find a compassionate phrase that resonates - some words you'd like to be able to say to yourself - write them down and pop them in here to come back to.

To start us off, there's a little note from me inside, sharing your guiding card - and I've written a little more about guiding cards below.

If you're signed up for the digital option instead, you might like to create your own little tin - somewhere to print and store your favourite parts of a year of sea and kindness, and any treasures you've found that bring the sea to mind.

In this month's online package of treats, you'll find all sorts of lovely things...

There's the first chapter of your Sea Soul Journal here to start you off.

You could print and complete the writing prompts, or use the questions as prompts for your own journaling. You might prefer to simply choose a question to discuss with a friend or mull as you go about your day.

Next, there's our first sea meditation video, and a downloadable audio recording of this.

January is a time of new beginnings, fresh starts and renewal - even when the future feels unclear, and you don't yet know quite what's beginning. So this month, our meditation reminds you that each day, each breath, renews us.

In each fresh moment, we can choose to be kinder to ourselves. And we can choose to offer kindness to each other.

The beautiful view you'll see accompanying this meditation was filmed from my favourite swimming spot in Mount's Bay, Cornwall, at dawn on New Years' Day.

Watching the sun rise and feeling its warmth on my skin felt hopeful and releasing all at once - a beautiful way to start the year. I hope you can feel that too.

To help you reimagine your everyday screens as deep sea breaths and inspiration to be kind to yourself, there's also this month's Sea Screen Kit...

This includes five screen-savers for your phone, and one for your computer.

Use these as reminders to pause and breathe in the sea, or to motivate yourself with kindness.

Sometimes we scroll because we're seeking qualities we can find more effectively in the sea: peace, connection, a positive focus.

So let these little images of ocean beauty gently steer your busy mind away from that deceptive riptide...

## January: your first love letter

How are you? Over here, it's been a week of new challenges, huge highs and lows. A week of somehow finding the energy required to soothe and hold all the shifting emotions within my little family - and within me at times.

But each morning, I come back to the sea. The fluid centre of it all. I stand and watch that effortless horizon looking back at all this whirling humanity, the struggles and noise of it all - with such simple bold beauty in every shift and roll. Each wave carrying a message of fluidity and faith - holding me together, holding us all together in the whirl.

In a year of sea and kindness, I'm creating what I need in these whirling moments.

I want these love letters and sea-filled packages to feel like coming back to the sea when you feel untethered.

That moment when you pause to offer yourself some kindness, as the sea holds you.

A safe harbour, a universal embrace, the ocean's movement calling you on.

Together this year, we'll find more mindful moments of calm and clarity; and encouraging reminders to pause, reflect and be kind - all rooted in the constant beauty of the sea.

Because those small shifts make all the difference. Those moments of mindful kindness support us to become the person we most want to be.

Your moment might be spying a postcard print on your desk and remembering to breathe in the sea and speak a few kind words to yourself.

It might be boosting your resilience and soothing your nervous system by listening to a meditation. Or taking a few minutes to reflect and journal. It might simply be clicking away from your phone to focus on what you really want instead of getting sucked into scrolling.

Each moment counts. Each moment builds on the one before. Slowly encouraging you to shift towards a gentler way of being with yourself.

And a deeper connection to the peace of the sea. Within you, and without.

Our time together this year is about finding ways for life to feel more compassionate and spacious. Take your time. Listen to what you need. Be kind to yourself as you choose where to place your energy. Let the sea guide you.

You'll hear from me again a fortnight from now, with another love letter from the sea. In that, I'll answer any questions I receive from you all, offer some thoughts to go a little deeper with these online gifts, and encourage you along.

If you'd like to share how you're doing, I'd love to hear from you. And if you have any questions, please ask. If I don't know the answer, I can always ask the sea...

With love from the sea and me,

Pippa

You can find all of your online treats here:  
The URL is [www.seasoulblessings.com/a-year-of-sea-and-kindness-jan21](http://www.seasoulblessings.com/a-year-of-sea-and-kindness-jan21)  
The password is "Beginning"



part one

## About guiding cards

We're starting the year by choosing a simple focus - a guiding blessing.

I'll share the card I've drawn for you either as a little message in your tin when I post these out (if you can't wait to find out, email me and I'll let you know!). If you're a digital only subscriber, I'll send you a card by email in the next couple of days.. And of course, if you prefer, you can choose your own card.

If you'd like to, this month's journal also allows space for you to draw yourself a card for each month ahead. Don't worry if you don't have your own set of cards to use for this, as we'll be choosing a new Sea Soul Blessing theme each month as our guides. This month's blessing for us all is 'may you begin', and you'll be able to read that in your Sea Soul Journal.

### How I've chosen your guiding card

I've been heading down to the sea with my set of Sea Soul Blessings cards, imagining you with me.

And thinking how wonderful it would be to gather together in person at the ocean's edge - maybe one day!

I lay out my cards, and hold each of you in my thoughts, one by one. As I listen to the sea, I notice which card is calling to me - and that's the one I choose for you.

### Using your guiding card

You might simply use your guiding card as a message to absorb on the day you receive it. Or like me, you might return to it as the year progresses - that's entirely up to you.

I use my guiding card as a simple focus to hold onto when life feels overwhelming - or whenever I need some guidance, or an extra boost of kindness and faith. I'll read the message again and see what new resonance it has for me in that moment - or repeat the phrase to myself as I take some deep breaths, as a little soothing mantra.

You could also use your card as an extra layer to deepen your understanding of any other blessings you choose for yourself this year.

And of those we will visit together over the year.

How might your focus shift when you bring the quality of 'may you begin' to the card that the sea has chosen for you?

To give you an example of this...

My card of the year is 'may you release'. So when I combine the two, I get to explore what it might feel like to begin releasing - what do I need to let go of first?

Or consider what it means to release beginnings - what might it be like to simply place myself in the middle, in the here and now, releasing any need for a start or end point?

That's it from me for now - we are beginning!

I'm over here feeling all the feelings that come up about that - the excitement, the nervousness, the doubts and the thrill of anticipation...

Every breath is a new beginning. Let's step forward together with kindness and the sea in our hearts - and hope on the horizon.



A photograph of a rainbow arching over the ocean. The sky is filled with large, dark grey clouds, with some lighter patches where the sun is breaking through. The rainbow is vibrant and spans across the right side of the frame. The ocean is a deep blue-grey color, and the horizon is visible in the distance.

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sea soul journal

may you begin

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## MY SELF COMPASSION PRACTICE

Take a moment to acknowledge your current struggles and emotions, without judgement.

Remind yourself that these challenges are all part of the human experience - they are the lived stories that connect us to others.

Reassure yourself that you are here to be kind to yourself - from the beginning to the end - however it all turns out.

All of this may be difficult at first. So as you speak these blessings to yourself, offer yourself some gentle physical comfort - holding your own hand, placing it on your heart, or some other calming touch.

### Speak kindness

May my fears evaporate as the sun rises

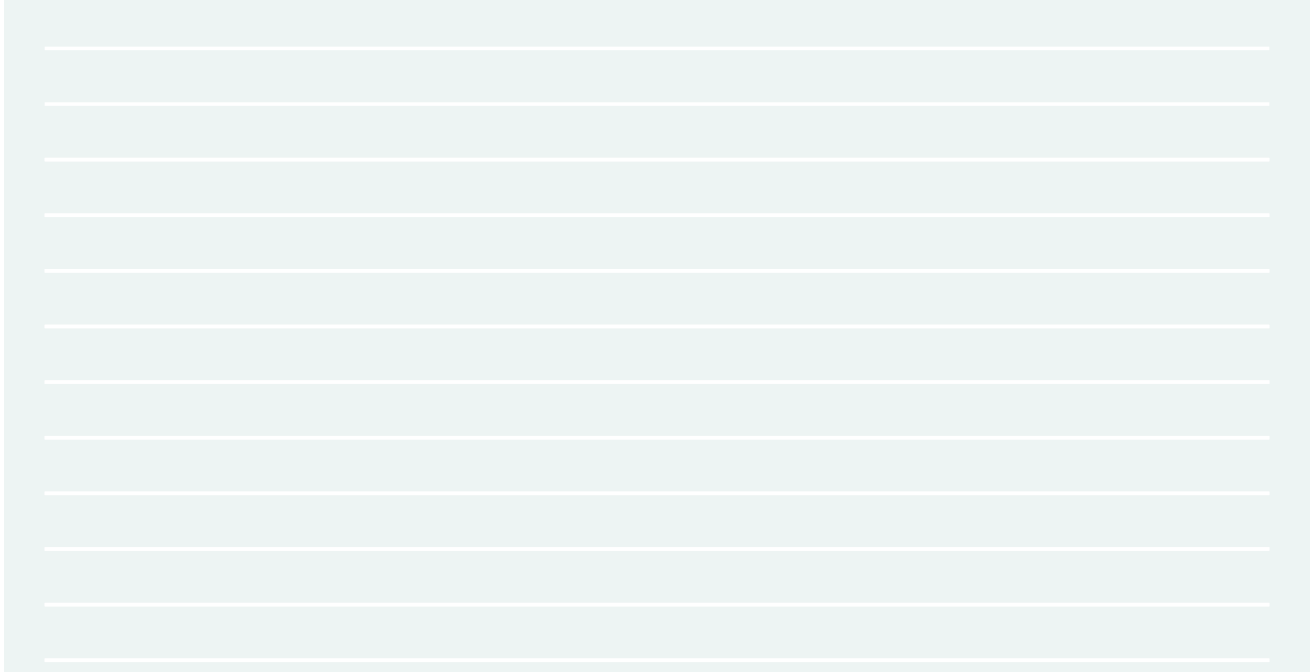
May a deep breath move me forward

May I take the next step, as if it has already been taken.

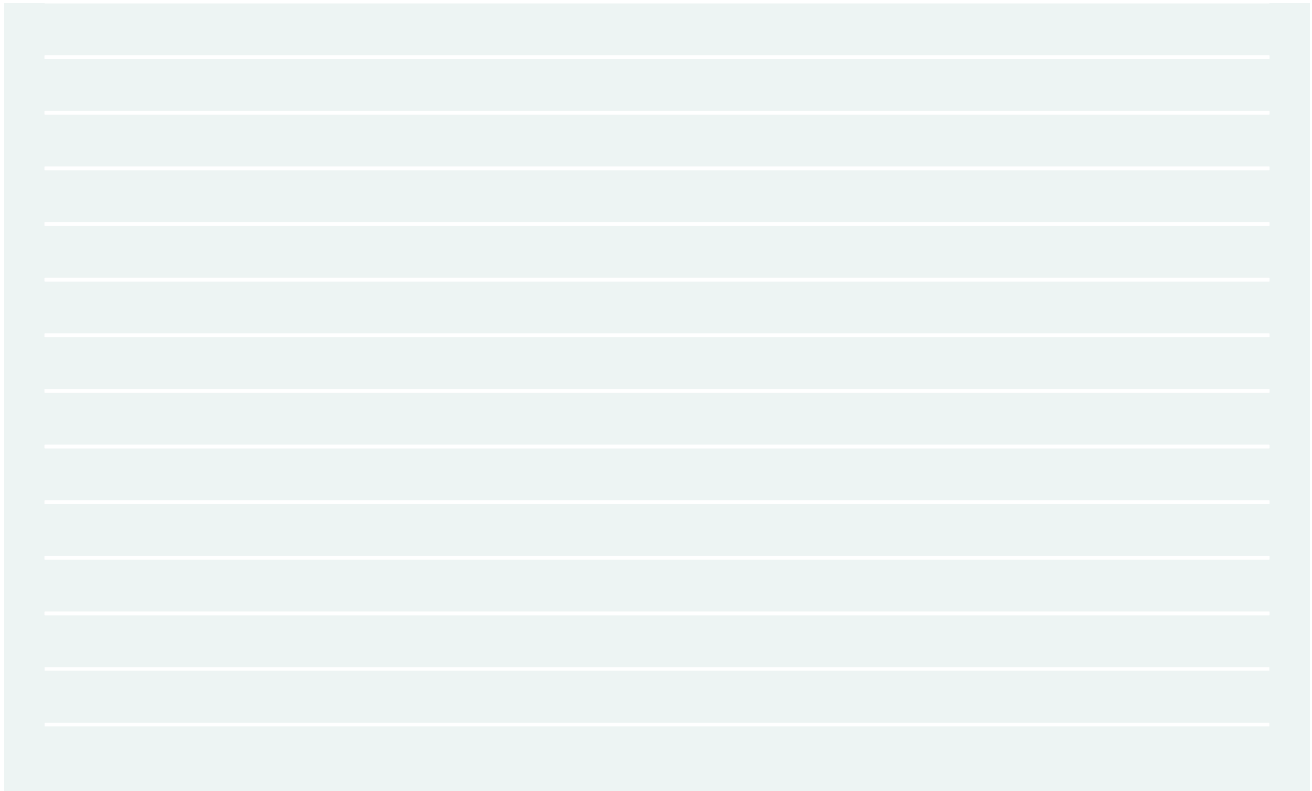
# Beginning

What would you like to celebrate from 2020?

What did you learn, appreciate, and discover?

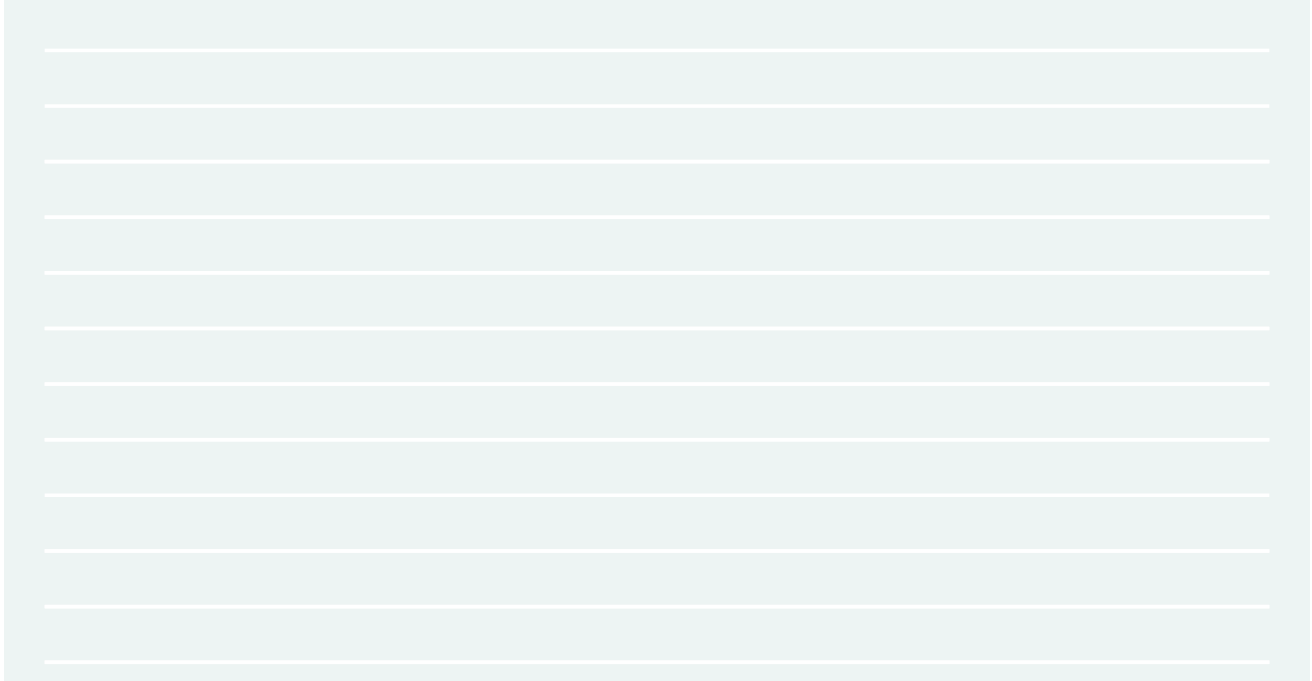
A large, light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines, intended for writing a response to the questions above.

And what were the greatest challenges of 2020?

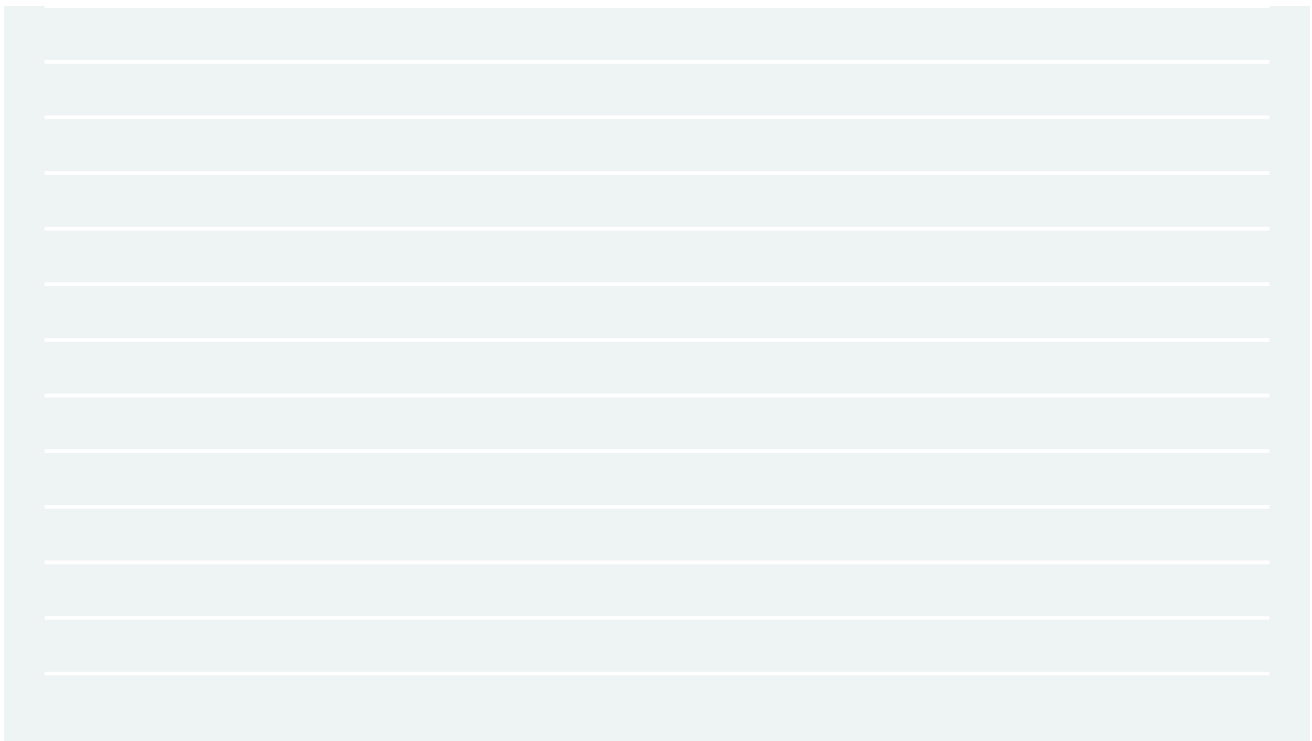
A large, light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines, intended for writing a response to the question above.

## Beginning

In order to move forward into a new year, we often need to make some space. What could you release and let go of from 2020 in order to begin 2021 afresh?

A light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines for writing, intended for the user to list things they want to release from 2020.

And what would you like to carry forward into 2021? What would you like to focus on, create, or invite into the year ahead?

A light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines for writing, intended for the user to list things they want to carry forward into 2021.

A photograph of a rainbow arching over the ocean. The sky is filled with large, dark grey clouds, with a patch of blue sky visible on the left. The rainbow is vibrant and spans from the right side of the frame down to the horizon. The ocean is a deep blue-grey color, and a small dark object is visible on the horizon line.

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and kindness

sea soul journal

guiding cards

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# GUIDING CARDS



## A CARD OF THE YEAR

At the start of the year, you might like to choose a Sea Soul Blessings card to guide you forward. You can use this as a simple focus to ground you as you move through the year ahead.

## Choosing a Sea Soul Blessing guide for 2021

At the start of the year, when others choose a 'word of the year' or a theme to focus on, I draw a Sea Soul Blessings card. I choose my card randomly, but it's equally powerful if you make your choice consciously.

I'll use the message of this card as a simple focus to guide me. Last year, my card was 'may you feel alive'. This year, it's 'may you release'. Those choices gave me two powerful qualities to explore, very different in tone, and open to so many possible interpretations.

While I'll use many other Sea Soul Blessings cards over the course of the year, this guiding card is the card I'll reflect on most often. My understanding of it will evolve as the year progresses. Even if I'm not sure of its meaning at the start of the year - over time, it will become a trusted friend.

And journaling can be a powerful way to explore its message.

When I'm stuck or overwhelmed, I'll come back to read my guiding card's words again - to see what new wisdom it might have for me in that moment.

I might use it as a mantra to spur me on, or as some reassurance that everything is as it should be.

When I'm feeling low, I'll practice speaking its message to myself, as a reminder to focus on kindness and encouragement.

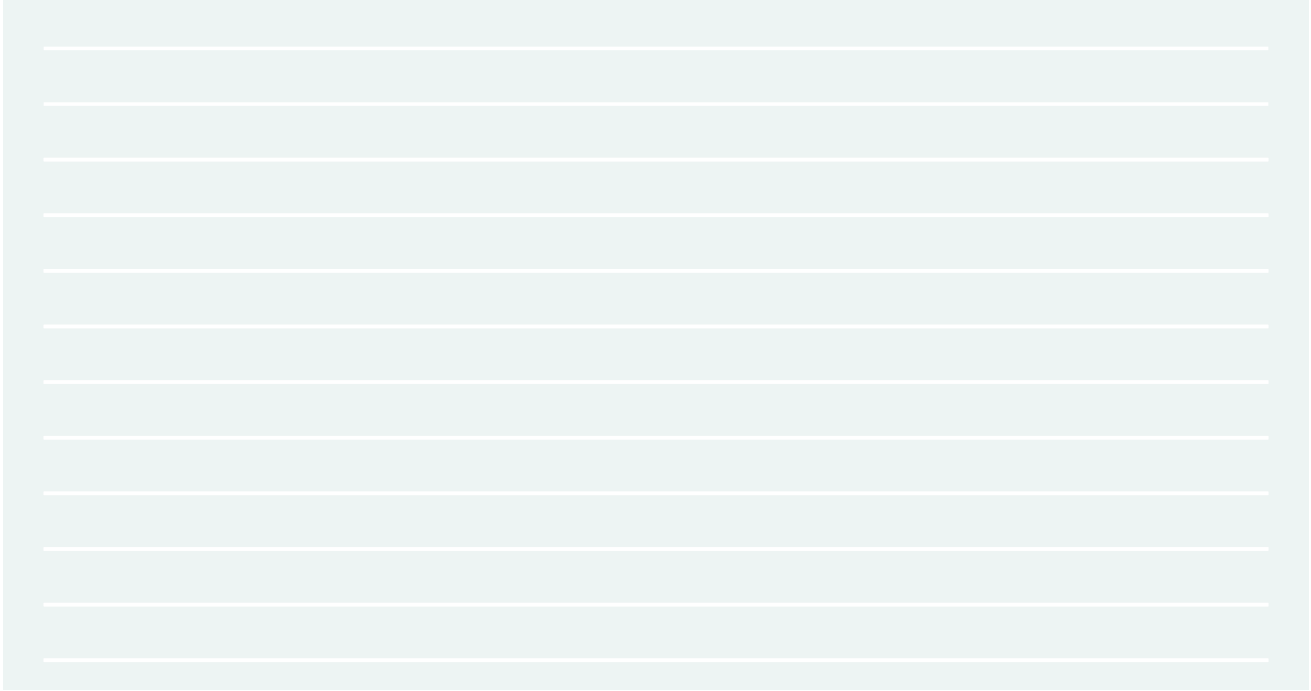
And when I draw other cards - for the day or the month - I'll sometimes choose to pause to reflect on how the two messages might work together. How might I combine the experience of feeling alive with that of releasing?

When you've chosen your card (or I've chosen it for you), take a moment to write the full message out below.

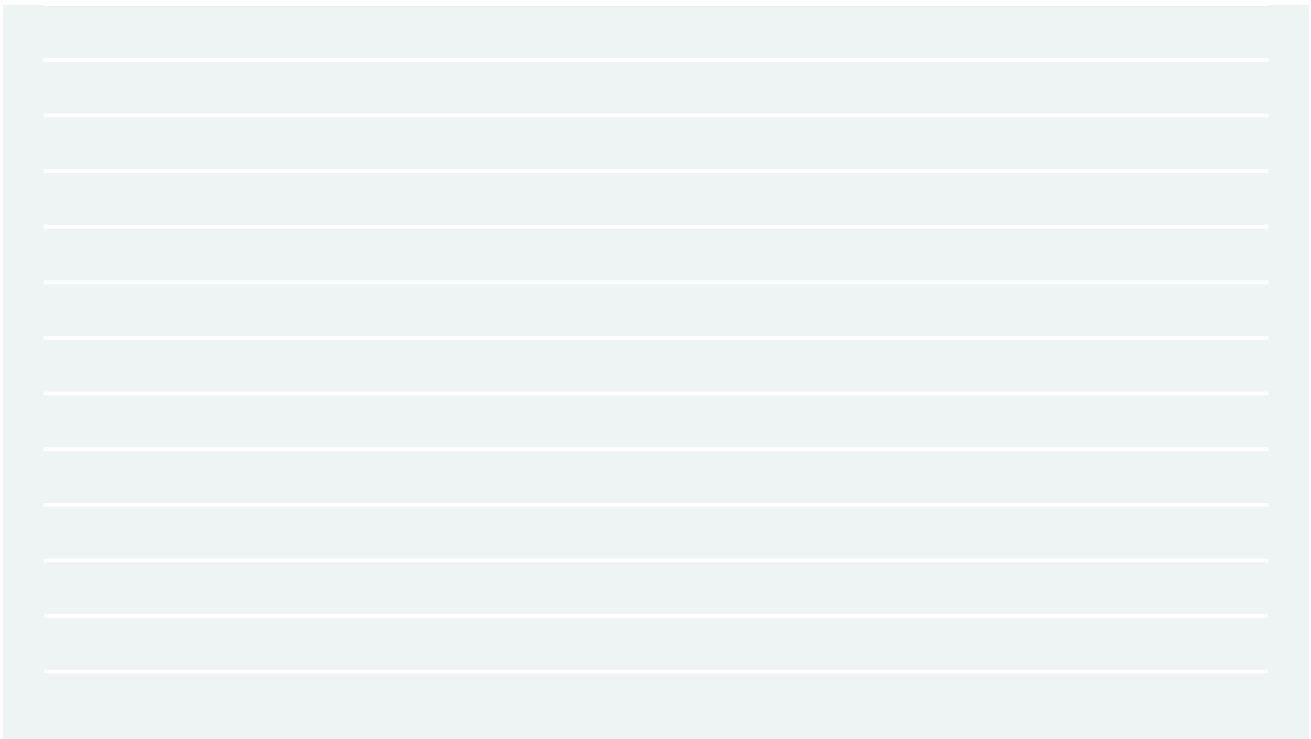
MY GUIDING CARD FOR THE YEAR

## My Sea Soul Blessing guide for the year ahead

As you read your card's message, notice your reactions. How do you feel?  
What resonates here, and what's harder to connect with?

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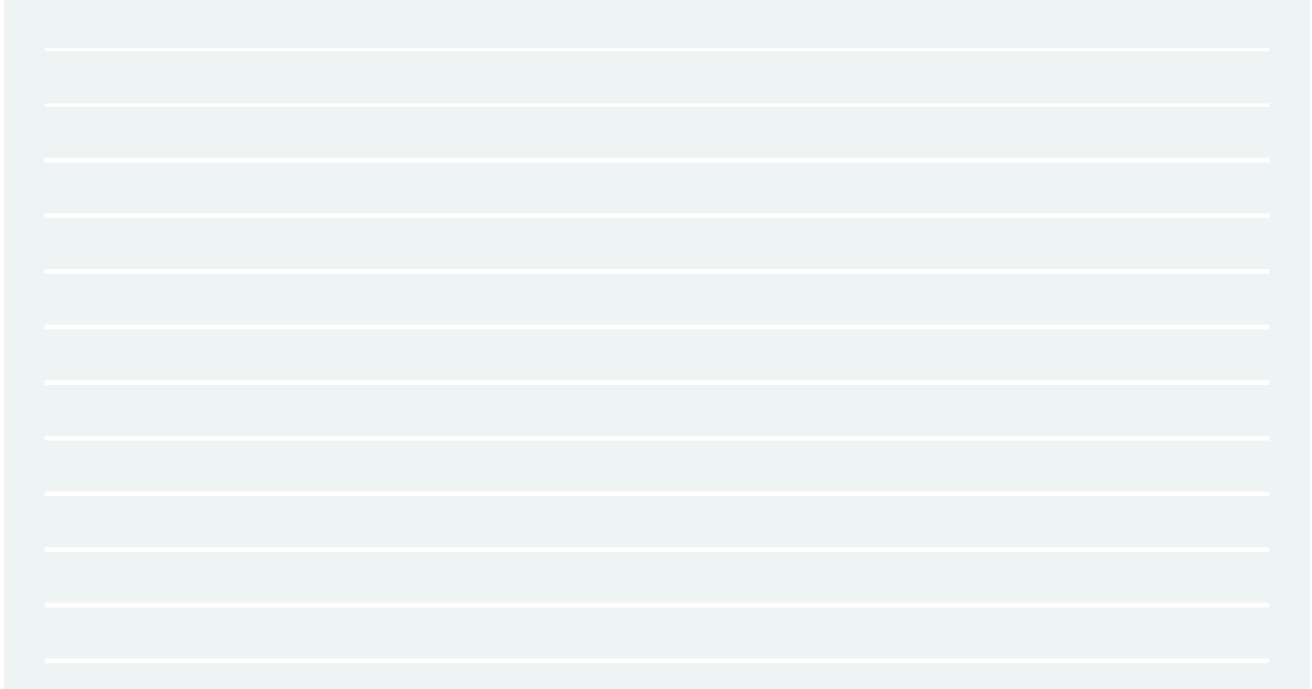
How might embracing this quality influence your year ahead?

A light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines for writing, intended for the user's response to the second question.



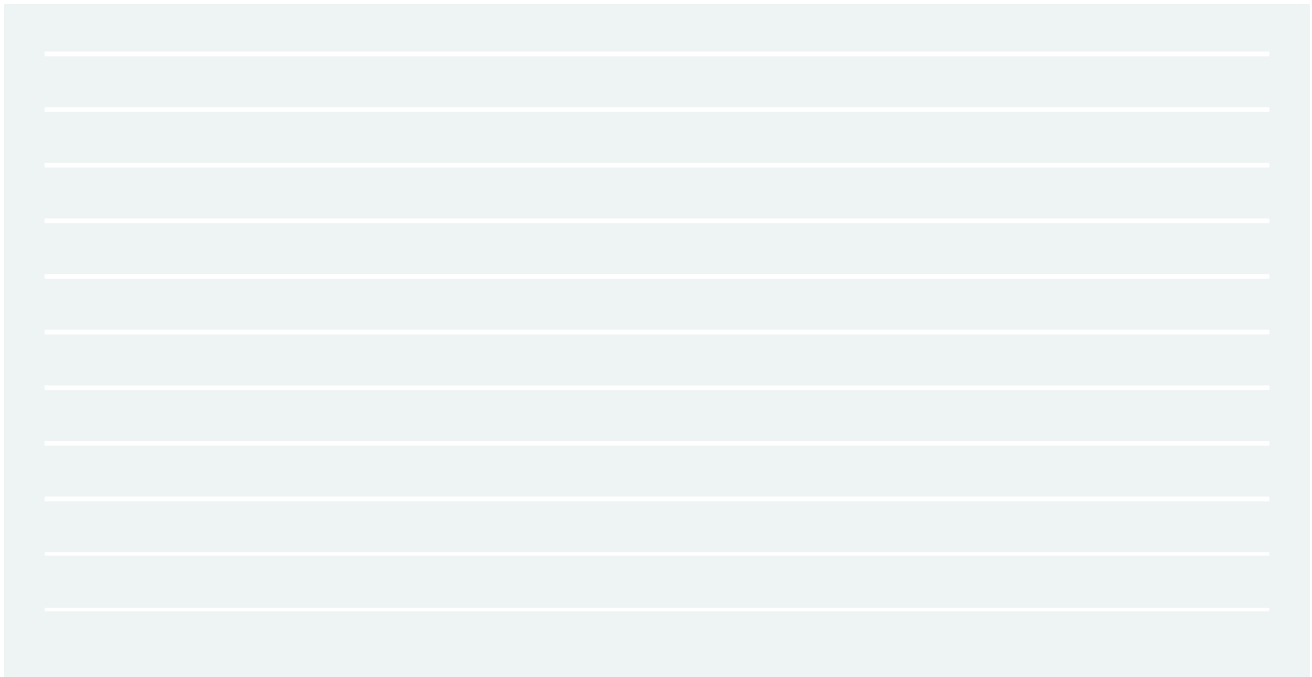
## My Sea Soul Blessing guide for the year ahead

Can you identify a few specific ways in which focusing on this quality might change life for the better? Which would you most like to explore this month?

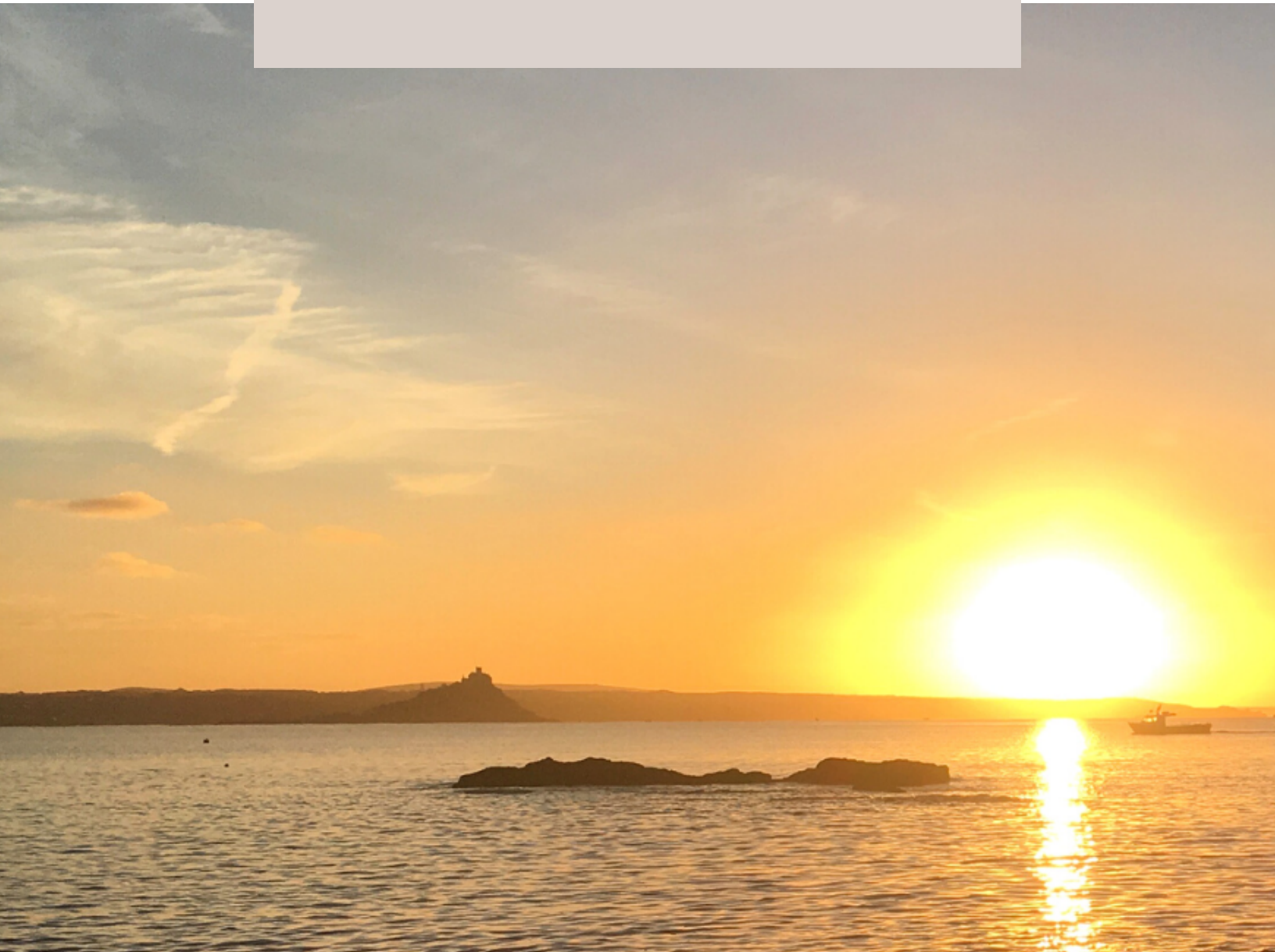


What first small step could you take towards this?

What might prevent you taking that step, and how might you overcome that?



# MONTHLY GUIDES



## MINDFUL MONTHLY GUIDES

Choosing a card for each month at the start of the year is an opportunity to imagine yourself moving on through the year with positive encouragement and a clear focus.

## My sea soul blessings cards for each month

Looking ahead to the rest of the year, choose a Sea Soul Blessings card for each coming month to help you envision the year ahead...

If you don't have Sea Soul Blessings cards, you can ask me to draw them for you.

MY GUIDING CARD FOR THE YEAR

JANUARY:

FEBRUARY

MARCH:

APRIL:

MAY

JUNE

## My sea soul blessings cards for each month

You can return to these cards for additional inspiration and guidance as the year progresses. You might also like to explore how your yearly and monthly cards could combine to give you a deeper understanding of each of these.

### MY GUIDING CARD FOR THE YEAR

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

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And journaling can be a powerful way to explore its message.

When I'm stuck or overwhelmed, I'll come back to read my guiding card's words again - to see what new wisdom it might have for me in that moment.

I might use it as a mantra to spur me on, or as some reassurance that everything is as it should be.

When I'm feeling low, I'll practice speaking its message to myself, as a reminder to focus on kindness and encouragement.

And when I draw other cards - for the day or the month - I'll sometimes choose to pause to reflect on how the two messages might work together. How might I combine the experience of feeling alive with that of releasing?

When you've chosen your card (or I've chosen it for you), take a moment to write the full message out below.

MY GUIDING CARD FOR THE YEAR

Or use them to take a deep breath and focus your mind on the particular useful task you need to do through that screen. (And when your brain stops ‘seeing’ the screensaver, try refreshing it with a new one...)

As it’s been such a bumpy start to 2021, I’ve added an extra sea soul meditation this month.

“May you be held” is a meditation for moments when life feels overwhelming, and the whirl is just too much.

I hope it offers you some extra soothing as you gently release 2020 and step into whatever lies ahead. You can find all of your online treats here. The password to access the page is “Beginning”.





part two

## January: your second love letter

How are you doing over there?

Have you been able to connect to the sea?

And to kindness?

If you dived straight in, how have you invited more mindful sea pauses into your day? Have you noticed any small shifts?

And if you haven't yet had a moment to start exploring, don't worry - we have time and space.

After all, here you are, reading this letter and connecting - you have already begun. Trust that you will make the space for more when you are ready.

If it helps you to have an outside stimulus, you could use this letter as some gentle encouragement to listen to a meditation Or explore a journal prompt. Add a new screensaver to your phone. Revisit the message of your guiding card - or 'may you begin'.

Take a moment to get comfortable so that you can sink into today's love letter. Do you need a drink of water? Movement? A blanket? Something else?

Today, I'll explore the themes that have come up so far (feel free to email me with questions, thoughts - or simply to let me know how you're doing).

And I'll take you on a journey to the sea.

With love from the sea and me,

Pippa

### Guiding cards

How are you feeling about the Sea Soul Blessings card that the sea and I chose for you this month? Is anything resonating? Or jarring?

If you'd like to read a little more about guiding cards, I wrote a blog post for you this week about my experience of choosing 'may you feel alive' as my guiding card last year - and how it changed my life in so many unexpected ways.

I remember being excited to draw that card - it fit perfectly with where I felt I was, and where I wanted to go. But what followed was a year filled of fear and restriction - not the easiest environment in which to feel alive. And yet...

It was beautiful to look back and see how that card continued to inspire me forward last year.

Towards vitality and a full expression of living - in so many different ways.

I also wrote about how I felt when I chose my guiding card for 2021 - 'may you release'.

In a word - resistant.

The idea of a whole year of letting go seemed frightening at first. It wasn't where my head wanted to be led.

My sea soul was ready - used to releasing in the sea every day - but it took the rest of me a while to warm up.



The more I allowed it simply to be, the more it started to make sense to me. Instead of seeing 'release' as a focus to maintain constantly for a whole year (which felt far too challenging), I began to simply use it as an encouraging tool to ground and help me through my everyday challenges.

As I pause - or remember to close my eyes in a tense moment and breathe - I ask myself "how or what could I release right now?"

Often, it's just the tension in my jaw or shoulders. Sometimes it's an old story I'm telling myself. Sometimes it's a set of expectations.

It's a practice, just like self compassion and responding to ourselves with kindness. It's a muscle we exercise; a neural pathway we begin to create. A pattern of thoughts or behaviour that becomes more familiar with repetition.

In a moment of difficulty, we can practice speaking words of kindness to ourselves in place of criticism.

We can pause to remind ourselves that this is hard, but here we are in this moment. And we are not alone in experiencing struggle. We can offer ourselves some love and compassion.

Self compassion isn't a 'one fits all' practice, it's about finding the words that soothe you - and they will be different for each of us.

If self compassion is still very new to you, speaking to yourself kindly may feel uncomfortable, fake, or just downright odd at first.

If you'd like a simple path to follow, I walk you through the basics of a short self compassion practice in the first chapter of the Sea Soul Journal - using 'may you begin.'

In these moments, you can also connect to compassion through your guiding card. Ask yourself "what might bring me closer to the quality of my guiding card right now - and how could I offer that to myself?"

Whether that's a movement towards lightness (stretch up, look to the light, seek out joy...) clarity (clear a space, look for the truth, speak your need simply...), resilience (rest, acknowledge all you are enduring, take the next irrepressible step...) or something else...

"What one small step could I take in this moment to connect me to that feeling?"

I know some of you will have felt connected to your guiding card straight away. And others will have felt unsure.

Sometimes when I draw a Sea Soul Blessing card, I feel delight - the message fits perfectly. And sometimes, I feel the complete opposite - ugh, that card, really?

But even when it's not the card I want at all, it always holds truth in some form. It's always useful. Every response I have teaches me something. Moves me forward. We can learn so much from what we are drawn to, and what we resist - about what we need, what we fear, and where we could stretch.

## Let me take you to the sea...

The morning is unforgiving grey. The smooth new surface of the promenade damp without a shimmer.

The sea - grey too - is bristling. Not yet fuelled by the coming storm, but already holding a minor grudge. Rainclouds sulk, echoing my mood. The dark pebbles of high tide still smarting. Turning, turning, turning, unable to escape the water's reach.

As other swimmers come to look and leave - heading for the walls of the harbour, I wait. Watching the rocking horizon, timing the waves. Cold, but not going home. Somewhere, I have already begun. Waiting for a fellow sea soul. Another - like me - in need of an open water skirmish today.

Even as she arrives, I doubt our chances. But here we are, getting changed. The wind whipping our words away before they're spoken.

Half-undressed on the slipway, a wave surprises us, white embers of froth firing up the ramp towards our jumping feet.

Squawking back at the gulls, we hustle bags, boots and towels to safety. Then, flesh to the air, no time to spare. Hats on, goggles strapped, standing at the edge.

An entry point. More waiting. Colder now, but anticipating relief.

As a big wave passes through, we whisk ourselves in before the next.

Nothing to feel but the cold. Seaweed and murk. Getting nowhere. Gulping salt on the turn. But pushing arms through water all the same.

And feeling strong. Brave. Free. A trail of tiny bubbles and thoughts no longer held so tightly popping behind us in the swell.

We are here now, in the movement and the life of it. Rolled by the sea into presence and acceptance. Alert to the sounds above the water, and the sounds below - a softer, deeper foreshadowing of the clatter of pebbles as another wave rolls in.

Grinning at each other now. A hint of sun on the horizon, its colour tinting the tips of waves. Just a little wash of gold. Enough hope.

It's a short swim.

Barely a swim.

But we made it in. And we never regret it.

Getting out. More well-timed whisking than a soft-poached egg. Duck-diving the big ones and letting the suck of the sea hold us in awe for a little longer. Until the moment comes when we can use the wave to urge us towards shore, dancing an unsteady reel between tide and keeling pebbles.

And here we are on steady ground. Elated.

Bending to pick up fishing line and plastic. Red skin thrilling, circulation singing. Numb feet padding to the jostled bags with the towels on top. Still in my swim caps and goggles, I pull on my bra, and all the jumpers and the dress at once. Coat scarf hat. The bottom and the boots.

I drop the flask that I always struggle open. Wiping the lid, wiping my hands, trying again. There it comes, there it comes... the sweetest steam.

Who knew that the sound of the sea and hot tea  
poured into a dented cup would become one of  
life's greatest pleasures?

Looking back at the sea, drinking our tea.

Reminding ourselves that we were there.

And if we were there, we can go anywhere.

We have already begun.





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february

## Our February focus

This month we're exploring the power of the mindful pause.


You might pause to reflect and consider; to rest and recover; to think before speaking or acting; or as a way to 'be' instead of 'do'.

The pause is where we nurture and replenish. Where we discover what we want and what we need.

In the pause, we can listen. We can make conscious choices. We can understand ourselves more fully - supporting us to better understand others.

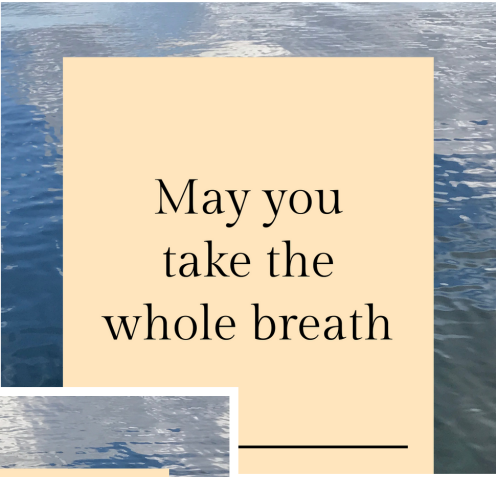
Modern life often makes it hard for us to pause - or to give our full attention to one thing. Yet pausing - even for a single breath - is a powerful way of being kinder to ourselves.

May you find yourself in the pause. And there, gather insight, strength and compassion with which to progress.




May you  
have time to  
consider

SEA SOUL BLESSINGS



May you  
take the  
whole breath



May you  
know the pause  
as progress

SEA SOUL BLESSINGS



## may you pause

Each visit to the sea opens space for respite and contemplation.

A chance to be present in the pause.

A movement away from overwhelm towards peace.

A wash of stillness to guide your movement forward.

May you find the quiet moment.

May you take all the breaths you need.

May you have time to consider.

May you know the pause as progress.

## What are you receiving in February?

If you're signed up for postal goodies, this month's package contains our first postcard print: may you pause.

Your postcard print might be a first treasure to store in your keepsake tin - or you could display it to create a soothing space in your home.

Taking a moment to connect to the image and words on the cards is a simple way to connect to the sea - and to pause.

You're receiving a new chapter of your Sea Soul Journal containing a monthly check in, and a section focusing on this month's card, may you pause.

The monthly check in offers you space to reflect on the last month. And encourages you to explore your connection with your guiding card for the year - along with any monthly cards you might have chosen.

The may you pause section contains journal prompts to deepen your exploration of our shared theme. This month, I've also included two short mindful practices you might like to explore and reflect on.

As always, there's no right or wrong way to use your journal.

You could print and complete the writing prompts, or use the questions and practices as prompts for your own journaling. You might simply choose a prompt or two to discuss with a friend. Or read one and mull on it as you do the washing up or go about your day.

You'll also find this month's sea meditation video, and an audio version of this.

Take some time out to listen. To be reminded to allow and appreciate the pause - for how this strengthens us, and moves us forward.

As some extra encouragement to make time for a pause, this month's Sea Screen Kit includes five screen-savers for your phone, and one for your computer.

Because sometimes, when we really need a revitalising pause, we turn to our screens for distraction instead.

To gently retrain your brain, let these little images of ocean beauty quietly remind you to take a deep breath, a mindful pause.

... and when your brain stops 'seeing' the screensaver, you can refresh it...

I've also included some pure sea sounds to soothe you. When you're finding it hard to pause in the moment, or to take 10 minutes to listen to the meditation - you might try simply listening to the sound of the sea as you breathe.

Or looking away from your work to watch the sea as a moving meditation for a minute or two. Let the pause wash over you - a reminder that pauses are not still, but fluid.

You can find all of your online treats here.

The password is "And breathe".

The URL is  
[www.seasoulblessings.com/februarys-online-gifts](http://www.seasoulblessings.com/februarys-online-gifts)



part one



## February: your first love letter

How are you?

This month, in a year of sea and kindness, we're exploring the power of a mindful pause.

Pausing to listen to ourselves, to gather strength, to set an intention, and to move towards greater self kindness.

The sea calls us to pause.

To allow our breathing to slow, our mind to settle.

To open to the horizon.

To soak up our surroundings.

To appreciate the beauty of nature, and feel our connection to it all.

While we can't always get to the sea, finding the pauses in our day is a first step towards becoming calmer, kinder and more mindful.

Yet in the midst of our busy lives, pulled in all directions, it isn't always easy to find those pauses - especially if we're far from the sea. And when we try, the pauses we create for ourselves may not be mindful or compassionate.

But a pause is where we start to move closer towards that. It's the first moment of awareness, however short that may be.

It may just be a breath. A moment in which we catch ourselves. One little moment of easing, quieting, breathing into the lull between the waves.

As we create the tiniest of spaces in which to bring our conscious attention, we slowly grow our capacity to move towards presence and kindness.

You might find it easy to pause and step into the immediate moment as you go about your day.

Or you might find it helpful to use external prompts like a postcard print on a desk; a set of Sea Soul Blessings, a message glimpsed on a screen-saver; a journal to hand; or a reminder in a love letter from the sea like this one.

Either way, the more we remember to take those tiny pauses for ourselves, the more our brain understands that pausing is a choice we can make.

...If you like, we could pause together now, just for a moment.

Before reading on, bring your attention to your breath. Notice the rise and fall of your chest, your shoulders, the movement in your body. Get curious about how you experience the whole breath.

You might like to close your eyes, and take three deep breaths - listening to the ways in which your breath echoes the sound of the sea within you.

A breath is one way to give yourself the gift of a pause. But your pause can be whatever connects you to your experience of the present moment.

You could pause to feel the experience of your physical self. Your feet on the floor. Your back and legs against a chair. Your clothes against your skin.

You could pause to name five things in the space around you; to taste the tea you're drinking; to listen to the sounds of nature, or the room you're in.

You could pause to inhale the smell of a flower, to gently stroke your hands for a minute; or to stretch and shake all the tension away.

You could pause to listen to your inner dialogue, or to name what you're feeling and where that's located in your body.

You could pause to think before you speak.

Just like being by the sea, a mindful pause has the power to bring you into the present. To create space in which to gently witness your experience, your shifting emotions, the way you talk to yourself.

It can reset your nervous system when things feel overwhelming, and boost your resilience.

It can clear your mind so that you can step forward more consciously.

Above all, it's a way to calm and connect to ourselves - mind, body and sea soul.

Where might you find the pause today?

In a moment of overwhelm, in the thick of a conversation, or in the quiet, within yourself?

With love from the sea and me,

Pippa

## When it's hard to pause

We've all learnt different lessons about the value - or otherwise - of a pause.

I'll share a story from my own life with you today. A story of how even finding the time to think about pausing can feel impossible.

Fifteen years ago, I was running a media development agency...

I was working with a coach who suggested that I include a five minute pause in my working day. A little break in which to clear my head and reset. To assess my priorities from a calmer stronger place...

Her suggestion seemed utter madness to me. I simply couldn't understand how I could do that.

Every minute of my day was scheduled, my tasks were unending, my list was always growing. I was a monster of efficiency, juggling budgets and writing complex reports, managing multiple needs and partners, shaping the bigger picture and attending to all the details...

I was incredibly stressed, and I couldn't comprehend how giving myself less time for my work could possibly help.

When there was never enough time to do everything on my list - how could I possibly pause for five minutes? Wouldn't I lose the chance to get something else done? Wouldn't everything fall apart if I just stopped doing?

I look back on that now - with compassion for myself, and an understanding of the global, societal, and personal context in which I was operating - and I feel sad.



I can see how my commitment to incessant productivity and impossible standards affected me and all those I worked with.

From where I stand now, I can see that I was unable to be kind to myself then.

I spoke to myself in ways I would never speak to anyone else.

My focus on meeting all the demands made of me, on being seen to be effective, a 'good' person, a 'successful' leader - was total. So much so that I couldn't even offer myself the gift of five minutes to soothe my over-stretched nervous system.

Five minutes to pause and find that quiet place within myself that could offer me kindness and wisdom. Five minutes that, ironically, would have made me more productive...

But so often, the modern paradigm of what constitutes 'success' encourages us all to keep doing.

To use every working hour. To stay active at all times. To only see value in productivity: "Rest is for the weak".

And even in our 'rest' moments, we're distracted by the high speed devices in our pocket, taught that constant updates are the path to happiness.

I suspect that I also resisted because I was terrified by the thought of spending five minutes sat with all the difficult emotions that arose when I wasn't doing, proving myself, or producing something of 'worth'.

Those feelings of shame, inadequacy, anxiety, blame, fear and sadness were all there, waiting to be faced and moved through - and all my "doing" was my way to avoid feeling them.

Feeling overwhelmed and out of time is a natural human response to all of these pressures.

Overwhelm doesn't mean that we're incapable of coping, or of changing the world for the better.

Overwhelm and lack of time is a call to be more mindful. A useful reminder to pause.

To come into the present moment. To focus on our breath, our bodies, and how we are truly feeling.

When I feel overwhelmed or out of time these days, I pause. I hear it as a call from my sea soul.

To let go of unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others, and seek a kinder way to live.

And I try to notice what I really need to strengthen myself.

Not what society tells us we need, but what we instinctively know - a glass of water, a full body stretch, a connection with a loved one, a different pace, or some time connecting with the sea.

The natural world reminds us to stop pushing, and simply be here now.

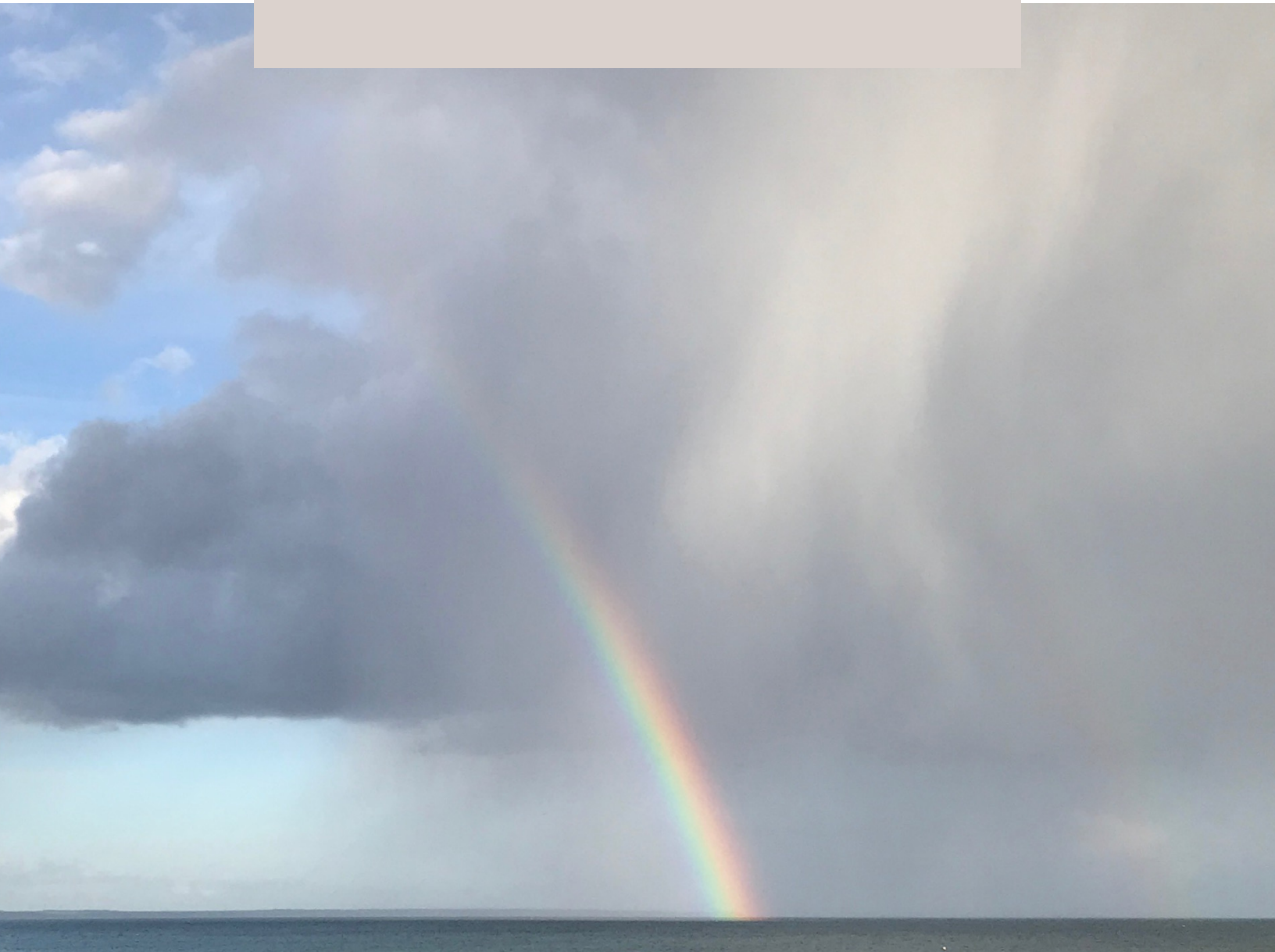
The sea, the sight and sounds of nature have a unique ability to soothe our brains and calm our nervous system.

They remind us that everything is connected - and rather than attempting to do everything, we simply need to do our part as best we can.

Next time you feel the overwhelm rise, or that sense of having no time to tend to yourself, take a breath. If you can, speak kindly to yourself and head outside, away from your devices.

Pause - and attend to your sea soul's call to slow down, listen and start afresh.

## MONTHLY CHECK-IN

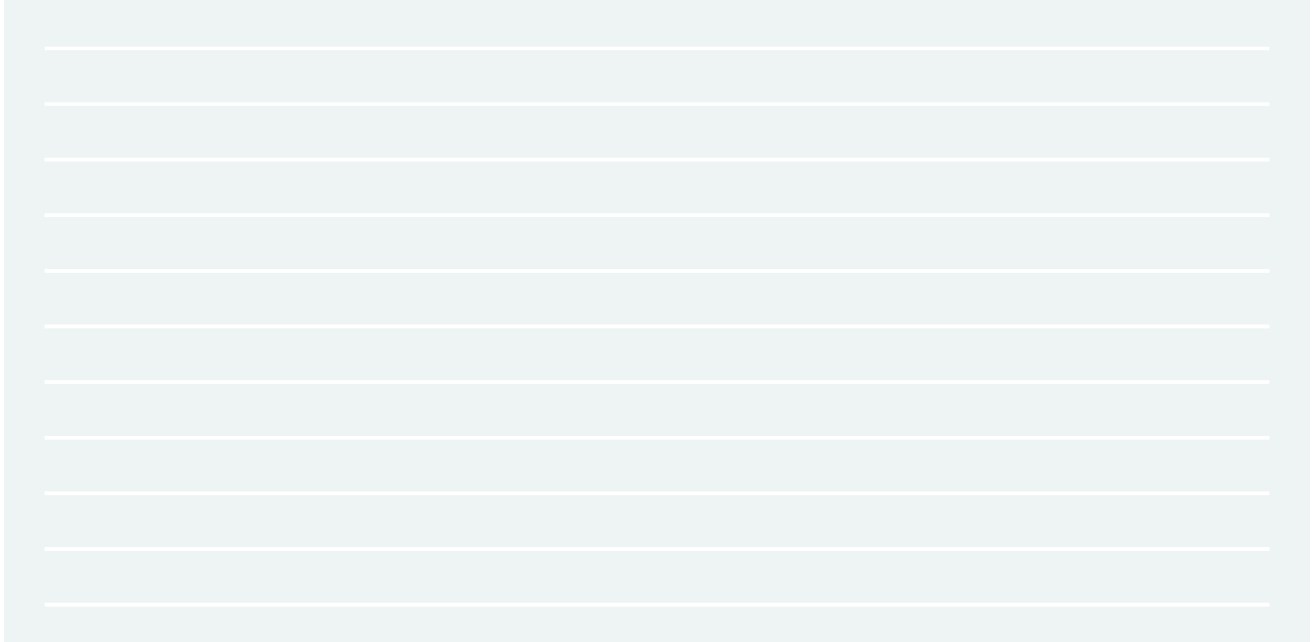


## A SPACE FOR REFLECTION

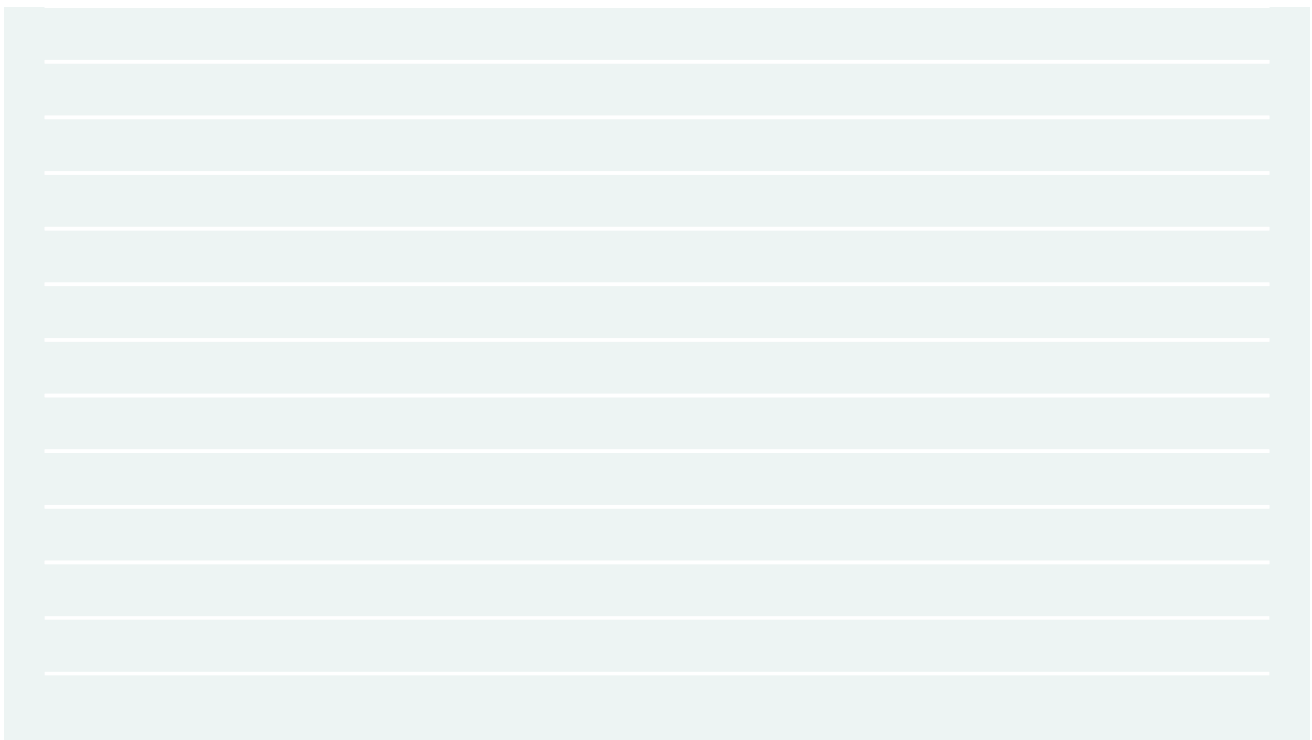
Each month, we'll start by pausing to reflect on last month's experiences. We'll also explore your connection with your guiding card for the year. If you've chosen your own individual monthly card in addition to our shared a year of sea and kindness theme of 'may you pause', you can explore that here too.

## Reflections on last month

Looking back at your experience of 'may you begin' over the last month, what did you learn or discover? What was difficult? What was helpful?



What would you like to release from last month? And what would you like to carry forward or explore more deeply in the next?



## My guiding card for the year

MY GUIDING CARD FOR THE YEAR

Where and how have you been experiencing this quality in your life?

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How might you deepen your connection with this quality this month?

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## My guiding card for this month

If you're choosing your own Sea Soul Blessing card for each month to work with too, you can use this space to explore the card you chose for February.

### MY CARD FOR FEBRUARY

Where and how are you experiencing this quality (or its lack) in your life right now?

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How would you like to explore this quality this month?

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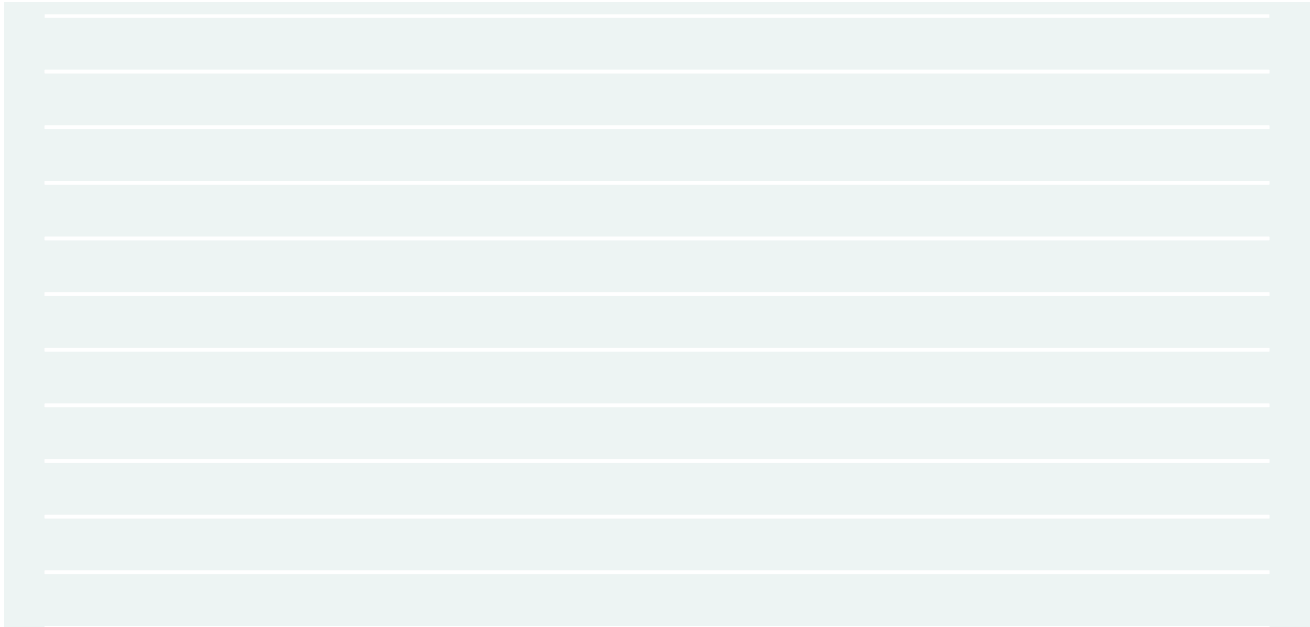
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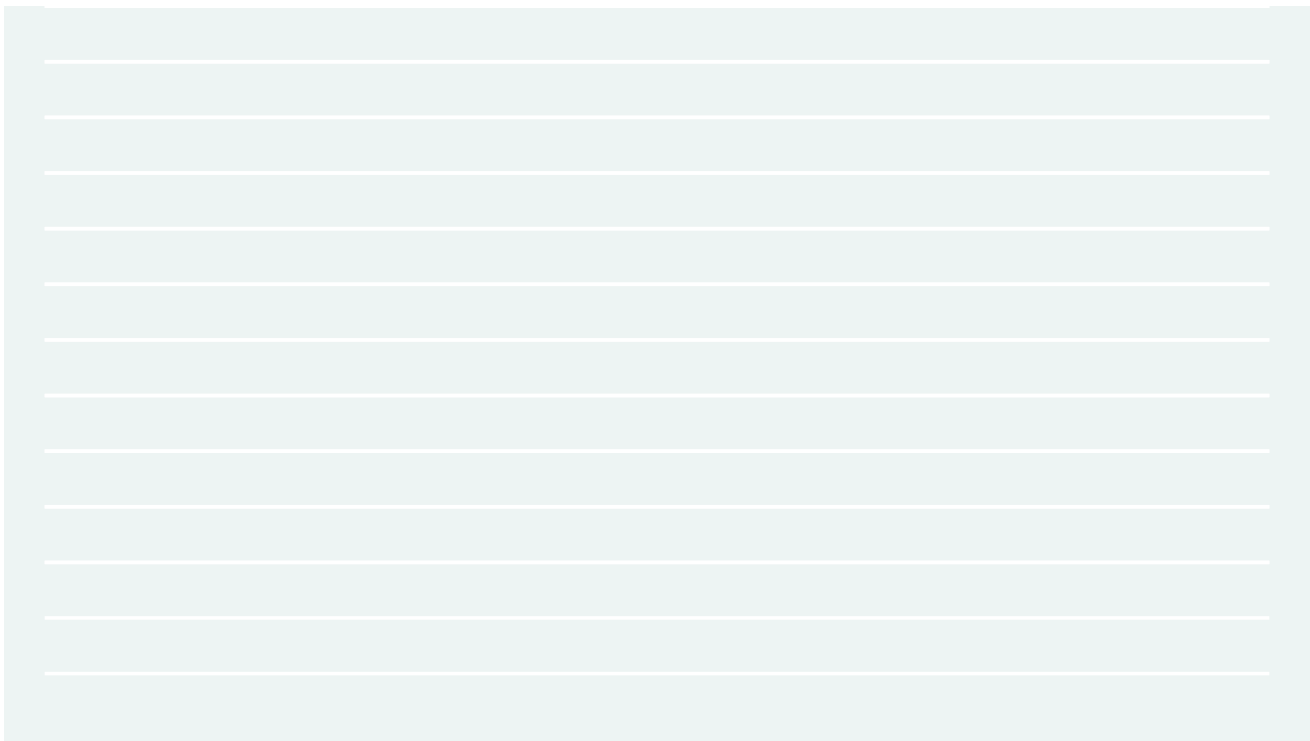


## May you pause and...

How might your guiding card for the year connect to our shared theme of 'may you pause'? e.g If that's lightness, what might you discover by pausing in the light, pausing lightly, or using the pause to find lightness? If it's accept, how might you explore the idea of accepting the pause, or pausing in acceptance?



How might your monthly card connect to our shared theme of "may you pause"?



A photograph of a rainbow arching over the ocean. The sky is filled with large, dark grey clouds, with a patch of blue sky visible on the left. The rainbow is vibrant and spans from the right side of the frame down to the horizon. The ocean is a deep blue-grey color, and a small dark object is visible on the horizon line.

a year of sea  
and kindness

sea soul journal

may you pause

[seasoulblessings.com](http://seasoulblessings.com)



## MY SELF COMPASSION PRACTICE

Take a moment to pause. As you do so, notice what you're feeling. You might like to name emotions as they arise. To witness them as shifting clouds above a vast sea: the ever-changing weather within.

Remind yourself that pausing can be hard. Your struggle connects you to others who find that too. And like them, you need and deserve rest and quiet. You might like to soothe your nervous system with touch: stroking hands or placing one on your heart.

As you stay with the pause, witness your courage and vulnerability. Offer yourself some love and kindness. Breathe.

### Speak kindness

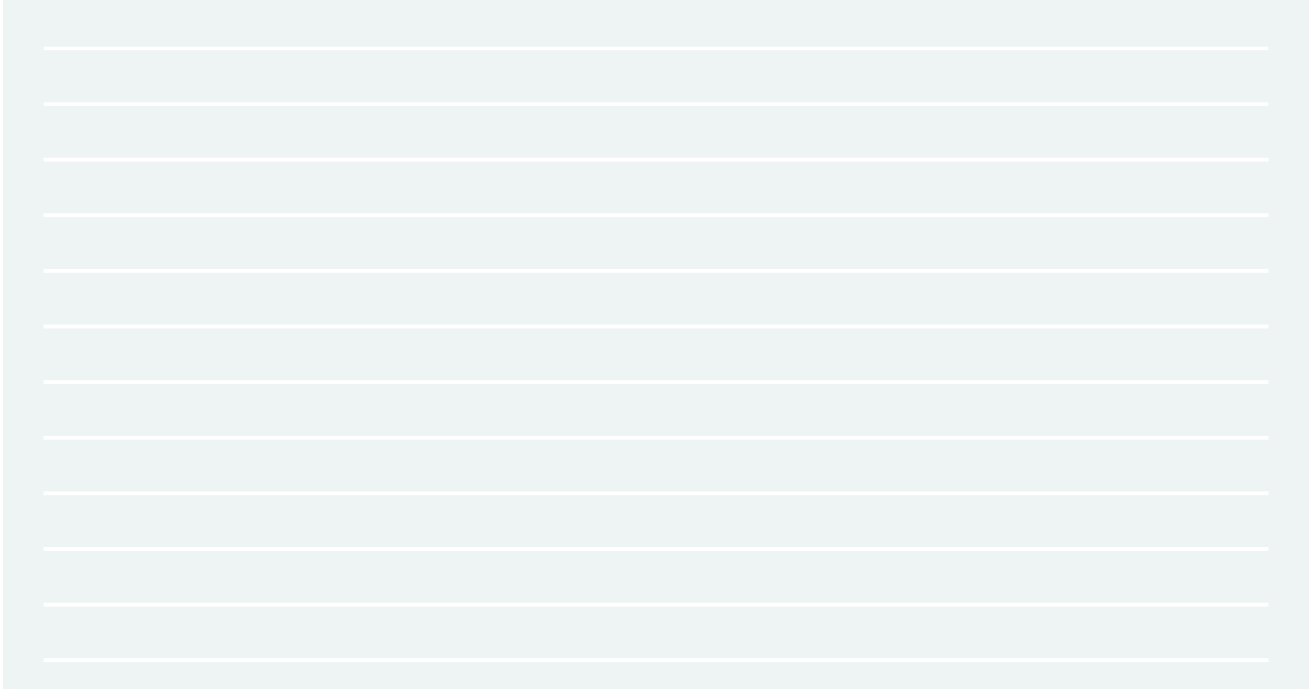
May I offer myself this quiet moment.

May I take all the breaths I need.

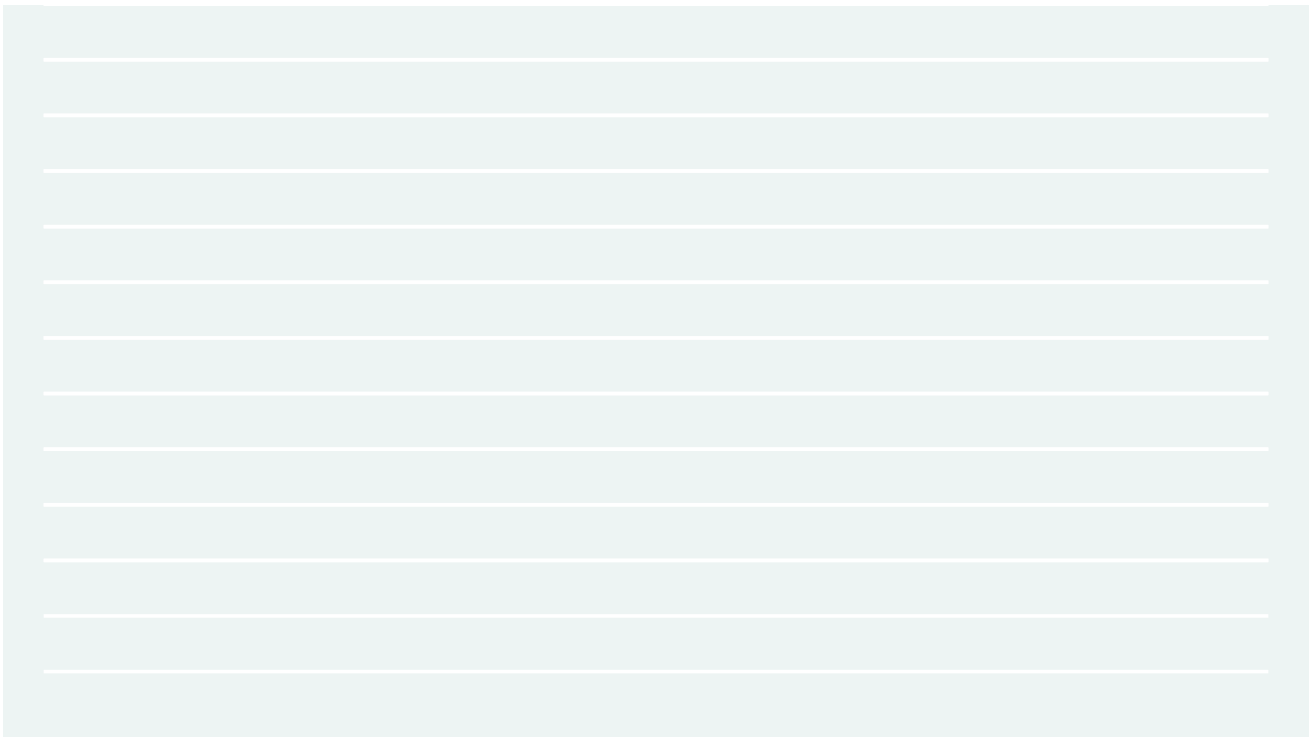
May I know this pause as progress.

## May you pause

As you read the message for "may you pause", notice your reactions. How do you feel? What resonates here, and what's harder to connect with?

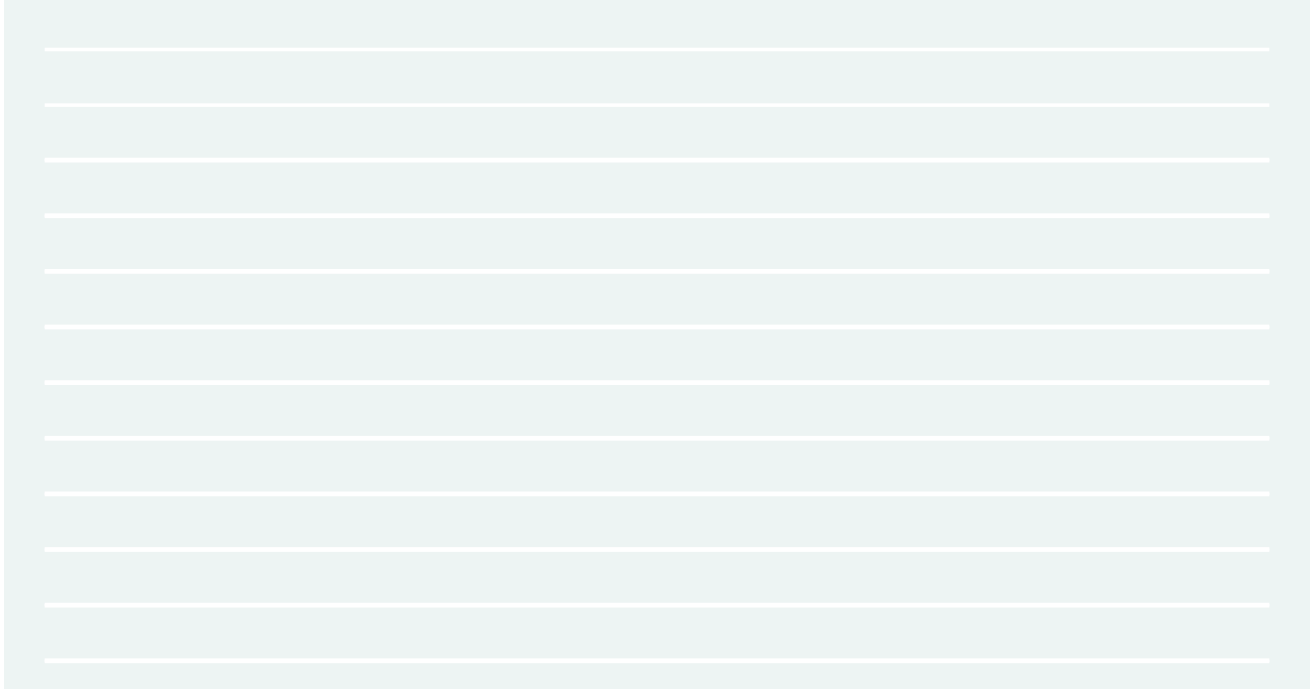
A light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines for writing, intended for the user to record their reactions to the message.

How might embracing this quality influence the month ahead?

A light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines for writing, intended for the user to describe how embracing the quality might influence the month ahead.

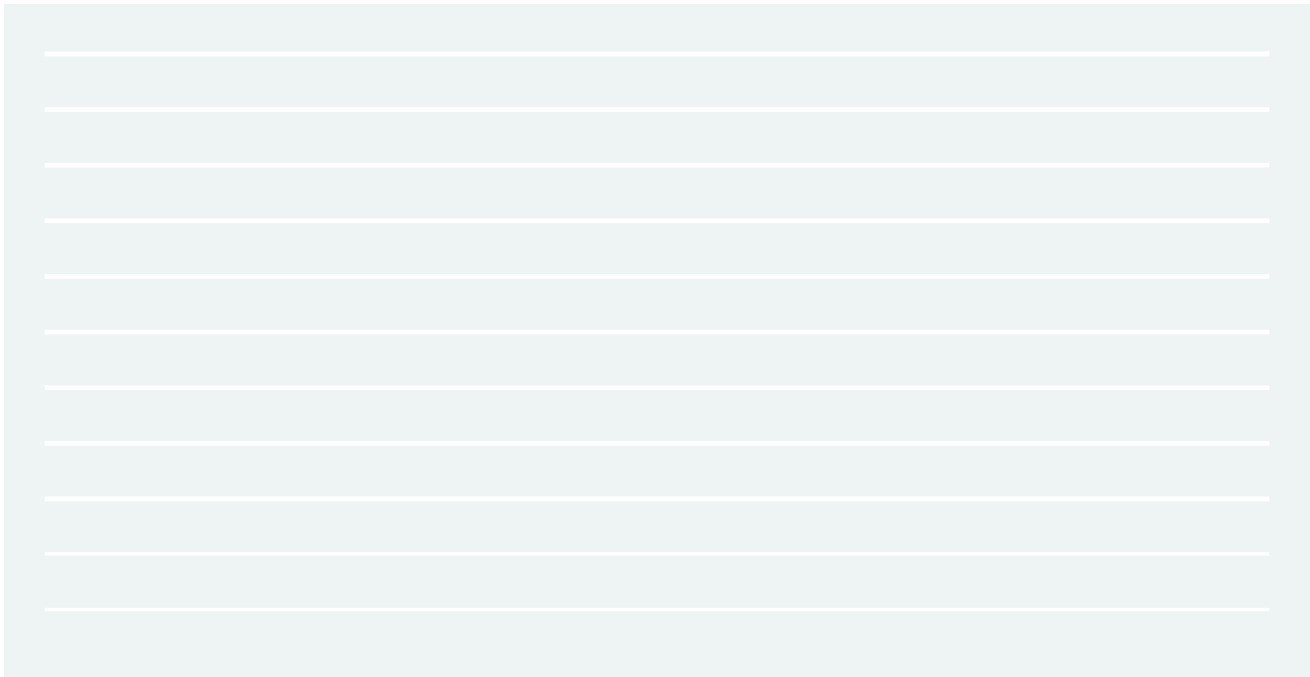
## May you pause

Can you identify a few specific ways in which focusing on this quality might change life for the better? Which would you most like to explore this month?

A light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines for writing, intended for the user to list specific ways focusing on a quality might change life for the better.

What first small step could you take towards this?

What might prevent you taking that step, and how might you overcome that?

A light blue rectangular area with horizontal white lines for writing, intended for the user to describe a first small step and potential obstacles.



## WAYS TO PAUSE

### A SEA PAUSE

The sea is a vast mirror for contemplation. Not silence or stillness but a moving meditation. A reminder of the fluidity of your own presence. A lull in which to gather energy. A call to witness the opportunity for change within each breath. A chance to seek out conscious kindness in every mindful moment.

## Finding the pause

Where will you find your pause today? Maybe it's a moment to think before responding. Or some time to get quiet enough to witness the chatter within. Maybe you'll offer yourself a moment of respite and tender care in the overwhelm. Or pause to find a point of stillness in the midst of a busy day.

Whatever you choose, be gentle with yourself.

Some days, the pause is clearly visible between the constant waves of life. You can feel the planet beneath your feet, look around, assess and appreciate the water, and feel connected to yourself and the wider world.

In these moments, you can witness your experience, listen to your needs, be kind, and become clearer about how you want to step into the next wave.

But sometimes, wave follows wave. Even as we sense the next, it knocks us from our feet, and we're back in the overwhelm.

On those days, the pause can feel far from reach. Yet every wave contains moments of respite. There is no peak without a trough. No wave without a lull.

Sometimes we have to release, and let the water roll us - to experience a pause in motion.

The water is always moving, as are we. Instead of waiting for time to pause, space to pause, a place to pause, or permission to pause - seek out the briefest of instants in which to take a conscious breath.

For as we find and sink into those lulls, we strengthen and nurture ourselves. We bring our mindful attention to what we can change, and allow what we can't to pass us by.

By gently witnessing our experience of the present moment in the pause - our shifting emotions, our physical sensations, the way we talk to ourselves - we boost our resilience. We calm and connect to ourselves - mind, body and sea soul.

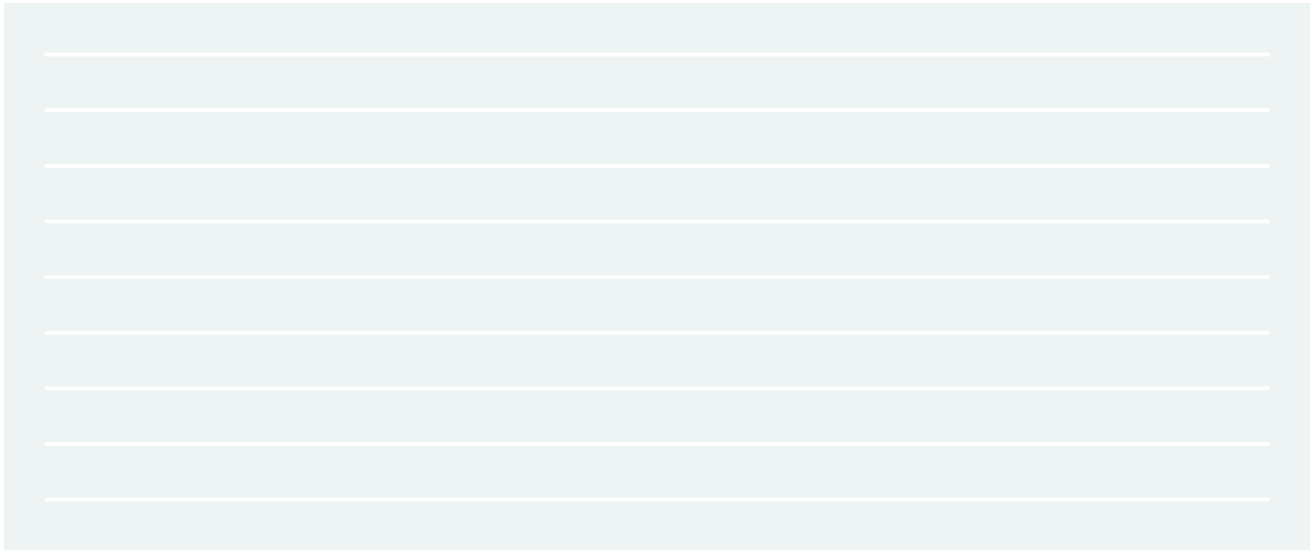
In the lull, we can also create space to choose a focus or intention for when we step out from the pause - into the next wave.

Below is a prompt to complete each day. And in the pages following, two different ways to pause that you could try, and explore in your journal.

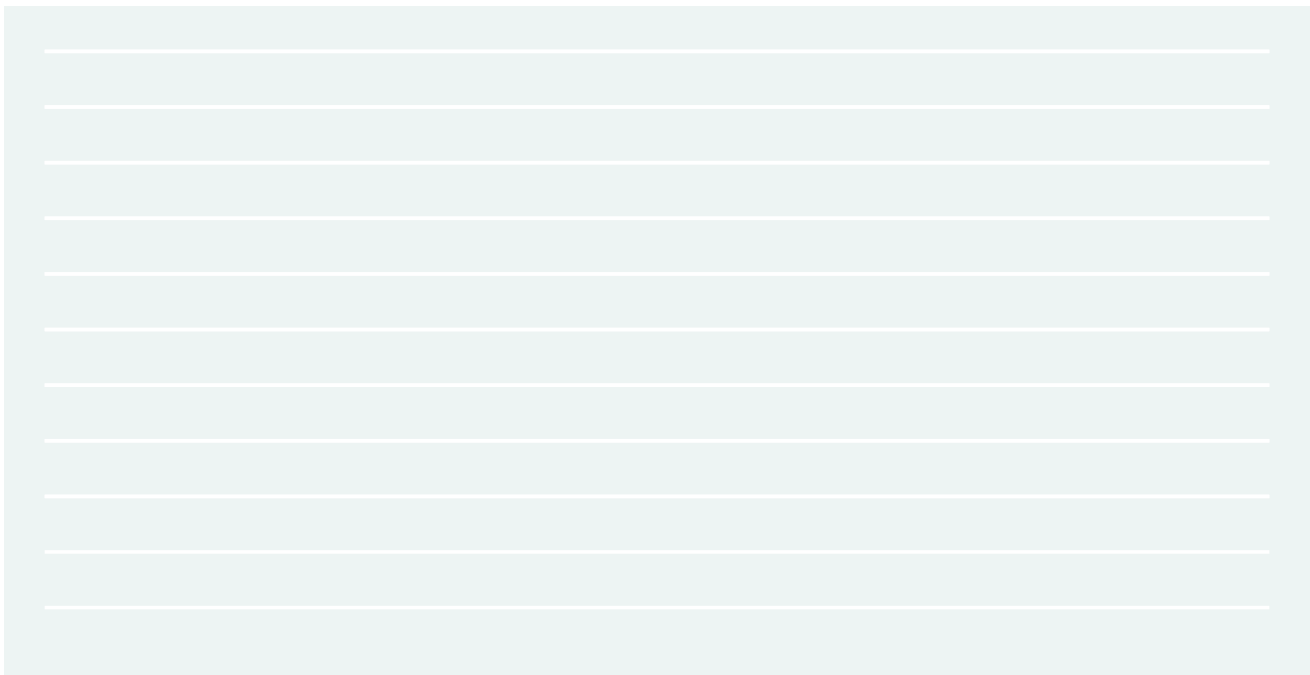
TODAY, I WILL SEE IF I CAN FIND THE PAUSE IN...

## Pausing to listen

Rest for a few minutes and listen to your body. Gently move your attention around your physical self - you might notice sensations, the way you're breathing, anything that changes or that you sense your body needs. You might move. Afterwards, capture a few notes about the experience below.



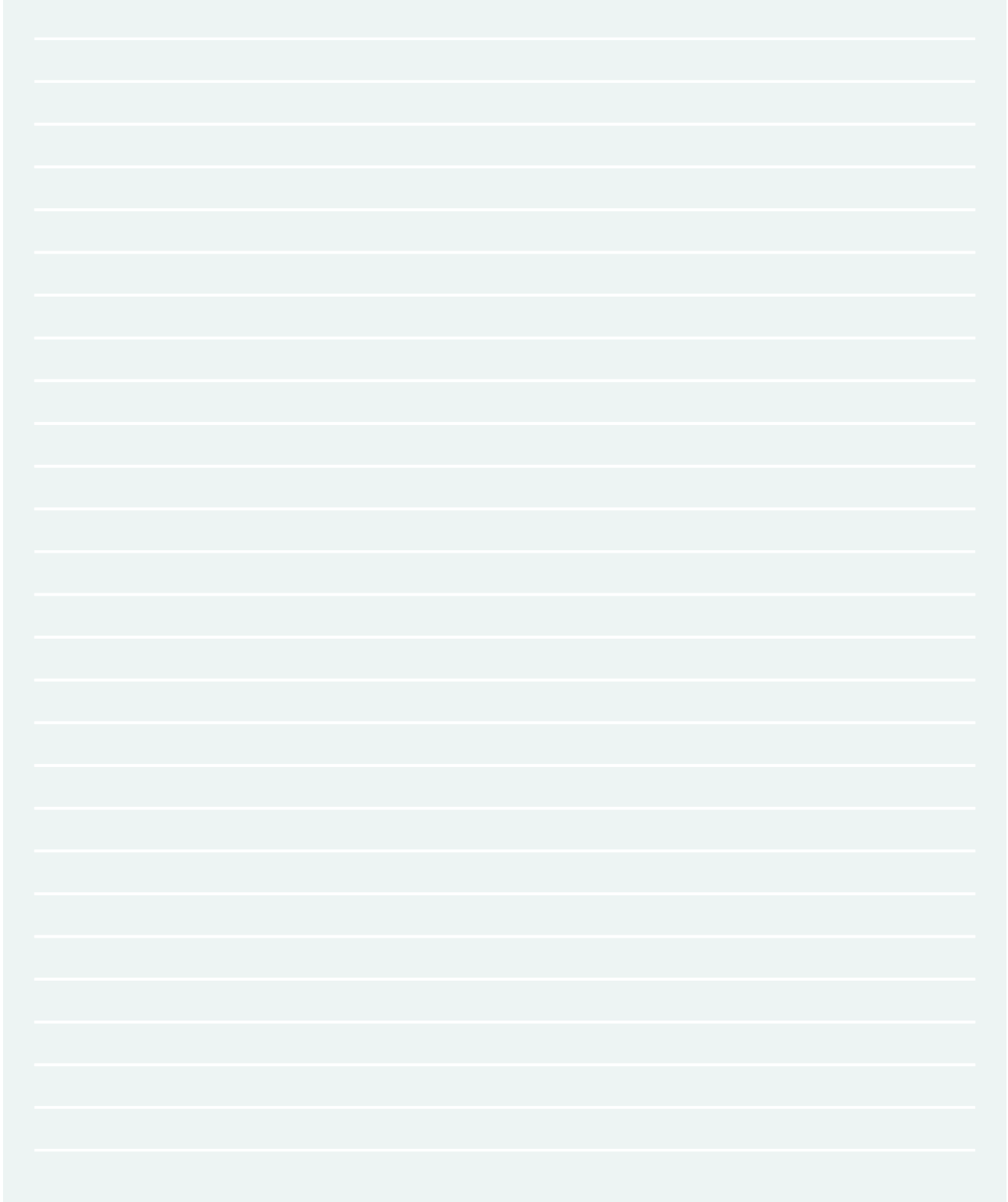
Try the 'free writing' activity on the next page. Then come back here to reflect. What did you hear when you listened to your internal chatter? How did it feel? Did you notice any recurring patterns or themes?





## Free writing

Set a timer for 10 minutes, and write. Don't judge or question. Write everything you hear yourself think - however repetitive, wild or dull - until the timer ends.

A large, light blue rectangular area that serves as a writing space. It contains numerous horizontal white lines, evenly spaced, providing a guide for writing. The lines are consistent in length and spacing throughout the area.



part two

## February: your second love letter

How are you?

What have you discovered while exploring the pause?

Have you found it hard to allow yourself moments of respite? Maybe you've noticed some of your internal chatter around that?

Or have you found it easy to step into that feeling of mindful pause - extending your usual mindful practices for a little longer this month?

Where has pausing led you so far?

In the past, I've found my mindful pauses in a morning swim, a yoga class or writing group. In moments of meditation, journaling and collage. Or when I remember to take a step into self compassion as difficult feelings arise.

...But this past month has been one in which it has been especially hard to find those moments.

Just as we're exploring the pause together, I've been living a month in which pauses have been few and far between.

In recent days, it's taken significant energy to remind myself to pause and recharge; to catch myself in the midst of moments of frustration and anger - and to pause long enough to shift direction.

It has been harder to call myself away to stop and reflect. Or to simply allow an experience to be what it is right now - without criticising myself (for not having enough mindful pauses in a month of mindful pausing for example...!)

It has been harder to just get up and out, and head to the sea.

How about you?

While I haven't always succeeded, this month's focus has helped me to grasp more of these moments in a difficult time.

And from talking to friends and clients, I know I'm not alone in finding it difficult. This particular period of lockdown here in the UK seems to be hitting many hard.

Maybe that's the miserable weather and limited daylight - it's harder to get outside and connect to nature.

Maybe it's the sheer mental and physical overwhelm of almost a year of pandemic living - along with the many other challenges currently faced by the world.

All of this comes packaged with an implied pressure to "just get on with it". To adjust to a "new normal" after so long here... When the situation in which we find ourselves is anything but normal.

In recent months, our nervous systems have spent much of the time in 'fight or flight' mode. Our bodies are not designed to run for so long on adrenalin, or to live with constant fear and threat.

To work effectively, our brains and internal soothing systems need regular rest; quiet moments in which to feel safe and secure.

Right now, those mindful pauses are particularly important because they bring our parasympathetic nervous system - our 'rest and digest' mode - back online.

And yet the pressures of managing work, school, family, fears and responsibilities can leave us with less time and capacity than ever.

Making it hard to pause and offer our bodies and brains this vital space to heal.

Physiologically, we've also evolved to rely on community - to thrive as part of a group. And yet over the past year, we've been unable to access so many of our more familiar experiences of touch and connection. That sense of isolation takes a toll, both physically and mentally.

So if you're feeling overwhelmed right now - and thoughtful pauses have been hard to find - know that you are not alone.

And be gentle with yourself.

It may be, given all that is going on, that when you finally make time for that mindful pause, it's not a blissful moment of quiet.

Often, we aspire to an imaginary moment of perfect peace, instead of being present with where we are. Having a busy mind is not a failing - nor is finding it hard to pause.

Your pause might be a space in which difficult emotions surface. A light shone on unhelpful thought patterns. A realisation that things are not as you wish right now.

While these responses may be difficult, they're also valuable.

Because it's only by being in this space of pause that we can witness ourselves, notice what we're finding hard, begin to explore why - and move towards compassion.

When you're carrying so much, a single pause is unlikely to ease all the overwhelm. But every attempt that you make to bring your awareness to the present moment exercises the internal "muscles" that will allow you to do that more effectively over time.

Our brains, bodies and sea souls haven't evolved to cope with the situation in which we find ourselves. Which means that it's a reasonable physiological reaction to find this experience hard - and to struggle to find those deep pauses.

But each attempt you make is another moment of progress to celebrate, however small and insignificant it may feel on its own.

If you've been finding the pausing hard, I'd encourage you to notice those mindful moments that don't come in the form you expect.

The moment you take to read this email.

The moment when you simply stop, close your eyes and take a breath.

The moment that you bring your conscious awareness to whatever's going on - and notice your feelings about that.

Each pause is different.

Each pause means different things to different people - or even to the same person on a different day.

Sometimes it's just the start of a practice - a single moment in which we reach for the pause. And no less meaningful for that.

If we have a goal this month, it's simply to be with this exploration of the pause, without expectations or judgement - and with kindness towards ourselves.

You are worthy of this pause. Of this opportunity to stop for a while. Of these moments of reflection.

Of this chance to simply be, for a moment or two.

Do reply if you'd like to let me know how you're doing, or if you have any questions or thoughts to share. I'd love to hear from you.

With love from the sea and me,

Pippa



## Let me take you to the sea...

Reading a poem can be a mindful pause in itself.

So in today's love letter, I want to encourage you to read or revisit two of Mary Oliver's poems.

So much of Mary Oliver's work is rooted in this experience of being fully present in the pause - of witnessing the stories of the natural world all around us - and within ourselves.

When she visits the sea, she conjures it up with raw beauty. Her poetry is powerful encouragement to pause and be a witness of the world in which we live - and a compassionate witness of ourselves.

If you like, you could head over to our collection of February's digital treats (the password is "And breathe") and play the sound of the sea as you read.

Either way, I invite you to take a whole generous breath, and to release it fully.

A mindful pause with the sea - within and without you.

To let your shoulders drop, your jaw relax, and your belly be soft.

To let your heart be present here.

Give yourself a moment with Mary Oliver's wisdom.

Do you have a poem that speaks to you - that reminds you to take a mindful pause? About the sea or something else? I'd love to read it if you do.

### Two poems by Mary Oliver

Breakage

The Poet Compares Human Nature To The Ocean From Which We Came

## A story from home - pressing pause

After recording this month's meditation, I lay down on my bed to listen to it.

As the meditation began, my daughter came to join me - and soon after, so did my son.

They're used to me listening to meditations in bed. When they were a little younger, we used to listen to one together every night before bedtime.

We all lay there listening, side by side. And slowly, the meditation worked its magic. There was a bit of wriggling about, some grunting, some giggling... but no fights. Just pausing together.

Ten minutes of reconnecting, of healing touch, calm - and that nervous system rest so needed right now (...especially at home during lockdown, when it's easy for us all to become frustrated with each other...).

When the meditation finished, I opened my eyes to see my daughter still lying there, apparently immobile, but gesturing furiously to her forehead.

Zoned out from the meditation, it took me a while to work out what on earth she was doing. Prompting lots more giggling.

It turned out that I needed to press the 'pause' button on her forehead to restart her...

I know that putting our hand to our forehead can sometimes be a powerful and soothing form of physical touch - a mental reminder to tend to ourselves. So of course I tried it on myself too. It worked.

So next time you're finding it hard to pause, see if you can press your pause button...



may you pause

## ANY QUESTIONS?

A year of sea and kindness is a completely new offering. I'm learning as I go too, and I want you to get all you can from the experience.

If you have any questions, or just want to let me know how you're getting on, feel free to send me an email at [pippa@seasoulblessings.com](mailto:pippa@seasoulblessings.com).

I'll incorporate as many answers to your questions as I can in our second love letter from the sea later this month

If you'd like more personal guidance, you might like to add a Sea Soul Session, or an individual Sea Soul Insight audio recording as an extra.

Every breath is a new beginning. Let's step into 2021 with kindness and the sea in our hearts - and hope on the horizon.