

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

5 Ways to Find Your Purpose

January brings a lot of questions as well as a lot of hope. With each new year we often feel that it marks a new beginning. We typically reflect on the past year, its highs and lows, some of us are sad to see 2025 go, some of us couldn't wait for it to be over. At some point in the first few weeks of January we all take the time to look forward. What will the new year bring? In this issue we will explore 5 ways to help you find your purpose which can help guide your new year.



In This Issue:

5 Ways to Find Your Purpose

PAGE 01

Why January Feels So Hard (And What Your Nervous System Needs Instead)

PAGE 06

Announcements, Updates, This & That

PAGE 08

1) Connect with Your Values

Reflecting on what we truly value isn't something we often do. We just assume that we know. Sometimes our values were chosen for us by our parents, friends, work place or partners that we unconsciously adopted. With the fast pace of today's society and high expectations we can lose sight of what is important to us.

Values are chosen qualities of being and doing. Sometimes they come naturally and sometimes they take a little work. Examples of values can be honesty, work ethic, kindness, being a good friend or parent, being dependable.

It is important not to confuse values with goals. Goals are finite, they can be achieved and come to an end. Values are an ongoing, never ending guide to live life by. You cannot achieve a value, but you can manifest it by acting in accordance.



An Weird, But Effective Way to Discover Your Values

A strange way to identify what you value is to think about how you want to be remembered when you die. Essentially, if you were to write your own obituary what would it say?

As much as this can feel like a morbid exercise, or even a silly one, imagining what you want your life's legacy to be can help in the search for purpose. Looking back on your life as it nears its end can truly be useful in determining what you want to devote your most precious time to. Ask yourself how do you want to be remembered? What do you want to leave behind—tangibly, emotionally, and socially?

2) Turning 'I have to' Into 'I want to'

When we are pursuing goals (like New Years Resolutions) our intentions don't always translate into actions. This comes down to two types of motivation:

1) Want To Motivation- this is intrinsic motivation because the goal is important to us, it's interesting or it fits into our values.

2) Have To Motivation- this involved behaviour we feel like we *should* be doing. This comes when someone else told us we require it or expects it of us or because we feel guilty if we didn't engage in these behaviours.



When we want to we can see the big picture, understanding that small moments will help lead us towards that goal, therefore being less likely to engage with things that can create obstacles for us. For example wanting to live a healthier lifestyle could make us less likely to be interested in cookies, chips and candies that are left out in the staff break room.

However, if we have a 'have to' goal we are more likely to ignore the small steps and tell ourselves we'll make up for it later. We are more short sighted making it easier to give into impulsivity. For example, I have to lose 5 pounds, the cookies, chips and candies on the break room table are looking pretty good and I can burn the calories off at the gym later. Or I'll just have one...

So how do we achieve 'Want To' Motivation? We make the goal fit our lifestyle, values and identity. Instead of slogging your way through each task, reframe it as something small that can get you to the goal your actually interested in. This can make it more pleasurable in the moment. For example, I want to eventually become a veterinarian; doing my math homework is important to accomplish that goal. You can also add things to make the task more pleasurable such as listening to music, doing it outside etc. To approach a task with an intrinsic sense of purpose gives you the best shot at truly, and happily, accomplishing it.

3) The Impact of 30 Seconds or Less

Thirty seconds may seem insignificant, yet it holds more power than we often realize. In just half a minute, we can pause to notice our breath, adjust our posture, send a message we've been avoiding, write down a single thought, or take one small step toward something that matters. The focus isn't on doing everything at once, but on choosing to act within these brief windows of time.



When we approach life in 30-second intervals, tasks feel less overwhelming and more accessible. Small actions begin to stack gently on top of one another, creating momentum without pressure. Over time, this sense of movement helps us feel capable and engaged, which naturally supports a growing sense of purpose. Purpose doesn't always arrive in big revelations — sometimes it's built quietly, 30 seconds at a time.

4) Finding the Moments that Give You Meaning

Finding meaning in a world that highlights negative news and offers no shortage of stress can be difficult. Many people struggle to connect with a deeper sense of meaning.

To find meaning in our lives the first thing we can ask ourselves is what am I doing when I feel like I lose track of time and am totally focused on the task in a positive way? These feelings combined are known as 'flow'. Flow state is a theory developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who researched positive psychology.



Following this feeling give you clues that can help fine-tune what resonates with you most deeply. It can also lead you to uncovering activities that make you feel like you are made to be doing them and in turn developing a sense of purpose.



Not everyone's purpose is tied to an activity; it is not uncommon for someone to believe that the true meaning of their life comes from other people. Sometimes it's both. When you think of others (people, animals, plants) who do you see? These are often the people we love and value who bring purpose to our lives. Love can mean many things to many people, but when you imagine what it means to you, it can often point you in the right direction of your purpose—thinking about the reason that you are on this Earth and the legacy you want to leave behind.

5) Be at Peace with Yourself

Easier said than done. If we had control over our lives, we'd make sure that all our experiences were good ones; but this isn't what happens in life, we don't get to choose. Accepting that life is uncertain and unpredictable and that when we don't always get our way it opens the door to living with equanimity—a calm and balanced state of mind that accepts with grace whatever comes.

To do this one needs an incredible amount of self compassion. It's easier for us to be kind and accepting of other, but we often forget or don't know how to extend this to ourselves. This is an opportunity for us to become curious. When you find yourself being harsh or hard on yourself ask; would I say this to another person?, maybe not, where does this come from for me?, and what do I need right now? These are the first steps to becoming kinder to ourselves and it starts with having a deeper understanding of who we are and why we are like this.

Why January Feels So Hard (And What Your Nervous System Needs Instead)

If you're feeling more on edge than usual in January, you're not imagining it — and you're definitely not alone. January is one of the toughest months for mental health, and a big reason for that is anticipatory anxiety and uncertainty.

Culturally, January is framed as a “fresh start.” But psychologically, anxiety isn't just about stress — it's about the anticipation of stress. January represents an open-ended year that hasn't yet unfolded, filled with decisions, responsibilities, and the possibility of getting things wrong. For anxious minds, that unknown can feel overwhelming. Add to that the unspoken expectation that this is the month we'll suddenly “do better,” and it often creates more dread than motivation.

January compresses the entire future into a single mental snapshot. Questions like *What will this year bring? Will I succeed? Will anything actually change?* can quickly pile up. When there's a gap between how you think you should be behaving and how you actually are, that gap tends to produce distress, self-criticism, and stuckness.



What this narrative ignores is that most people enter January depleted. We're emotionally, socially, and mentally tired from the holidays, financially stretched, and trying to re-orient back into work and routine. Research has shown that high levels of burnout over the festive period are linked to emotional volatility and reduced emotional expression afterward — essentially, our systems are worn down.

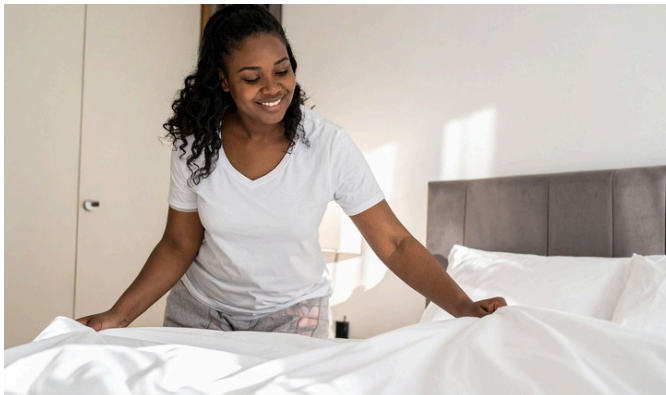
There's also a neurological piece here. Our emotional systems rely on anticipation and reward. After the novelty, connection, and stimulation of the holidays drop off, the brain experiences a kind of emotional crash.

Dopamine and reward circuits are suddenly under-stimulated, leaving many people feeling flat, restless, or anxious. This isn't laziness — it's your nervous system recalibrating.

For many, January can also trigger a quiet identity crisis. When you think, I should be someone who works out more, earns more, feels happier, you're not just planning behaviour change — you're threatening an overhaul of your identity. The tension between who you are and who you think you should be becomes another source of stress and uncertainty.

So what actually helps?

Instead of sweeping resolutions, focus on small, realistic goals that align with who you are right now, not who you think you should be. Choose one behaviour that reflects your values and aim for consistency over perfection. If you fall off, start again — self-compassion is part of sustainable change.



Prioritize gentle self-care. Replenish your emotional reserves in simple ways: sleep in when you can, go for a walk, take a long shower, eat some vegetables. These aren't insignificant — they help regulate your nervous system.

And if possible, ease back into routine gradually. Emotional energy doesn't recharge overnight. Your system needs time to adjust after disruption. Block downtime into your calendar and allow yourself to rest.

January doesn't need to be about reinvention. Sometimes it's just about stabilization — and that's more than enough.

Updates, This & That

Footwear Reminder

A reminder to all clients to change your outdoor shoes to our indoor sandals which can be found in the clinic waiting area. We ask that all clients do this to help reduce the amount of road salt stains and water marks appear on our clinic flooring during the winter months. Thank you for helping us keep our workspace clean!

Client 2025 Pride

If you are proud of something you accomplished in 2025 let Olivia know! She will be posting moments of pride on her door to highlight what incredible clients we have! See the front desk to participate.

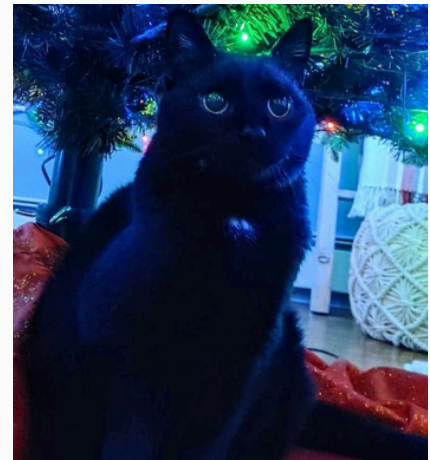
Ongoing Training

Olivia will not be seeing therapy clients from February 10th- 13th. She will be taking part in Internal Family System training which will be ongoing throughout the year.

Pet of the Month

Loomis is our pet of the month. She unfortunately passed in September, but we have been told she was all about Christmas. (Please note her picture is her under a Christmas tree).

Loomis will be missed and never forgotten.



New Service Announcement!

Shivohn is now offering nutrition coaching!

Take your wellness goals to the next level with personalized plans and ongoing support!

