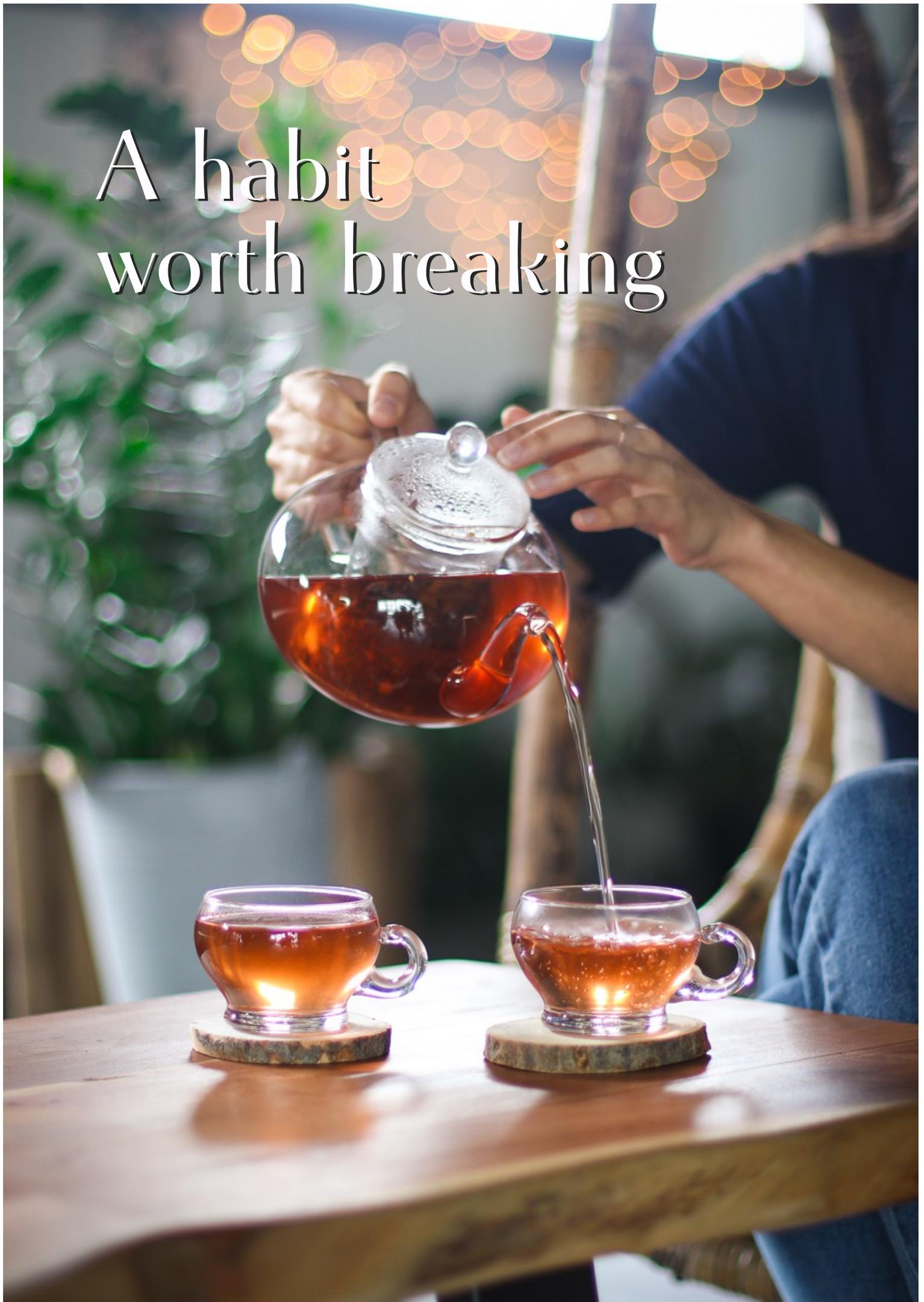# A habit
worth breaking

A habit worth breaking
Overcoming the habit of negative self-talk

The more we practice any habit, the stronger it becomes. Negative self-talk is a habit that can develop over time, in turn damaging our self-esteem. Wherever possible, we want to become aware of our internal dialogue. It is possible to "unlearn" habits that don't serve us. Even the smallest shift in our choice of words can make a big difference in how we feel and can help to gradually overcome the habit of negative self-talk. This resource presents two small exercises to help us create this awareness and promote positive self-talk.

Exercise 1: Check, Shift, Celebrate

Try to catch yourself when you are talking to yourself in a negative way. Whenever you manage to do so, try to answer the following questions.

Check your tone

1. What prompted the self-conversation?
   (e.g. I forgot to buy bananas at the grocery store.)

   _____

   _____

2. What was the tone you took with yourself?
   (e.g. I was calling myself an idiot for forgetting it.)

   _____

   _____

Shift our wording

3. If you were addressing your friend or partner in the same way, would that be acceptable?
   (e.g. No, it is completely normal to forget something.)

   _____

   _____

4. If not, how would you change your wording?
   (e.g. Hey, I noticed you forgot to get us bananas, but no sweat, we have plenty of other fruits at home.)

   _____

   _____

Celebrate the small things

5. Think of a way to start this conversation with some positive feedback and sprinkle in a bit of praise.
   (e.g. Hey, thank you so much for getting groceries, I love all the delicious foods you brought home!)

   _____

   _____

"Talk to yourself like you would talk to someone you love." ~Brené Brown

Being your own bestie is the best company you can have!

Exercise 2: Make it specific

1. Write down one limiting belief that you have about yourself.
   (e.g. I'm a terrible person.)

   _____

   _____

2. Make this more specific: in what area of your life specifically do you feel this way?
   (*e.g. I feel terrible for how I've treated my mum.)*

   _____

   _____

3. Now also give it a time frame. How long have you been feeling this way for?
   (*e.g. I spoke really harshly on the phone with my mum yesterday.)*

   _____

   _____

4. Compare your statement from number 1 to your updated statement in number 3. What do you notice?

   _____

   _____

Perhaps you can see how the small shift in how we phrase what we feel can make it come across less as severe and harsh. We might begin to realize that blanket statements do not serve us. While it is true that a particular thing can make us feel unhappy, stressed, overwhelmed, or negative, it often doesn't serve us to generalize these feelings. Generalizing feelings such as "I'm not worthy" or "I'm not loveable" or "I'm lazy" can go on to negatively impact other areas of our life, when in reality, it might be only one (or few) thing(s) that are making us feel this way. When we more clearly identify the source of what it is that makes us feel this way, we can do something about it. Either by taking action or by acknowledging it's simply not as bad as we made it out to be. In this way, we can start to shift our internal dialogue into one that's more constructive.

"It's not what we say out loud that really determines our lives, it's what we whisper to ourselves that has the most power." ~Robert Kiyosaki