

GROW

GROW IN IRELAND

Grow Eastern Region News



Cocooned

Nelson Mandela's 27 years in prison were marked by terrible hardship, freezing nights, suffocating summer days, poor food and back breaking labour. He slept on a thin mat on a stone floor for most of his time behind bars in a cell about 19 x 16 feet. For many years, his wife was allowed to visit only rarely and his children not at all!!

In contrast I've been "cocooned" at home as I'm in the over 70 group with an underlying medical condition. I've followed the guidelines to stay safe during this worldwide CoronaVirus-19 infection. The restrictions have eased so I'm just back from a short walk in a gentle sea breeze. I consider myself fortunate to live in Co. Wicklow ("The Garden of Ireland"). However, I spent most of the last three months in my own back garden!. Two words help me cope-"ACCEPT and ADJUST"- just like Nelson Mandela. I'm putting them into action by strengthening my immune system against the virus with; a good nights sleep, eating healthy food, exercising through gardening, relaxing, laughter, with a sprinkle of spirituality. That's what "Aim for balanced living" [p59 BB] means for me right now. On a positive note, over 90% of infected persons recover..Plus, scientists worldwide are racing for a vaccine. There is Hope for us yet.

George

The Man And The Seagulls

A story of love, desire and the futility of chasing happiness.

There was a man living by the seashore who loved seagulls. Every morning he went down to the beach, and the seagulls flew down to him from their nests in the cliffs. They gathered round him, shrieking at the tops of their voices; and he too shrieked with pleasure. He danced across the beach, and they danced with him.

One day his father said to him: 'I too would like to dance with seagulls. Tomorrow morning you must catch some seagulls, and bring them to me.' The man was very sad; he believed seagulls should be free, so he hated the idea of catching any of them. Nonetheless he had a duty to obey his father.

So next morning he went to the beach, with the intention of catching some seagulls, and taking them to his Father. But none of the seagulls flew down; they remained firmly in their nests.

The supreme good is like water,
 Which nourishes all things without trying to.
 It is content with the low places that people disdain.
 Thus it is like the Tao.

In dwelling, live close to the ground.
 In thinking, keep to the simple.
 In conflict, be fair and generous.
 In governing, don't try to control.
 In work, do what you enjoy.
 In family life, be completely present.

When you are content to be simply yourself
 And don't compare or compete,
 Everyone will respect you.

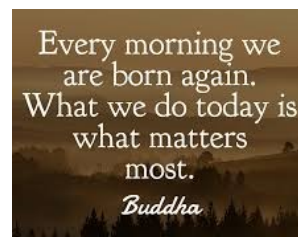
*Verse 8 Tao Te Ching
 Lao Tzu*

Eastern Regional Team News

- Zoom meetings, though a poor substitute for face to face meetings, have proved popular as a support amongst GROWers. There is still no confirmation for dates of reopening face to face meetings. As we get information we will pass it on at the various zoom meetings.
- The two zoom socials, a music night and a quiz night, were very successful.
- Thanks to Clodagh, Izabela and John for all their hard work in keeping the GROW programme going during these unprecedented times.
- Best of luck to Eunan Whyte in your future endeavours. Who was the Communications Officer with GROW. Thank you for all your great work with us in GROW.
- There has been on going work on the rebranding of GROW. Were some of the regional team are involved in this committee. We look forward to the new branding and the new Blue Book.
- A grant was precured by the management of GROW from the HSE for tablets and phones to help those who do not have devices to join zoom GROW meetings. For further information contact your Area Coordinator.
- There has been a shortfall of fundraising due to Covid-19 and with the secret bags not been collected.
- The regional weekend away will not happen this year due to Covid-19. However there is talk of organising a one day event. Possible BBQ, walk and Music. We will pass on details when confirmed.
- Because of Covid-19 and no on site groups there has been no way of safely distributing the Eastern Regional Newsletter. It has been decided to print 150 copies of the summer newsletter to be distributed to hospitals and an enclosed group who cannot access the Zoom platform. There will also be an online e version and the link will be available through your area coordinator.
- Wayne, Growers and supporters have virtually walked the distance through both the America's and continue walking through Africa. It started in 2019 to celebrate 50 years of GROW in Ireland when we virtually walked the distance from Australia to Ireland. At present thanks to "the walking App" Wayne is able to design our walk through Africa. If anyone would like to join the virtual walk please contact the Area Coordinator Izabela. Every little step counts...

O&R Meetings

Tuesday, 25th August, O&R with John and Izabela at 6.30pm. By Zoom. Please let your Area Coordinator know which representative of your group will be in attendance.



“ Having an aim is the key to achieving your best.” *Henry J. Kaiser*

A Journey in Space

Space calms. Have you ever experienced the vast peace on a mountain top or the calming quality of a Japanese painting with its use of empty space. Space offers no resistance, it is still and eternal.

- Sitting or standing, allow your body to become still. Give yourself full permission to achieve nothing for the next couple of minutes. Bring your awareness to this process of stopping. Take a few breaths, then allow your breath to be free. Relax.
- Notice the space in your surroundings. Usually we notice the things that take up space. In a room, we tend to see only the contents: objects, people, walls. To notice space means to become aware of the gaps between objects. Allow your attention to find these gaps—the emptiness of your surroundings.

My way of looking after my mental health during Covid-19.

I started doing art in the community centre that I go to. So I got acrylic paints and brushes. So I am trying to paint at home. I love doing acrylic painting. As you see I did a painting using the acrylic paint. My art tutor taught me. I find it very relaxing and also helps my anxiety. I lose myself when I start painting. It is the best thing I ever started.

Mary Knocklyon Group



Space is always present, yet it rarely attracts the attention. It exists around, and within, your body. If you are in a room right now, consider how it too exists in a wider space. Space is not just part of your environment. Space is what contains your environment.

Space is peaceful in a way that objects—animate or inanimate—often are not, since these tend to arouse reactions within us. By nature it does not get in your way. When you move, it moves with you. It is always there.

Inspired by the teachings

Of the Buddhist Monk Ajahn Sumedho

The book of blessings

“This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.”

John O'Donohue

“ My happiness comes from within and is not from external factors /persons.”

Step 7 - We took care and control of our bodies

From a logical standpoint Step 7 makes perfect sense. For the most part, our bodies work very well- it's complexity hidden under our inattention. We can take for granted this well oiled machine, unless and until a spanner gets thrown into the works. It is often then and only then that we become aware of what goes on behind the scenes. Maybe physical illness will remind us that the vessel we live in deserves more respect than we have given it up to now.

For many of us battling mental illness, the war resides in our minds. Our body is the poor relation, the Cinderella who never gets taken to the ball. Our concentration is focused on our anxiety, our despair, on whatever form our mental illness takes. We can forget that we are more than our minds, and our bodies can suffer as a result. Mental pain may cause us to take refuge in drugs, alcohol, or comfort eating.

Being Ordinary

I can be ordinary. I can do whatever ordinary good people do and avoid whatever ordinary good people avoid. My special abilities will develop in harmony only if my foremost aim is to be a good ordinary human being.

"Sometimes I worry you'll all realise I'm ordinary." Said the boy.

"Love doesn't need you to be extraordinary." Said the mole.

When we were youths the last thing we wanted is to be ordinary. We wanted to be Rock Stars, if not famous then successful or popular. We wanted to be the hero or heroine. To save the day. Ordinary life can be boring and routine. And for those of us that have experienced psychosis, delusions can bring on colourful notions of ourselves and of our life. Very unordinary. Delusions of self grandeur. That the Government is tracking our every move or that we are the chosen one to save the world. These beliefs can be very hard to shift. They are very real for the person. It is hard to have the humble admission that I could be mistaken. It feels like giving up a big part of your identity.

It's instant gratification, but the price can be immense and far reaching.

Step 7 is a reminder that we are the caretakers, the custodians, the only inhabitants of the most important real estate we will ever own. It is therefore our responsibility to treat our bodies with respect, to make decisions that will properly maintain and nourish them. In practising Self Care, we give ourselves the love we denied ourselves in the past. In taking care and control of our bodies, we advance further along the path of personal growth and recovery.

Maria

But you can still be successful and authentic and loved while being ordinary. If your foremost aim is to be a good ordinary human being. That grounds. To be human is to be humble. We all can be fearful, vulnerable and we all can get it wrong, a lot. At times we need the help of our fellows and at times they will need our help too. Sometimes we can lead the way. But the next day we need the guiding light of another. Sometimes we fall and are grateful for the lifting hand of a friend.

And if you are successful just remember that is ordinary too, so are many others. Just remember all the help you got along the way. In gratitude you can give back and help others.

The fortunes of life are fickle. One day you are a big shot and the next you are just one of the small fry. But certain things are lasting. Love, Friendship and wisdom among many other ordinary virtues.

Jonathan

"Never be a prisoner of your pass. It was just a lesson, not a life sentence."

Change your thinking and improve your mental health

Many different types of influences can affect your thoughts. These can include:

Financial situation

Relationships

Job stress

Physical circumstances

What's going on in the world

News

Trauma

Early life experiences

Positive experiences

Experiencing any of these can lead you to feel down or depressed. As a result, we can neglect to do things that make us feel better. We may not eat properly, sleep well, exercise or even see friends or family. Not doing these things makes us feel worse, and a downward cycle can begin.

We can't always control our environment, but we can control our thoughts and how we react to our environment. It may seem like you have no control over your thoughts. But that is not true. You have a lot more control than you would imagine.

There are 3 kinds of thoughts:

Automatic thoughts: we are constantly thinking about things, all day long. These are automatic thoughts. There is no basic problem with these thoughts unless they are almost always negative.

Assumptions: are rules we live by. They involve conditional statements or demand statements. For example: "People should be nice to each other", 'I should be perfect.' They are restrictive and not always true.

Core beliefs: These are strong, absolute statements we make, that we take as fact. They include: I am ...

Others are ... the world is ...

If our core beliefs are very negative and unbalanced they can contribute to having more frequent negative thoughts.

Ways of thinking that contribute to negative emotions

Here are the different ways of thinking that can make us feel negative about ourselves:

Demands: 'I have to do that...' or 'I should have done that...' or 'They should or shouldn't do that...'

Catastrophising: thinking things are going to turn out in the worst possible way.

Self-downing: 'I'm such a loser...'

Low frustration tolerance: 'I can't bear this...'

Black and white thinking: things are either exclusively good or bad and nothing in between.

These ways of thinking are rigid and can have a negative effect on us.

Overcoming rigid thinking

The best way to overcome rigid thinking is to challenge the assumptions and rules you have.

One of the best ways is asking yourself these three questions about what you're thinking.

1. Does it make sense?

2. Is it helpful?

3. Is it true?

These 3 questions can help you to examine the thoughts you are having. They can help you to see that you could be thinking in a different way. It could be a way that benefits you, rather than hurts you, or makes you feel bad.

Changing your negative thoughts

Depending on the type of negative thoughts you are having, there is a specific way to turn them around.

The first and most important steps are:

To have an awareness that you are having a lot of negative thoughts

To spot them when they happen

Demands

Relabelling a demand as a desire - from 'I have to do this' to 'it would be good for me to try to do this' - can help. It may help us to feel less angry, hurt or resentful when things don't go the way we want them to do.

Catastrophising

Remember that things rarely turn out as badly as we imagine. Predicting disaster only creates anxiety.

“ Try not to change the world, you will fail. Love the world and the world is changed, changed forever .” *Sri Chinmoy*

This can make us less able to cope if something bad actually does happen. While most things that we catastrophise might be possible, the chances of them happening are actually really low.

Self Downing

Putting yourself down never makes you feel good. Anyone can make a mistake. It doesn't mean you're a bad person.

Low frustration tolerance

Most people can bear most things if it is in their in-

terest to do so. Not liking something is very different from not being able to bear it. There will always be things in life we don't like. Building our tolerance for them is useful. You might not be always able to avoid or change them.

Learn to change your thoughts. It isn't easy but it is definitely doable. With practice, you should find yourself feeling more positive on a daily basis.

HSE

Testimony

Depression is mire. It sucks me in like quicksand.
My body, restricted on all sides, makes moving painful,
Sore and tense.
Despair weighs heavily from the inside out.
Like having no skin, there aren't enough clothes
To heat the chill within.
Bridget.

I came to GROW because of on-going and recurring depression. Having already battled different struggles at various times in my life, I was confused as to why it continued to haunt me. I used to think I wasn't 'sick' enough for a group – that I could beat this on my own. A friend handed me a GROW leaflet and I was immediately impressed by the message:

'You alone can do it, but you can't do it alone.'

This gave me great encouragement knowing I didn't need to struggle in isolation. Through GROW I learned with relief that I could embrace this condition, every day, with rational positive skills. I no longer felt I had to hide it like some deformity, something to be ashamed of or feeling different.

The first reading I was given was PERSONAL VALUE. This has been given to me many times over the years – as my sense of self and personal value are always the first to go, when faced with difficulties at work and at home. BEDROCK is extremely helpful as I am comforted by the fact that:

'No matter what has happened.....

It is one of those things that can and do happen
to (other) human beings.'

Before GROW, my socialising was a bit acted and forced. Now, with the help of 12 STEP, I can be honest – with genuine honest friends. I'm accepted for who I am and I can be well or unwell, without pressure. Over the years in GROW I have been Recorder once and Organiser twice. I've developed leadership skills which have been encouraged.

In the past, thinking I had to fight and beat depression like it was some terrible bad habit, only led to hopelessness and self-criticism. Now I practice self-compassion for my condition, which I realise is intrinsically linked to my quiet, reflective nature. Members have been helped and inspired by my insights and giving back to the group is fundamentally rewarding.

My name is Bridget and this is my testimony.

"Happiness is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable or happy. The amount of work is the same."

Strange Times

“Strange Times”... So many mails and articles and even verbal greetings start or end with these two words.

A huge amount of people who heretofore never saw themselves as having anxiety problems are now being wound tight as a wrung dishcloth by it.

So many huge stressors are stalking among us – domestic confinement, loss of income, fear of the immediate future. And for many a fear of other human beings. Imagine. A fear of every one. Of every surface. Of even the air.

Each us can double or treble the items on the above stressor list that afflict us, or our families, or our communities.

It feels as if masses and masses of people have suddenly tuned in to a radio frequency I’ve been hearing for the majority of my life.

It’s called *Radio Catastrophe*. *Its broadcasts are always aimed specifically at me. Explaining how dreadful things are and relentlessly telling me how useless / failing / unworthy I am.*

And the guy giving the broadcast is always me. It’s always my voice. Yep, the show today, all day, is “*Melt De Head with Mental Ted*”.

Most or all of us in GROW are familiar with this. Most or all people in society are too. But heretofore maybe they didn’t tune in so often, or at this super-loud volume.

The Kind Noble and the Charlatans

A pauper was walking along the road, dejected and sad. It had been years since his wife had smiled. G-d had blessed them with a houseful of girls, beautiful, wise and resourceful—each one a gem. From the moment his eldest had come of age, matchmakers began knocking on their door with suggestions of fine young men, Torah scholars. But alas, when they heard that there was no money for a dowry, they turned away. “Your daughters are wonderful,” they would say, “but how can we expect a young man to join a family that cannot even contribute a few coins toward the wedding celebration and settling the young couple in a new home?”

As a last resort, he set out to beg, hopeful that his fellow Jews—“merciful ones, the children of merciful ones”—would have pity on his family and help him in his time of need. But he was mistaken. It wasn’t that they were stingy or uncaring. It was just that they too were poverty-stricken and had barely enough to support their own families. And those who had more were overextended, fielding requests from far and near for assistance.

Now, on his way home, his mind was on his empty pocket and his wife’s impending disappointment. Barely noticing his surroundings, he leaned against a large tree, massaging his back against its ample trunk. “Hey, you!” he heard. “What are you doing here? Don’t you know that you’re trespassing?” Looking up, he suddenly realized that he had apparently wandered onto the grounds of a grand manor, and that he was face to face with the *poritz*, the feudal lord who had almost unlimited power in his realm.

“Oh, I am so sorry, Your Lordship,” he was quick to say. “I was simply wandering around, feeling so alone and dejected about my sorry state of affairs, and I stopped to comfort my aching back against your tree. Please forgive me for taking that simple pleasure, and I will be on my way.” “Wait a moment,” said the *poritz*, not unkindly. “You look like a man who has suffered in life. Please tell me more. Perhaps I can help you . . .”

“Oh, Your Lordship is too kind,” said the down-and-out man. “I was feeling so alone. I am a father of daughters, and I desperately seek

But today it is blaring across the minds of so many people. Ruining their sleep, slicing their nerves, making them more volatile than usual.

In my past, I was unwell enough to need Pieta House. My walk through life has been dogged by Fear and Self Blame as long as I can remember.

This can help me with those who are in great pain now. If I can understand, I can empathise more easily. And I can help: I can say a nice thing, or do a helpful thing, or just smile and say hello (from the appropriate distance...)

Or, most simply, I can help by not adding more logs to the bonfire consuming their psyches.

I can regard this period as The Greatest Catastrophe Ever – or I can see it as a chance to be of use. And if I am of use, I silence the embedded voice in my soul that says, always, “you are useless.”

And if I show compassion to other creatures, in a way I am being compassionate to myself.

If I help others, I help myself.

Ted Knocklyon

means with which to help them get married, but why should you care about a poor old Jew and his problems?” “Dear man,” said the *poritz*, “please take this purse of coins, and marry your daughters in gladness. I am an old man and have all the money I can ever need—it’s the joy of giving that I could use in life. Now go in peace.” Still doubting whether it had all been a dream, the poor man stumbled home. It was not long before word of the miraculous chain of events spread through the village.

“What good fortune,” said one man to another. “Here’s our chance to get rich. Let’s go to that same estate and try our luck.” Making their way to the rambling grounds, they promptly located a well-suited tree and began to rub with vigour.

Sure enough, the master of the realm soon came to question them. “OH, Sire,” they said, “Please have pity! We were feeling so sad, so alone and so hopeless that we decided to lean against your tree for a while, taking advantage of the opportunity to massage our backs.”

“You’re charlatans, both of you,” thundered the lord, who had once been a general and still knew how to bark an order. “Leave at once!”

As they humbly left the garden, one of them summoned up the temerity to question the *poritz*. “How is it,” he queried, “that when our friend was here, you greeted him so kindly, but when we came and told you a similar story, you called our bluff?”

“It’s very simple. When a man is truly alone and he needs to scratch his back, he has no choice but to lean against a tree trunk. But there are two of you. You could have rubbed each other’s backs. That told me that you weren’t really as needy as you made yourselves out to be.”

When relating this parable, chassidim would conclude: As long as one has a friend, no situation is ever hopeless.

“The older you get the more quiet you become. Life humbles you so deeply as you age.”

The Healing Power of Storytelling

What makes us mentally healthy or mentally ill? Is it our habits of thinking, our ability to connect with people, to set and achieve realistic goals etc? Obviously these are the ‘nuts and bolts’ of mental health.

Yet, over the years attending Grow meetings and reading about politics and history, I wonder is there an even bigger factor in our mental health – the stories we tell others about ourselves. We can see in politics how a group of people (even a country) can tell a story of being both ‘victim’ and ‘more important’ than others. Such storytelling leads to never ending conflict.

And then there are (to misquote Bob Marley) ‘Redemption Stories’ – stories of how we have transformed past suffering to discover a sense of wholeness. As we redeem all that is good in us, we connect with all that is good in the world. As we acknowledge our own mistakes and weaknesses we can better handle the mistakes of those around us. Telling our story is both a valuable and vulnerable experience. Are people really listening? Can they understand and empathize with where I’m coming from? There have been times when I’d share my story in a Grow group and feel frustrated that the ideas in my head did not match the words that came from my mouth. If I can’t truly express myself, how could anyone get to know my true self? Other times I might express myself incoherently and a Grow member will give feedback showing that they truly understood. They could listen beyond my rambling words and grasp its essence. Such moments make all my faltering efforts worthwhile.

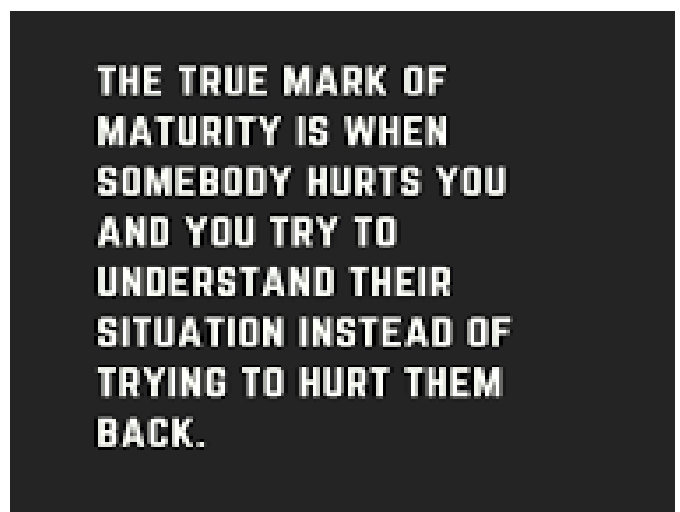
We hope our stories can (in some small way) change the world for the good, yet wonder how? Life can be mysterious. Anne Frank’s diary is a world-famous book. Yet when she was sent to the concentration camps could she have imagined her diary would teach future generations about the dangers of stirring up hatred and how vital it is to recognize our shared humanity?

At a book club recently I re-read Maya Angelou’s ‘*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*’. She writes about losing her voice and becoming mute after being raped as a child. A neighbour encourages her through books and communication to regain her voice and her soul. Maya Angelou’s book is considered one of the best autobiographies of the 20th century. It shows the power of the spoken and written word.

Re-reading the book I saw how at key moments in her life people nurtured her dreams. At Grow we heal our past by nurturing each other to discover our deepest hopes and dreams – ‘our true self is our happy self’. When Grow started in Sydney, Australia in 1957 could those people have imagined that their stories would live on long after they died? If our hopes remain unspoken and hidden inside us they become trapped and shrivel up. Sharing our stories carries many risks, yet over time we can learn the shared art of storytelling.

John

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” – Maya Angelou



“The man that wins is the one who thinks he can.” Bruce Lee

The Difficulty of the Present Moment through an Anchor

When you start to do anchor meditation it is the difficulty in it that brings about the healing. You start to say this does not work, you start to say this is too difficult, this is causing me anxiety, that this is of no use. While your mind is analyzing in this way, in the beginning you are learning to still or control the analyzing part of the mind not the part of the mind that is always pushing up a new thought up into consciousness. When you learn to stop analyzing your thoughts eventually subconscious thought that becomes conscious thought grows less and less, so we need to realize when we have wandered off analyzing. We need to be aware we have gone off labeling and judging.

We have felt the healing anxiety of the present moment. This anxiety is caused by the mind not wanting to focus on its anchor. The mind goes off analyzing, it does not want to be stopped. This causes an anxiety but it is a healing anxiety. We need to keep returning to our point of focus, our anchor. We need discipline, awareness, perseverance, focus, willpower and concentration to do this. By doing this we gently come back to the breath or our point of anchor, whatever it is, this is the nearest we can get to the controlling of the analyzing part of the mind. Not the part always producing thoughts, but that part that is always producing thoughts becomes less and less when you practice with skill. You will create anxiety. If it did not create anxiety, everyone would be doing it. This is difficult but not easy. It

takes practice, practice, practice. Eventually with the practice and skills of awareness and concentration this anxiety grows less and less and with discipline, the anxiety subsides and you are left with a calm, relaxed mind.

As soon as the difficulty or anxiety starts in anchor meditation people stop doing it. They don't want to stop analyzing their thoughts. Because of a difficulty or an anxiety or an uncomfortableness they don't want to stop ruminating because they have to leave their problem mind to create another problem, or an anxiety, but this is a healing anxiety which eventually achieves the slowing down of the mind. Achieving peace and calmness. It takes a different act of will to stop repetitive thinking. It is the line of least resistance that keeps you in a repetitive thinking. Like a magnet you are sucked into your thoughts. Every thought pretends it matters so much. It is the path of least resistance that keeps you in repetitive thinking. When you take deliberate act of will to stop analyzing or ruminating this causes anxiety and difficulty. This is where the mind is healed. Writing about this paper and not practicing it is the same as having no knowledge of it. We need to practice the skills to slowdown the mind and bring peace to our minds through an anxiety that heals us.

Joe Clane

I Will Give Myself Positive Messages

I will befriend myself by ceasing to create my own anxieties. What are those inner voices that constantly stir up pain and fear? Those are left-over, critical voices from my past that told me I was a bad, worthless person. Perhaps the last hold-out to my recovery is facing my shame.

Shame is like a hidden monster in the closet that pops out when I least expect it. The messages that hit right at my core originate in my shamefulness. The journey through shame requires me to turn these inner thoughts outward. I recognise shame when I feel it and substitute these negative voices with positive affirmations.

Today I begin a new phase of my recovery, as I realise that some of the anxiety I feel is self-induced shame. I have the courage to treat myself with kindness and let old wounds heal.

Today I see that I can carefully examine the rules I live

by and that I have the power to change them if I want, to promote my recovery. Am I still living unconsciously by rules that no longer fit me? In my illness there were many rules that were incongruent and unrealistic.

Today I will look at my rules about love, money, friends, decisions and emotions. Which rules are my choices and, which rules have I unconsciously adopted? I have the ability to decide which rules work for me and discard those that do not.

The Affirmation of Good is a perfect passage to help with the above piece. It reminds me that I am indeed, "neither wholly good nor wholly bad". I am learning that I am like all humans, a mixture of good and bad. It is such an important lesson, for it is in the blanket condemnation of myself that I become smothered by depression.

Maria

"Reason is immortal, all else is mortal." *Greek aphorism*

Christian Spirituality helps in the GROW Program and in recovery.

In the Christian tradition, love is generated in relationship to God and one another and in loving myself and this has been the key to my recovery.

This is the summary of my experience of recovery from mental illness over 40 years since 1978:

Being a Christian I believe in God. God is a relationship of 3 persons, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ who lived and walked this earth is the Son of the Father. He came to save us which He accomplished through His life, death and resurrection. Then came the Holy Spirit into our world, the love between the Father and the Son. Love comes from God for God is love. Love sprang forward into humanity and causes each one of us who believe through faith to live in freedom life to the full.

Life to the full includes having meaning and purpose, experiencing joy, appreciating other people – listening, being thankful – particularly for the gift of life itself, seeing the beauty in nature, having dreams and goals and enjoying life. Life involves struggling but the struggles are worthwhile and teach lessons into a new horizon of peace, joy, hope and love.

How is the love of God accessed? Through prayer. The praying of the prayer the ‘Our Father’ has within the essence of living one day at a time in the present moment, receiving from God our needs and from which He abundantly blesses us. The Bible, the word of God is God’s blueprint for living and heals our wounds.

Please read in “Journeying to Mental Health” that love is one of the five foundations of Maturity on

page 10, then again there is The Features of Loves expression on page 44, see the 4 Causes on page 54, also the section on ‘The Bigger Questions for Life and Mental Health’ on page 70.

The core of love is to cherish, nourish and be kind to my inner self, spirit, mind and body. This extends to all other persons and to nature. Making mistakes, stumbling at times is part of growing to maturity, day by day. My intention is to be good and to do good. Ordinary living, practical application, treating each other well is paramount.

My past life is history. I can use all the valuable experience now seen in the light of my recovery as a storehouse, a treasury of memories I can draw on to bring goodness, joy and healing into the lives of others wrestling with mental health issues.

I cannot over emphasise the importance of having befriended myself, and relating well to others for our presence to one another is most valuable in life. This situation in my life springs from prayer in relationship to God who is love.

Christian spirituality links in well with the Recovery model from ‘mental illness.’

Finally a great debt of gratitude is owed to the chief architect of the Grow Movement, Fr. Con Keogh R.I.P. a Roman Catholic priest from Sydney, Australia.

Hugo Magee—Clane Grow Group.

God never said the journey would be easy,
But the arrival
Would be worthwhile

“Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.” *J.K. Rowling*



GROW Community Mental Health Dublin, Wicklow, and Kildare Groups

Find a group near you

Face to Face meetings have been cancelled until further notice due to Covid-19

View GROW Website for further updates.

Monday

- 10.00am - Arklow, Arus Lorcaín Parish Centre, St Mary's and Peters Church, In case of bank holidays meeting Tuesday instead at 10.00am.
- 2.00 pm - Balbriggan Community Centre, Dublin Street, Balbriggan.
- 2.30 pm - Raheny, Hilltop Raheny, St Francis Hospice Priory Rooms, Station Road.
- 7.00 pm - St. Mary's Priory, Tallaght Village, Dublin 24 (use the Greenhills Road Entrance).
- 7.00 pm - Mount Argus, Mount Argus Community Centre, 179 Lower Kimmage Road, Dublin 6 (upstairs)
- 7.00 pm - Clane Community Group, Kare Centre, Old School House, Dublin Road.
- 7.00pm - Dun Loaghaire, Park House, Library Rd.

Tuesday

- 10.30 am - Bray, Queen of Peace Parish Centre, Bray, Putland Road. Co. Wicklow
- 6.00 pm - Pimlico, School Street Family Resource Centre, School Street off Thomas Street.
- 6.30 pm - Central Mental Hospital (not open to general public)
- 7.30 pm - Newbridge, Parish Centre, Station Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.

Wednesday

- 2.00 pm - Arbour Hill Prison (Closed Group).
- 2.30 pm - Wicklow town, De La Salle Pastoral Centre. Access only from St Patricks Church.
- 7.00 pm - Knocklyon, IONA Pastoral Centre, Idrone Avenue, just behind Knocklyon Shopping centre.
- 7.15 pm - Blackrock, The Centre for the Living, Rose Hill, top Carysfort Ave.
- 7.30 pm - Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow, Camphill, Grange Beg.

Thursday

- 6.30 pm - The Carmelite (Whitefiar) Community Centre, 56 Aungier Street, Dublin 2.
- 7.30 pm - Ballyfermot, Parish Centre, at Ballyfermot roundabout.

Infoline: 1890 474 474 Website: www.grow.ie Dublin office 8734029