

### The Gates of Paradise

A soldier named Nobushige came to Hakuin, and asked: "Is there really a paradise and a hell?"

"Who are you?" inquired Hakuin.

"I am a samurai," the warrior replied.

"You, a soldier!" exclaimed Hakuin. "What kind of ruler would have you as his guard? Your face looks like that of a beggar."

Nobushige became so angry that he began to draw his sword, but Hakuin continued:

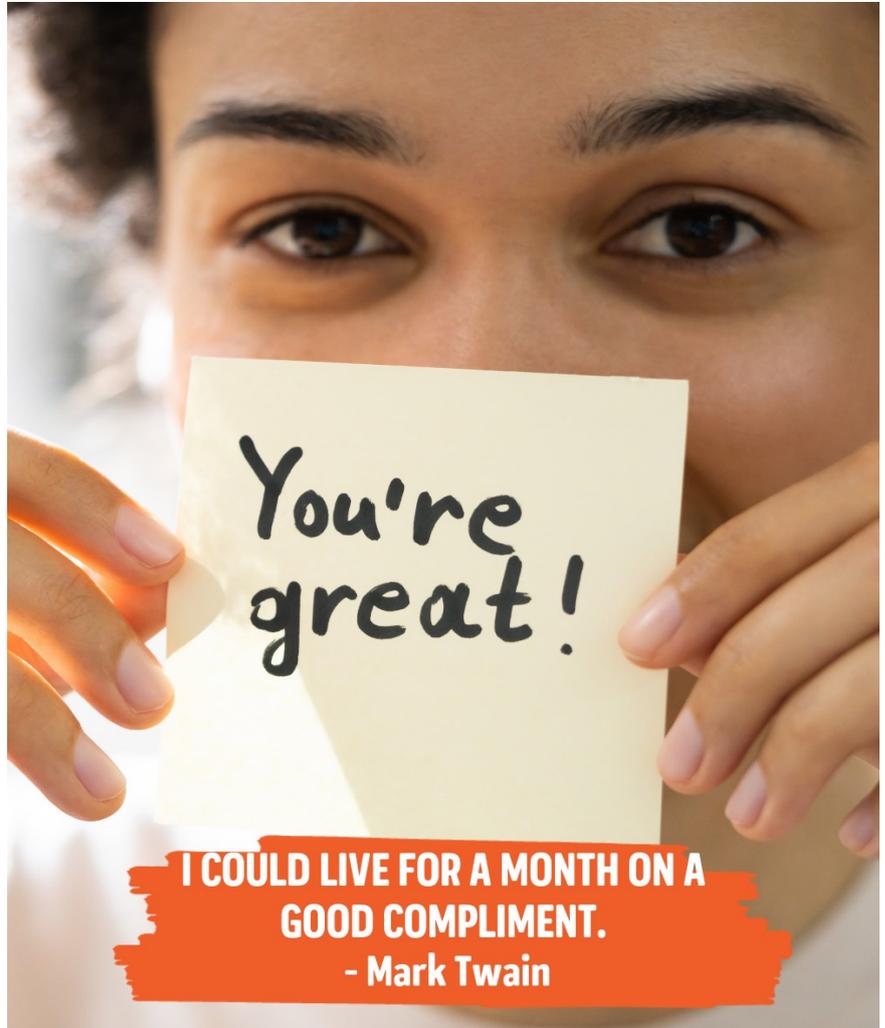
"So you have a sword! Your weapon is probably much too dull to cut off my head."

As Nobushige drew his sword Hakuin remarked: "Here open the gates of hell!"

At these words the samurai, perceiving the master's discipline, sheathed his sword and bowed.

"Here open the gates of paradise," said Hakuin.

*Heaven and Hell are within.  
Awakening will change Hell  
into Heaven.*

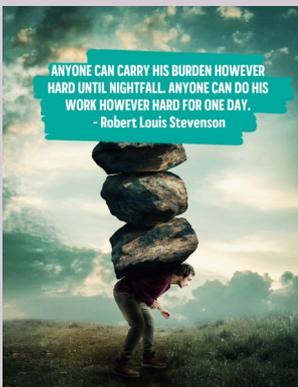


**"Realise that life will never  
be how you want it to be. Jump  
in regardless. The jump itself is  
living; its whole spectrum,  
its entire beauty."**

***Mr Mircea***

She does not know what the future holds, but is grateful for slow and steady growth.

*Morgan Nichols*



I feel now that the time is come when a woman or even a child who can speak a word of freedom and humanity is bound to speak..

*Harriet Beecher Stowe*

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## Beat Fear In Ten Minutes

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Are you putting something off because you're a bit frightened? Whether it's a conversation, a meeting or a big step that you need to take in your personal life, set yourself a deadline. Yes, it sounds simplistic, but setting a deadline can give you the rush of adrenaline you need to overcome your fear. Take out your calendar or diary and spend 10 minutes setting a sensible deadline for when you need to overcome your fear

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## Hope

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We all come to Grow with the hope of recovery, 'hopefully' a full recovery. And many do make a full recovery, after a year maybe, or several years.

As we strive for recovery from anxiety, depression, or schizophrenia what *e/se* can we hope for? What else can Grow help us with as we still suffer? No matter how long we strive what can hope give us on a week to week, day to day basis if we so choose?

If we so choose we can grow in love and maturity. We can always grow in our personhood no matter what the circumstances. The hardships of this world give us plenty of opportunities for the more subtle forms of love to grow, like forgiveness, forbearance, loyalty, faith, courage, trust, fidelity, patience, helpfulness, endurance, generosity and letting go. As we grow in these qualities are we not healing our soul and heart? And in a small way the people around us?

Like love, maturity can always grow no matter what if we so choose. We can grow in understanding of ourselves and life. It does take some time and effort, but wisdom is as valuable and as enduring as gold.

Maturity also involves acceptance, the acceptance of human suffering, the acceptance of how life is now. As we mature, we develop self-control and paradoxically develop choice. No matter what our present circumstances we can always choose our attitude. In Viktor Frankl's book, *Man's search for meaning*, Viktor observed that even in the horrors of the concentration camps of the holocaust, the prisoners had one last freedom, the freedom to choose their attitude. Some prisoners, in the face of extreme suffering and certain death, chose to keep their humanity. They transcended their situation. They shared what little bread they had and gave a comforting word to their fellow prisoners. They were few in number, but there was a few of them. They were not diminished by their suffering but ennobled by it.

There is always hope if you so choose.

*Jonathan*



If a man does the best he can, the best he knows, he has done all he was ever supposed to do.

*Joseph A Kennedy*

One of the secrets to staying young is to always do things you don't know how to do, to keep learning.

*Ruth Reichl*

## Courage

Most of my Grow Community know that I suffered a personal tragedy a couple of months ago. My dearest friends have and continue to support me throughout this very difficult time. At my last meeting my Grow friend handed me a coin. It had a lion on the front, and on the back was inscribed: The angel of courage. It was such a beautiful gift and I know I will treasure it always. I began to think, once more, about what courage really means. Most of us know that courage is not the absence of fear. If fear were not present, courage would not be required.

So many challenges in life require Courage. Unforeseen circumstances that allow no preparation to propel us into a world that turns the life we knew upside down. Navigating this unfamiliar place forces us to walk on unsteady legs, and think with a mind full of shock and panic. The similarity between mental illness and this new reality is palpable. But because it in some ways feels familiar does not mean it is easier to cope with.

Under Crisis Management in our Grow Program book we are prompted to ask these four questions. What exactly am I troubled about? Be rational. Is it certain, probable, or only possible? Be wise. How important is it? What shall I do about it? We need courage to face into these questions.

Courage is the ability to accept that our world can turn on its axis. Acceptance of this truth will eventually lead us to a place of transformation. We will never be the person we were before these unforeseen circumstances came into our lives. But we can come back to our changed world, wounded but happy to be alive again. Similar to our reentry after our mental illness.

This is the epitome of Courage. We went to war and returned, grateful for peacetime again.

The willingness to face our friend's pain is equally courageous. When we allow ourselves to go into the trenches of pain with them, we are confronted with the frailty of our human condition. As they are now, we too may be. However by doing this we bear witness to the value of compassion, and trust that our own hand will be held in our time of need. The ability to hang on until the worst is over is our greatest strength. Without this no other ability can be realized.

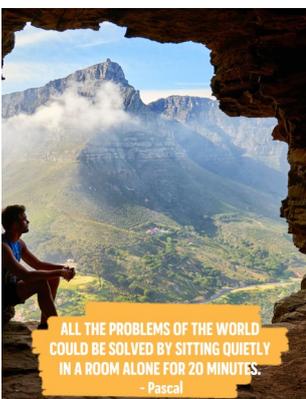
*Maria*

Drama is very important in life. You have to come on with a bang. You never want to go out with a whimper.

*Julia Child*

Come ye yourself apart into a desert place and rest awhile.

*Mark 6.31*



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## Self-Pity

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I can talk about my pain and not fear that I am overdoing it, or that people will feel sorry for me. I will not disown myself from my pain; neither will I indulge in self pity. There is a distinct difference between acknowledging pain and blaming others for it.

I will not cling to my pain as an excuse for inactivity, nor will I complain about my pain while seeking to avoid it.

Talking about my uncomfortable feelings can be therapeutic and relieving. It requires courage and honesty, and it is not an exercise in self-indulgence. When I tell someone how I'm feeling, I am taking full responsibility for my awareness. I enter the realm of self-pity when I make no effort to deal with my suffering or to understand it. I am indulging in self-pity when I abandon responsibility for my feelings and surrender to passivity.

I see that when I face my emotions and experience them freely, I take a big step towards recovery. Today I face my pain and I move through it.

*Maria*

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## Dadirri—An Australian Aboriginal Spiritual Practise

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Dadirri is about deep listening and still quiet awareness. To sit quietly in nature. It is not to be hurried or to be squeezed in. Let the practise have some time and forget time. Sit still in a garden, a park, by a river or sea, on top of a mountain. Listen deeply to the sounds, the sounds that can barely be heard in the far distance and to the sounds that can't be heard. Let your mind slowly settle. Give creation around you your quiet awareness. Watch the ant, the leaves trembling, the cloud drifting. Get to know the place and let the place get to know you. No Goal. Just be. Slowly your soul will be fed and renewed. Answers will come in their own time.

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### Area Coordinators Contact numbers

Amanda Dempsey : 086 136 7423	Kildare
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Louise Carroll : 086 770 6067	North County Dublin

Doubt is a killer.  
You just have to  
know who you are  
and what you  
stand for.

*Jennifer Lopez*

Don't let anyone  
speak for you, and  
don't rely on  
others to fight for  
you.

*Michelle Obama*



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## The Blackness Descends

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The blackness descends upon my head  
Like night descending on day.  
I know what's coming but I can't stop the process,  
Until it fades away.

This could last a week, a day, a month and if really bad, a year.  
For entering this darkness is the start of my fear.  
Upon reaching my wretched destination, life is bleak and black.  
I sit here in total silence, with my demons on my back.

For if someone said you've won the lotto, I really wouldn't care,  
All the money in the world's no good, if your mental health is not there.  
Nothing gives you any joy, you are filled up with despair,  
Until with help, the blackness lifts,  
And you feel you're breathing in fresh air.

*Michael*



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## Submitting Material for the Newsletter

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It's great to see such wisdom and creativity among our Growers.  
Please submit poems and articles as a Word document if possible  
and also email pictures to your Area Coordinator by **September 10th**  
for the Autumn newsletter.

Once you figure out what respect tastes like, it tastes better than attention.

*Pink*

Enough for my need not my greed.

*Anon*

The rational mind is a servant. The intuitive mind a sacred gift. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift.

*Albert Einstein.*

Think like a Queen,  
A Queen is not afraid to fail.  
Failure is another stepping stone to greatness.

*Oprah Winfrey*

I have had a good think. I am not writing anything new here. You have heard it before. I am writing a gentle reminder because in process of our busy lives we forget.

We now know that happiness is not in the big promotion or winning the lotto though they will please you immensely for a month or two. Then it's back to normal. Or you feel worse. You got the object of your desire, then what? The next desire? Buying the latest fashionable shoes will give you a pep, nothing wrong in that, but as many have realised, materialism does not fulfil. And even pursuing happiness too directly can leave you miserable.

People find happiness in meaningful work, passions (if you are lucky to have one), relationships, a spiritual life (if it's in your makeup) and acts of altruism. However, what I would like to write briefly about is slowing down, travelling light and appreciating the small and every day.

A month ago, I watched a YouTube documentary on an English sailor in the 1700's that survived a shipwreck and was marooned on a remote island in the Pacific Ocean a few hundred miles off the coast of Chile. He lived alone for 9 years until he was "rescued". He survived by fishing, gathering, and hunting pigs and goats that previous sailors had released onto the island. He had a simple life with practically no possessions and no money at all.

After his return to the world being a resourceful man, he became very wealthy and famous. And he became miserable. He recalled the happiest time was on the island where he did not have a penny to his name. He was not the first or last to realise that the lures of the world do not fulfil. And as the old saying goes, the best things in life are free.

However, in our modern world we are supposedly more connected with our technology but now we are disconnected. Disconnected from ourselves, from nature and being physically with a friend. Our life is getting faster and faster. There are more and more responsibilities.

However, to enjoy the best things you have to slow down and even stop otherwise they will be overlooked. We are so used to being busy that our minds are busy, full of thoughts. For many it's only at the very end of the day with a glass of wine do they come to rest.

So please slow down to a natural pace. *Nature does not hurry however she accomplishes all* (Lao Tzu). Have an uninterrupted cup of tea in peace. When walking to the shops slow right down and appreciate the flowers in the gardens and the birds in the trees. Stop and chat with neighbours. Make time to slowly read a book. Get into nature, not for ten minutes, though if that is all the time you have it's still wonderful, but linger for half a day. Turn off the phone for two hours. Stop it taking over completely. Have time for family and friends.

As Pascal said, *the problems of the world could be solved by sitting quietly in a room alone for twenty minutes*. You get the picture. It's sense but we need to be reminded.

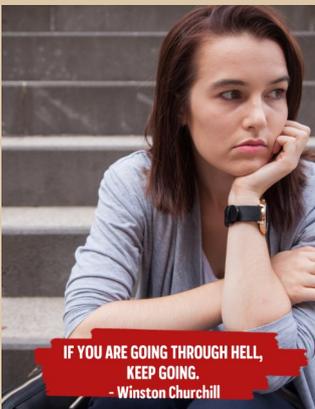
*Jonathan*

Take criticism seriously, but not personally. If there is truth or merit in the criticism, learn from it. Otherwise let it roll right off you.

*Hilary Cinton*

The secret of success is never, never, never give up.

*Winston Churchill*



There are many paths up the mountain. What does it matter once we get to the top.

*Mahat Magandi*

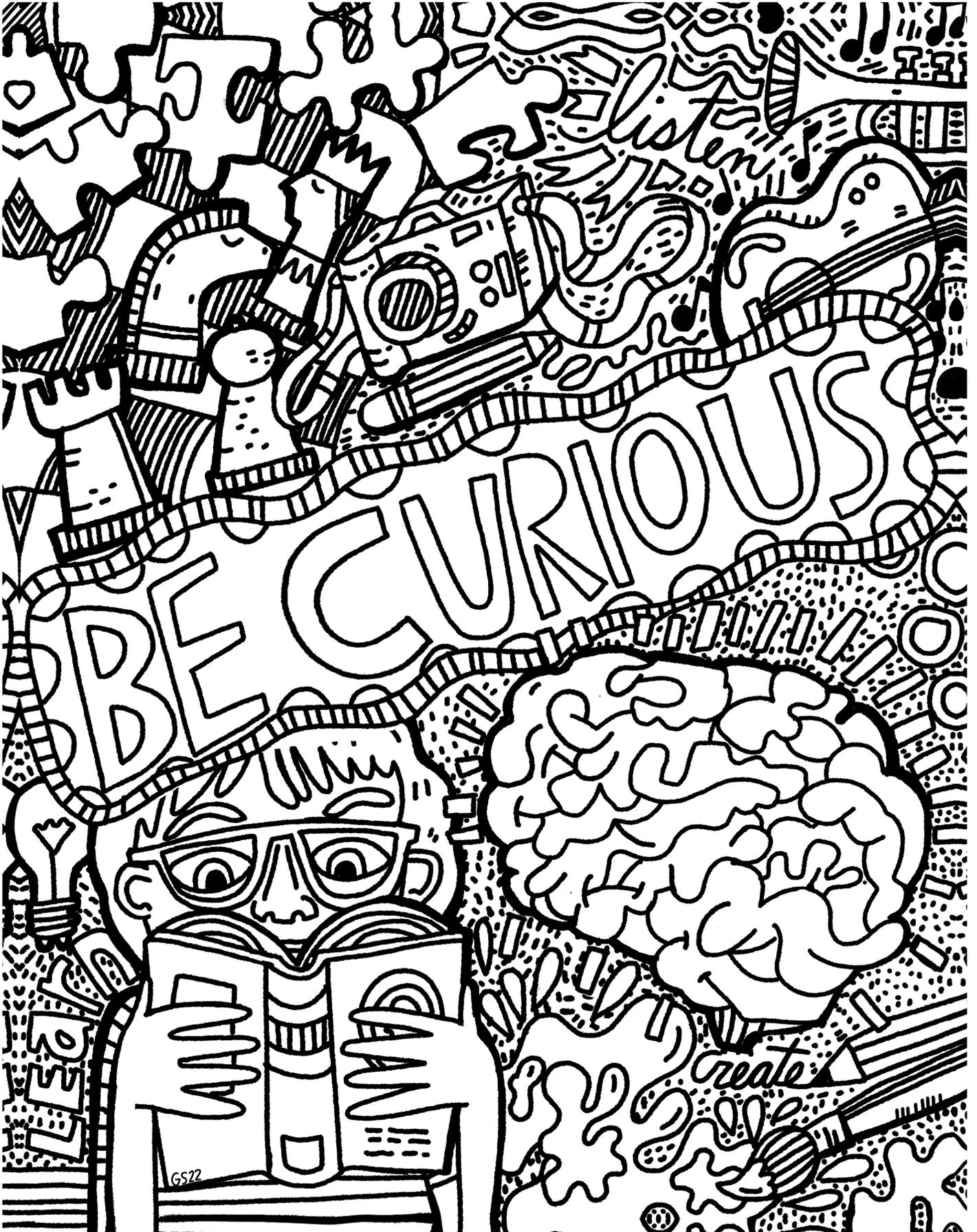
## Eastern Regional Team News

- If anyone wants to do the Grow leadership course please get in touch with your AC.
- Ruairi Powell regional manager for Eastern, Midlands and Western regions is leaving Grow at the end of June to take up a position as centre manager of the National Learning Network in Tullamore. We wish to thank Ruairi for his many years of dedicated service and hard work as manager. All the best in your new endeavour.
- The AC for the Wicklow area. Trish Williams is retiring in June. Many thanks for your dedicated commitment to your groups and to the Eastern region. Wishing you many years of happiness and health in your retirement.
- Next O&R on Zoom, Mon 24th June at 7–9.
- Trish and Jeff give talks on Grow every 6 weeks in John of Gods hospital Stillorgan. Very well received.

## Group News

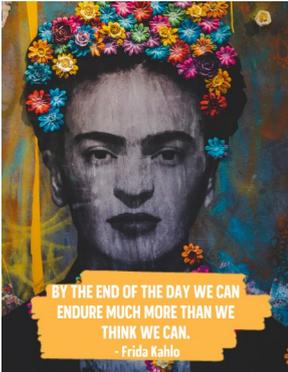
Some groups are being run on Zoom for the foreseeable future. For links contact Area Coordinators. Some groups have reopened in person.

- Monday, Arklow, Arus Lorcaín, Castlepark–10.00am in person
- Monday, Dundrum Village, Main Str, Holy Cross Church–11.00am in person
- Monday, – 7.00pm Zoom.
- Monday, Balbriggan, Flemington Community Centre, Main Str, over 18's welcome–2.00pm in person (currently in recess)
- Monday, Tallaght Village, Dominican Priory–7.00pm in person
- Monday, Welcome group for new members–7.30pm Zoom
- Tuesday, Leixlip Library–11.00am in person
- Tuesday, Bray, Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Putland Rd–10.30am in person
- Tuesday, Whitefriar Street, Carmelite Centre, Dublin 2- 6.30pm in person.
- Tuesday, Raheny, Capuchin Friary, Grange, Church side door– 7.00pm in person
- Tuesday, online group–7.00pm Zoom
- Tuesday, Newbridge, Parish Centre, Station Rd–7.30pm in person
- Tuesday, online Men's group.–10.30am Zoom, jerrycronin@grow.ie
- Wednesday, Wicklow Town, St. Patrick's Church Pastoral Centre–2.30pm in person
- Wednesday, Blackrock/Dun Laoghaire–7.00pm Zoom
- Wednesday, Knocklyon, Iona Centre–7.00pm in person
- Thursday, online group–7.00pm Zoom
- Thursday, Family Resource Centre, Athy - 7.00pm in person
- Thursday, Ballyfermot, Parish Pastoral Centre, Kylemore Rd,–7.30pm in person
- Friday, online group–7.00pm Zoom
- Friday, Open group– 2.00pm Zoom, missed your own group or need extra support? feliciablack@grow.ie



GS22

## Go Yellow For Grow MH



When you got a dream, you got to grab it and never let go.

*Carol Burnett*

All that we are, is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think we become.

*Buddha*

When I feel like dancing, I dance. I don't care if anyone else is dancing or if everyone is laughing at me. I dance.

*Rachel Danson*

June 21st, or the Summer Solstice, is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and the official beginning of summer. Extra daylight helps our mood and energy levels leading to better health and wellbeing. Here in Grow Mental Health, that is certainly a cause for celebration. Join us as we make every moment matter raising awareness, funds, and hope for those facing mental health challenges in Ireland.

Walking, running, stretching, picnicking, or hiking - this year you can choose the event. Between June 20th and 23rd we need you, the people who know and support our work, to organise local fundraising events which bring us together and allow us to enjoy the extra hours of daylight.

It's easy! All you need to do is:

- 1 Work out what lifts your spirit and create an event around that activity. Maybe it's a hike, cycle, walk, yoga session, picnic, swim, fitness challenge - whatever you like!
- 2 Register your event here: <https://grow.ie/summer-solstice-go-yellow-june-20-23-2024/>
- 3 Generate and share your event (or event QR Code) by reaching out to family, friends, colleagues, local businesses and asking for donations and/or support over the GO YELLOW weekend.
- 4 Gather for your event between June 20th and 23rd wearing yellow.
- 5 Let us know how you get on by sharing on social media using #GOYELLOWFORMENTALHEALTH and #GROWMENTALHEALTH.

Thank you for helping us reach our vision of an Ireland where no one needs to navigate mental health challenges or life's struggles alone. Together we can shine brighter.



Make Every Moment Matter on the longest Days of the year, June 20th - 23rd.



If you realise you have enough, you are truly rich.

*Lao Tzu*



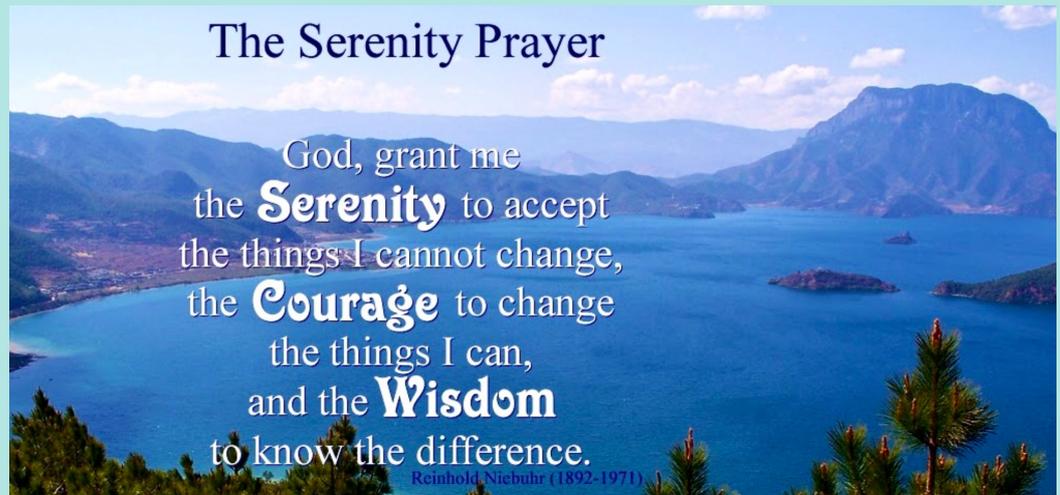
Nothing is worth more than laughter. It is to laugh and to abandon oneself. To be light.

*Frida Kahlo*

Tremendous amounts of talent are being lost to our society just because that talent wears a skirt.

*Shirley Chisholm*

## The Serenity Prayer



Do you, by chance, know **who wrote the Serenity Prayer**? If you do, then you probably might remember when it was written.

I have been taken with the Serenity Prayer for a long time. I find peace when I use it. It is like a mantra for me. I have never tired using it. The prayer gives me strength and hope. I often recite it in my mind.

At our weekly Grow group meeting, after a member shares their “**report on progress**” the Serenity Prayer is often suggested as a “piece of the book”, for the member to reflect on during the week. You can find the prayer in the “**Grow Wisdoms**” (page 105/ No. 73 of the **new Grow Program Book**). I am always amazed how the collective wisdom of the Grow group find an appropriate Grow wisdom for each particular situation a member is trying to deal with.

**I wondered lately what is the power and attraction of this prayer for me?** What came to me is that it is like autosuggestion.

The Serenity Prayer is a calling upon a higher power that seeks:

- **Wisdom** to understand the difference between circumstances (“things”) that can and cannot be changed.
- **Courage** to take action when change is possible.
- **Serenity** to accept situations that cannot be altered.

The Serenity Prayer encourages a balanced approach to life, emphasizing acceptance, courage, and discernment (wisdom). “**Aim for balanced living**” (Grow Program Book, p. 80)

Getting back to the question above, the answer may surprise you... (I thought St. Francis of Assisi was the author!! 😊,) The original Serenity Prayer, was composed by a Protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, in the 1930’s as printed above.

The Serenity Prayer has spread worldwide and is widely used in recovery programs.

During World War II, the Serenity Prayer gained prominence when it was published in booklets for soldiers. Its words provided some comfort to those facing the challenges of war. Imagine their bravery and courage, (which we commemorate 80 years on), when they landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944. Their valour and actions changed the course of the Second World War.

One of the best-known recovery programs is **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**.

Our own **Con Keogh** attended AA Meetings in the 1950’s after he was discharged from

Trying to define yourself is like trying to bite your own teeth.

*Alan Watts*

To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself.

*Thich Nhat Hanh*

Wise People don't judge—they seek to understand.

*Lao Tzu*

Wisdom says we are nothing. Love says we are everything.

Between these two our life flows..

*Jack Kornfield*

Respect Life, revere Life. There is nothing more holy than life, nothing more divine than Life.

*Unknown*

hospital where he was treated for a mental illness. He met other people in AA, who, like himself, didn't have a drink problem but used the AA Programme to change their lives through direction, support and personal growth. They continued to meet and began to record the wisdoms they learned to cope with life's challenges. Their sharing became the basis of the Grow Program and recovery model.

You can Incorporate the Serenity Prayer into your daily life if you choose and bring a sense of inner peace, resilience, and clarity to your day. Some practical ways to do this:

1. **Morning Reflection:** Begin your day by reciting the prayer and contemplating its meaning.
2. **Pause and Breathe:** When faced with stress, take a deep breath and remind yourself of the prayer. Reflect on what you can control and what you need to accept.
3. **Journaling:** Write down situations where you found the wisdom of the Serenity Prayer helpful.
4. **Mindfulness Practice:** During meditation or mindfulness exercises, focus on the present moment. Accept thoughts and emotions without judgment.
5. **Decision-Making:** When making choices, ask yourself:
  - "Is this something I can change?"
  - "Do I need the courage to take action?"
  - "What wisdom guides my decision?"
6. **Nightly Reflection:** Before sleep, revisit the prayer. Acknowledge moments of serenity, courage, and wisdom during the day and be grateful for them.

Remember, the Serenity Prayer is not just a set of words; it's a mindset. Embrace it as a guide for navigating life's challenges with grace and resilience and as an inspiration to seek serenity, courage, and wisdom. **"Keep our minds set on the way of growth" Page 24 GP.**

Examples of applying the wisdom of the Serenity Prayer:

1. **Acceptance:** Accept things I cannot control. I can't stop the sun rising in the east nor setting in the west. Accept people as they are. Recognise that you cannot change others; you can only influence your own responses. **"Acceptance is an honest and mindful perspective of reality" (Grow Program Book, p. 77).**
2. **Courage to Change:** Consider someone struggling with depression. The courage to change involves taking steps toward recovery, attending support groups, and making healthier choices. Letting go of perfectionism and embracing imperfections is an ongoing challenge for myself. **"We took our courage in our hands and asked for help" (Grow Program Book p. 15, Step 2).**
3. **Wisdom to Know the Difference:** Students face academic challenges. They learn to discern between aspects they can control (study habits) and those beyond their control (unexpected exam questions). **"Growth means growth in wisdom" (Grow Program Book, p. 83).**
4. **Trusting a Higher Power:** A member faces health issues. They surrender their worries to a higher power, trusting that things will work out. **"A Greater Power can enable me to have more control over my thoughts, feelings and actions" (Grow Program Book, p.23)**

I pray that the Serenity Prayer may act as a guide for you, so that you can accept things you cannot control, and still work toward making positive changes in your life, with the support of your fellow growers – **"Growing is finding and keeping your truest self" (Grow Program Book p. 105/no. 4).**

Finally. **Frequently, do something nice for yourself, this summer,** as you continue your journey of personal growth and change

*All the best, George*

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## Louise's Story – Anxiety And Low Mood

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Growing up I was a typical “Tomboy”. I loved the outdoors and being active. One relative described me as “the one who is full of love”. I was a content child, I got on with my family, but clashed with my Mam. As I got older, I realised I was very socially awkward and shy. In shops I would struggle to ask staff for help. I had a fear of making phone calls, I would get so anxious! Controlling my anger had become a big challenge for me.

As I got older I realised that my self esteem and confidence were low. I got an average Leaving Cert but I knew I could have done better. After school I did a FETAC Nursing Course which I loved but I didn't pursue a nursing career. Instead, I got my first job in a restaurant. I was 18. I had the best team of co-workers, and I could see my confidence grow. I loved my job.

At age 19 I decided to move out with one of my work colleagues. Away from my negative household. My family were shocked especially my Mam. I liked to help out with my siblings when she was at work but I did so out of fear I suppose, as she would lose the plot if things didn't get done. Shortly after I moved out she told my Dad that she had realised how much I had done for her and that she missed me.

I met Micheal my now Husband in May 2011. Meeting him helped as he is always there with advice and constructive criticism.

In November 2014 when I went to Pakistan to meet Michaels family, I felt unconditional love. It was nothing like my hostile, negative family home. We got engaged and married in November 2014. I was so happy. March 2017 our son was born, he was loved by everyone. I became a stay-at-home mother and in July 2019 we had our daughter. Four and half weeks after her birth I was diagnosed with postnatal depression. The only support I had was from Michael, my aunt, and the PHN. As time went on my Mam started to offer to help. Then COVID hit! My postnatal depression turned into anxiety and low mood. I was put on antidepressants and referred for counselling. I managed to come off medication in 2022.

In 2023 I realised how much I still resented my parents for their lack of support. A friend gave me the details of Grow. I have always been good at taking advice and since joining my Grow group I can already feel a huge difference in myself. I realised how strong I am. I am so much happier and have confidence in my abilities and determination. I love logging on to my weekly meeting knowing there is someone to talk to about any issues. I love setting my weekly task.

I still struggle with anger. I have always put the feelings of others before my own. When my mother-in-law passed away in 2022, I stayed strong for everyone else. With Grow I have learned to put myself first and to see when I need to remove negativity from my life, even if it means losing friends. I am happy right now with my family of 4 and I would highly recommend Grow Mental Health to anyone who is struggling with any mental health problems. I am looking forward to the future and continuing my Grow journey.

