

### An Unlucky Tree

A man had a tree in his garden. The garden was so small that the tree dominated it. One day his neighbour said to him: "that type of tree is unlucky. You should chop it down." So the man chopped it down and cut it into logs for firewood. But there were so many logs that they covered all the flowers in the garden. His neighbour said: "let me take half the logs, so you can see your flowers again."

A few days later the man thought: "Perhaps my tree was not unlucky after all; my neighbour deceived me in order to get firewood for himself." So he went to Yang Chu, and asked his opinion. Yang Chu smiled and said: "The tree was indeed unlucky, as your neighbour said; it has now been burned. It's luck was being owned by a fool." The man began to weep. Yang Chu added: "But now you are no longer a fool; you have lost a tree, but gained a valuable lesson. Never again will you take advice, unless you first understand and agree with it."

*Book of Yang Chu*



**"Don't count the days,  
make the day count."  
- Muhammad Ali."**

**Life is a series of natural and spontaneous  
changes. Don't resist them;  
That only creates sorrow.  
Let reality be reality.  
Let things flow naturally forward in  
whatever way they like.**

*Lao Tzu*

Don't spend time beating on a wall, hoping to transform it into a door.

*Coco Chanel*

You always miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

*Wayne Gretzky*

I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious.

*Albert Einstein*



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## Try 10 minutes of Tibetan sky-gazing

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A type of meditation originating from Tibet, this beautiful practice involves sitting comfortably and looking out the window (or up at the sky if you're outside), allowing yourself to relax and simply observing what's in the sky. Take a deep breath as you watch, allowing yourself to sink deeper and deeper into relaxation. For best results practice for 10 minutes every day. A type of meditation, this practice will help to remove feelings of stress and boost your sense of wellbeing.

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### Reflections - An open door

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I've always loved nature but as I'm growing older, I really appreciate the sun as it shines down on a patch of grass in the garden, or is briefly reflected on a wall inside the house. To me, it's like an open door to another world of light, life and positive growth.

When my grandmother was cleaning out the fire grate on mornings before we left for school, the sun would illuminate a patch of wall, just above the wireless. Now, whenever I see this in my own home I always remember her and hope that she's looking in on me – through that small window, behind which she now abides, surrounded by love and light.

*Bridget*

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### New Area Coordinators

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Grow Mental Health would like to welcome Area Coordinators Jeff Byrne, Amanda Dempsey and Trish Williams to the East Regional staff team. Jeff will be taking up his new role in the Dublin Central area while Amanda will be starting a new Grow project in line with HSE funding covering County Kildare. Trish will be taking up her new role looking after South Dublin and Wicklow. These roles will represent exciting new ventures for Grow especially in Kildare where it is hoped we can open new groups in Athy, Naas and Kildare town while continuing to run the weekly Newbridge group. Grow Regional Team and Management wish Jeff, Amanda and Trish every success in the years ahead.

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## Grow

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A wise person should have money in their head, but not in their heart.

*Jonathan Swift*

It's a big world out there. It would be a shame not to experience it.

*J. D. Andrews*

**Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough, money can be got, but they need your hearts to love them. So spread your love everywhere you go.**

*Mother Teresa*

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## Work

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Why must everything be so difficult? Couldn't God have designed our lives so that we wouldn't need to encounter disappointments, challenges and toil every step of the way?

This must be one of the oldest questions ever asked. The answer—that an "easy" life would also be a meaningless life—is probably just as old. And so is the parable told to illustrate the point:

A wealthy nobleman was once touring his estate and came upon a peasant pitching hay. The nobleman was fascinated by the sight: flowing motions of the peasant's arms and shoulders and the graceful sweep of the pitchfork through the air. He so greatly enjoyed the spectacle that he struck a deal with the peasant: he would give him a gold coin every day if the peasant agreed to come to the mansion and display his hay-pitching technique in the nobleman's drawing room.

The next day, the peasant arrived at the mansion, hardly concealing his glee at his new line of "work." After swinging his empty pitchfork for an hour, he collected his gold coin—many times his usual reward for a week of backbreaking labor. But by the following day, his enthusiasm had somewhat waned. Before the week was out, he announced that he was quitting his commission.

"I don't understand," puzzled the nobleman. "Why would you rather swing heavy loads outdoors in the winter cold and the summer heat, when you can perform an effortless task in the comfort of my home and earn many times your usual wages?"

"But master," said the man, "I'm not *doing* anything..."

*Yanki Tauber*

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## Organiser & Recorder and Leadership Meetings

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- O&R Friday 11th June, 15th July and 16th Sept at 7.00pm. Zoom.
- Leadership Meetings in recess for now,

Check with Area Co-ordinator for further details .

All that we are is  
the result of what  
we have thought.

*Buddha*

You can call it  
being alone. I call  
it enjoying my own  
company.

*Anon*



Be yourself.  
Everyone else is  
already taken.

*Oscar Wilde*

## Steps 3 & 4 by Peter, South East

**Step 3 - Trust:** Years ago at a meeting someone was endlessly complaining about how it's so hard to trust people, they'll let you down. Frustrated, another member spoke up and said 'are you a 100% perfect friend, or have you ever let people down? We're all human, but taking responsibility for our lives means learning to have realistic expectations of others.'

These comments really challenged me. I'd noticed when I'm well I'm open to whatever possibilities life and people offer. Being able to confidently embrace new experience means they usually work out well, and if they don't I'll see it as a positive learning experience. However when I'm unwell, I'll make unreasonable demands on people, desperately put my trust in unreliable people and stumble blindly into painful experiences. Developing trust is a corner-stone of mental health. However our biggest struggle is learning to trust ourselves. Depression and isolation cuts us off from all that is good in the world. Learning to open up and explore the world can be painful – but I need to trust in my own ability to learn and make better choices. It also helps when I make the time and space to savour what is beautiful in the world: to notice a bright red sunset, the glistening of a spider's web in frost, the reassuring smile of a friend. When I'm depressed I often don't notice all the goodness in the world. Do I trust myself enough to make a greater effort to notice what is good in the future – now there's a mindfulness exercise that will keep me busy for eternity . . . . .

**Blog re Step 4:** We acknowledge our gifts and our strengths.

I came to Grow believing I had no gifts or strengths. Early on I noticed that the meetings worked best for those who embarked on the journey of finding and developing their unique gifts.

The first step on this journey involved people crediting themselves for gifts they always had – yet they didn't recognize or value their importance. As the saying goes: 'There are none so blind as those who will not see'. A necessary step in our recovery is tearing away our blindfold of negativity, looking in the mirror and see a uniquely gifted person looking back.

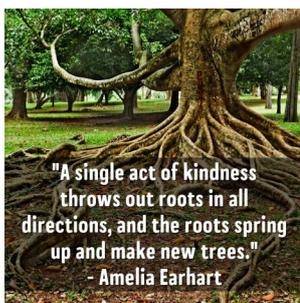
Perhaps a good metaphor is 'The Antiques Roadshow', where a discerning eye can see that beneath years of dirt and grime is hidden something of precious value. In our life we can accumulate years of stress and trauma that accumulate like dirt and grime. It can be a

You cannot find peace from avoiding life.

Virginia Woolf

Failure is not the opposite of success. It's part of it.

Anon



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slow and painful journey to wipe away and let go of all that dirty baggage. However once we commit to believing in our own goodness, a corner has been turned – we are finally heading in the right direction.

Apart from discovering our forgotten talents a second part of the journey involves discovering new talent no one knew existed. This can be a mysterious process but there are some practical steps that help:

Be open to trying a variety of good, ordinary activities. As we say in Grow: 'If a thing is worth doing . . .' It's easier to engage with life when we don't burden ourselves with rigid, perfectionist expectations. For example I often swim and cycle – these activities help me relax but I have no great skill at either. I have more skill at hillwalking – as it appeals to my inner nerd, which likes to study maps and discover roads less travelled.

Over the years it's fascinating to observe people discover hidden talents:

- the restless person who embraces mindfulness.
- the person who hated school discovering the joys of adult education.
- the home-bird who starts exploring the world.

The above examples happen because they are open to trying lots of different new experiences. They are willing to take risks and experience minor failures on the road to self-discovery.

Perhaps with mental health the only failure is an unwillingness to try something new. As the saying goes: 'insanity is to keep doing the same thing and expect a different result. A different result requires us to act differently.

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## Submitting Material for the newsletter

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Please submit poems and articles as a Word document or Rich Text Format if possible and pictures to your Area Coordinator by August the 31st for the Autumn newsletter. It's great to see such wisdom and creativity among Growers.



To the world you  
may be one  
person, but to one  
person you may be  
the world.

*Dr Seuss*

Be kind whenever  
possible—it is  
always possible.

*Dalai Lama*

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## Don't unintendedly hand over your freedom

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If a person gave your body away to a passerby, you would be furious, yet you hand over your mind to anyone who comes along, so they may abuse you leaving you disturbed and troubled.

Instinctively we protect our physical selves. We don't let people touch us, push us around, control where we go. But when it comes to the mind, we're less disciplined. We hand it over willingly to social media, to television, to what other people are thinking or doing. We sit down with our families but within minutes we have our phones out. We sit down peacefully in a park, but instead of looking inward, we are judging people as they pass by.

We don't even know that we're doing this. We don't realise how much waste is in it, how inefficient and distracted it makes us. And what's worse is that no one is making this happen, it is totally self inflicted.

To the Stoics this is an abomination. They know that the world can control our bodies, we can be thrown in jail or tossed about by the weather. But the mind? That's ours. *We must protect it.* Maintain control over your mind and perceptions. It's your most prized possession.

*Maria*

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## Stigmata

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We do not wear labels on the outside  
No plaster of paris cast on a limb,  
No glass eye or cotton eye- patch,  
No bandages or post operative surgical tape.

Our labels are handed out in the psychiatrists office,  
To be carefully stitched in the fabric of our being.  
Once being assigned from the psychiatrists bible  
they are rarely changed..  
Hysteria, Catatonia, Manic Depression.  
We have a nicer labels for them nowadays.

Self-stigma is the real stigma.  
Carried with us constantly,  
We always look out through the same eyes.  
You can ignore the comments and opinions of others  
but it is up to you how gracefully you carry  
your hidden label.

*Alan Keaveney*



Life would be tragic if it weren't so funny.

*Stephen Hawking*

Because in the end you won't remember the time in the office or mowing the lawn. Climb that Mountain!

*Jack Cerouak*

New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings.

*Lao Tzu*

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## Eastern Regional Team News

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- It was mentioned in the meeting that the weekend in the Sheraton in Athlone was a great success. The first of its kind since Covid. We look forward to many more in the future.
- The efficiency at meetings was discussed and some suggestions were made., including, choosing a person to lead the following week's meeting, readings chosen in advance of meeting, maybe meet 15 minutes before meeting for tea so meeting starts on time, to use gratitude journals or post-its to remember tasks from last week. And training to help judge time for reports on progress and the time for middle routine.
- Some further suggestions were made to improve enjoyment at the meetings : guest speaker, from outside the group, as evidence of success. Podcast (YouTube—Grow 12 steps) something different that can open discussion. Weekly affirmations on Whatsapp as a way to keep in touch and to support.
- John Farren has retired from his role as Area Coordinator for the Eastern Region. We thank him for all his dedicated service over the years. We look forward to John and Clare Murphy continuing to be part of the Grow community.

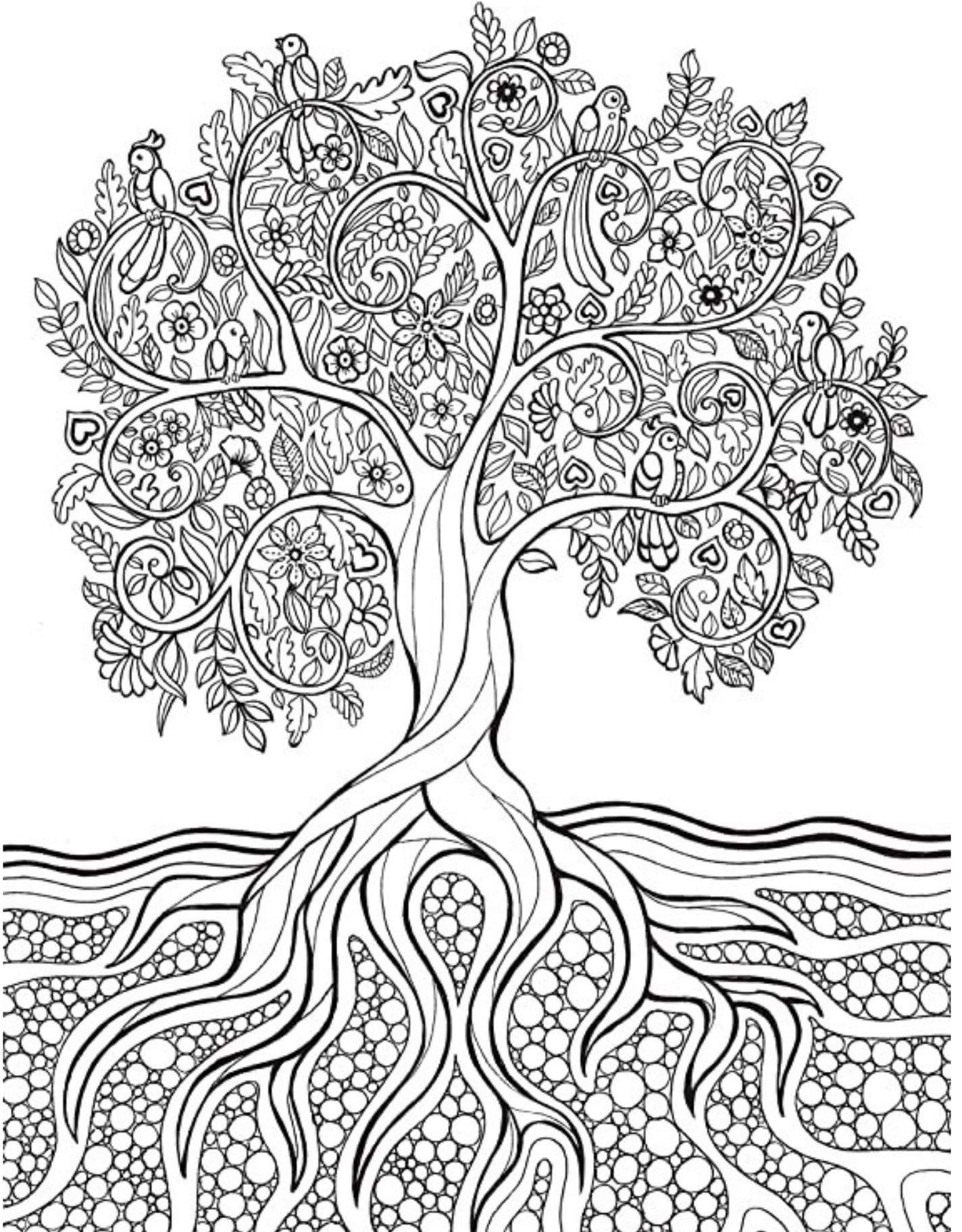
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## Group News

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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, - 7.00pm Zoom.
- Monday, Balbriggan Community Centre—2.00pm in person
- Monday, Tallaght Village, Dominican Priory—7.00pm in person
- Tuesday, Whitefiar Str, Carmenite Centre, 56 Aungier str, Dublin 2 - 6.30pm in person
- Tuesday, Raheny, Capuchin Friary, Grange— 7.00pm in person
- Tuesday, online group—7.00pm Zoom
- Tuesday, Newbridge, Parish Centre, Station Rd—7.30pm in person
- 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, Ballyfermot, Parish Pastoral Centre, Kylemore Rd,—7.30 in person
- Friday, online group—7.00pm Zoom



## Growing is finding and keeping your truest SELF

Care about what other people think and you will be their prisoner.

*Lao Tzu*

The master has no possessions. The more he does for others, the happier he is. The more he gives to others, the wealthier he is.

*Lao Tzu*

A person that never made a mistake never tried anything new.

*Albert Einstein*

Your age doesn't define your maturity, your grades don't define your intelligence. And rumors don't define who you are.

*Morgan Freeman*

The false self or small self or ego mind is always thinking. Of the past and of the future. Creating sadness, anger, and fear. It's never in the here and now. It is constricted like a prison, never at peace.

This small self, through fear, wears lots of masks. We may have a work persona, then a family persona and we may be different with friends or even different with different people. We develop our personality and personas to get us through this world and society. Also, we may wear a mask to hide our fear or how we truly feel, which we believe would be unacceptable to the company we are in. We may feel we need the approval of others. All in all, we may lose touch with our true SELF.

Now we can watch and witness our thoughts and emotions and masks. Try it! So, we can be aware of our thinking small self and the masks we wear. So, this false self is not our true SELF. We are the pure awareness or consciousness that sees the small self. The true SELF's main attributes are silence and presence. It is aware of, and witnesses thoughts, emotions, and outside forms. The false self is imprisoning, the SELF unbounded. The SELF knows without thought or knowledge, it perceives, reflecting what is, like a mirror.

To get in touch with this awareness or true SELF, ask,

"Who is it that is witnessing?"

"Who is it that sees when I see?"

"Who is it that hears when I hear?"

This will put you in touch with your silent awareness. Your true SELF. Your true home. The false self thinks and causes suffering. Thinking is a great tool, but a lot of its thinking is unnecessary and a lot of that causes suffering. We can use it but don't need to identify with it. The true SELF sees and is awake and is content.

The difficulty is keeping your truest SELF. We may be peaceful with inner quiet for a while and then thinking begins again and we are sucked in, identifying with the small false self and its thoughts.

Each person finds their own way to remember the one true SELF, and to awaken up, out of the false self with its many masks.

Our true home awaits.

*Jonathan*

## The Yellow Walk, our fundraiser

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.

*Walt Disney*

I walk slowly, but I never walk backward.

Abraham Lincoln

What is life without a little risk.

J.K. Rowling



If you judge people you have no time to love them.

*Mother Teresa*

We met at Parkgate Street entrance to Phoenix Park at 2.30 Easter Sunday. The rain began just before we met. A gentle drizzle. Most wore their yellow t-shirts under open rain jackets. Around twenty hardy souls turned up. There were members from a number of Eastern and North Eastern regions and some family members too. And John Farren the area Coordinator lead the walk. Armed with our umbrellas and rain macks off we went.

We walked through the park to the President's House. The weather was dreary but we were cheery. On the way back we dropped into the Tearooms for a well earned cuppa and chat. At that stage the rain stopped. We were nicely warmed up after our exercise and in the knowledge we did a good thing. A big thank you to all you who donated to a good cause.

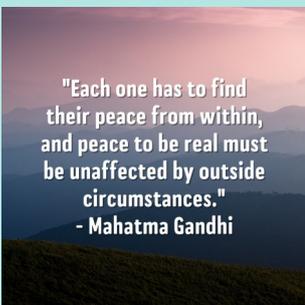




Eubie Blake 1887–1983

I'd rather be hated  
for who I am, than  
be loved for who  
I'm not.

*Kurt Cobain*



Don't limit yourself.  
Many people limit  
themselves to  
what they think  
they can do. You  
can go as far as  
your mind lets you.  
What you believe,  
remember, you can  
achieve.

Mary Kay Ash

## If I had know I was going to live this long

### *"I would have taken better care of myself."*

Those words were spoken by Eubie Blake. He was born 7 Feb 1887 and died 12 Feb 1983, aged ninety-six. In 1900, the life expectancy for men of colour was 32.5 years and for white men 46.6 years. Jumping forward to the year 2000 the life expectancy is much better – a white man's life expectancy was 74.7, and a person of colour was 68.2. The life expectancy for white women was 48.7 years in 1900 and 79.9 in 2000. For women of colour the life expectancy was 33.5 in 1900 and 75.1 in 2000.

Eubie was the only child to survive childhood of the many children born to his parents, former slaves.

He was an accomplished American composer, lyricist, and pianist.

I read and reread what he said to be sure I got his meaning right. I think this almost 100-year-old man could have written Step 7 of the GROW Program: "We took care and control of our bodies".

I also came across another quite similar quote –

*"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."*

Benjamin Franklin wrote this, another exceptionally talented person. He was born 17 Jan 1706 and died 17 Apr 1790, aged 84 – a remarkable age for his time (over three hundred years ago!). He wrote that quotation in an unsigned letter to his own newspaper published on February 4, 1735 (that is another story!). Among his many talents, he was a writer, scientist, inventor, publisher, and philosopher.

Given their lengthy lifespans, 96 and 84 years, respectively, they were doing something right. For example, they had varied interests and were involved with people. They must have taken care and control of their bodies.

So how can we live healthier and longer?

We already benefit from some great advances in medicine since the turn of the century, which all help to improve our life expectancy, e.g., penicillin discovered, insulin first used to treat diabetes, vaccines created for diphtheria, whooping cough, tuberculosis, and tetanus. More recently we have seen a vast range of new vaccines made to fight the Covid-19 virus with booster doses available now. Technology and further advances in medicine and medical procedures continue to help us live longer, e.g., medical alert systems, hearing aids and smartphones that can track our medication, activity e.g., walking, running; body measurements, e.g., blood pressure, heart and breathing rates. Much of this information can even be remotely monitored by our medical carers.

So, what are we waiting for? Our Grow groups are resuming in person meetings. We have a great opportunity for personal social interaction and support again. Think of a task you can take to improve your wellbeing... .... A thirteenth step, like a stroll in the forest, a walk on the beach, catch up with a friend for a cuppa and small cake, or check on any flowers or vegetables you might be growing so they have enough water and food to keep growing. If like me, you are "rewilding" – (humans step back and leave an area to nature) – the "lawn" is now, very thick and about eighteen inches high [though to be honest my lawnmower broke!!!]. As I finish writing this article, the sky is blue, the sun is shining warmly, so it looks like summer is here. I might head out now and walk down to my local shop for a choc ice!

Remember to take a piece from the Grow Book to support you through the week – Step 7 above might suit if you're stuck.

*"All Will Be Well" – Julian of Norwich 1343 – 1416.*

Have a refreshing and enjoyable summer,  
Best Wishes, George :-))

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## Suicidal Thoughts by Anthony

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Through national school and the first two years of secondary, I was happy, but then things started to get bad.

Nothing particular happened or changed apart from my own feelings. I started to lack confidence. I began to feel different, and I had low self-esteem. Despite this, I got through Secondary and passed the Leaving Cert. I got a place in college and passed the first year. I got an A grade average. I was really dedicated to it and was looking forward to going back to complete the course. However, things didn't work out that way.

I got a summer job working for a builder. It was around this time that things started to go really downhill. I became very anxious and unsettled at work. I found it hard to interact with my work colleagues and became withdrawn. It was the start of my breakdown, but didn't realise it at the time.

I constantly thought other people were talking about me in a negative way. I struggled through the rest of the summer but was a nervous wreck at this stage. I didn't want to answer the door to anyone or talk to people on the phone. In fact, my heart would start racing if the phone or doorbell rang. I would lock myself away not wanting to see anyone or let them see me like this. I even shunned my own family and became increasingly agitated with them.

The hours seemed like days. I was hiding under the covers, hoping and wishing things would get better. When I had to go back to college, I was literally shaking. I lasted half a day and had to leave but I knew I couldn't get away from my torment. It was around this time I had my first suicidal thoughts.

A few weeks after this I remember my uncle calling around and getting me to meet my doctor who advised me to go to hospital. The next thing I know I'm in hospital with all these people watching me and analysing me. I felt I would never recover and get out.

While I was in hospital, I thought an awful lot about ending my life. I was in hospital for six weeks, (it might as well have been six years). I suppose I recovered enough to be discharged but things still weren't great.

After leaving hospital I took an overdose of tablets. I was brought into hospital again. I was only in there for a week. When I told the doctor, he gave me an injection. After the injection, things started to take an upturn. I started feeling really good about myself and I left hospital feeling really confident, elated actually. I was really buzzing. It felt great. I believed all my problems were solved. I believed everything was going to work out for me. However, after only a matter of weeks, things changed dramatically. Almost as suddenly as I had gotten all this self belief, it went. Suddenly my mood took an extreme drop. I ended up in hospital again but I was only there for 4 days. On the fourth day, I jumped out of a hospital window trying to end my life. I woke up about 3 days later in the general hospital with a broken arm and badly damaged knee. I had shattered the bones in my ankles and had several other injuries. I was unable to walk for about 5 weeks. I eventually got physically well enough to leave and go home 7 weeks later.

Soon after this, I decided to see a counsellor. I found it very difficult at the start to talk about my thoughts and feelings. However, over time this became easier. I learned a lot about myself during this time. I found visiting the counsellor to be extremely beneficial. It was my counsellor who told me about GROW Mental Health support groups.

I did not know anything about GROW really. So one day I went to see Tess, the local GROW Support Worker. She encouraged me to come along to a meeting. She advised me to stick with it for a few weeks to check it out. My first impression of the group was that it was a caring and understanding group of people. Members gave good and sensible advice to each other. Each week someone tells their personal story.

Every week each member chooses a task to complete for the following week. It's a bit like a personal goal to aim for each week. I think the idea of getting a practical task is a good thing. It gives you motivation and determination, a kind of pressure, but a good pressure to do something positive for yourself.

The fact that I could still get up or do something no matter how bad I was feeling really opened my eyes and made me realise there was always hope.

I got strength from a Winston Churchill quote, "if you're going through hell, keep going."

The hardest decision to make is to admit you need help. But it could be the best decision you will make. It was for me.