

The diver in the waterfall

Hui went to visit a famous waterfall. He watched with amazement at the water falling and then forming a cauldron of foam at the bottom. While he was staring a man dived into the white foam. Hui assumed the man had fallen by accident. So he stood on the bank, ready to pull him out.

But a few minutes later the man emerged from the water some distance downstream. And calmly strolled back to the waterfall. At first Hui thought he must be a ghost; but as he came closer, he realised he was real.

"Do you have some special way of keeping afloat?" Hui asked. The man replied: "I have no special way, I simply follow the water. So I go under with the swirls, and come up with the eddies. I never think of myself. That is how I stay afloat." "Would I stay afloat if I didn't think of myself." Hui asked. The man replied: "You have always lived on dry land. As you walk you do not think about yourself; that's how you stay upright. I have always from being a small child dived in and out of water. Do not try to be what you are not."

Chuang Tzu



○ SET GOALS
◆ PUSH YOURSELF
■ MOVE
● DON'T QUIT
□ NO EXCUSES
● BE AWESOME
■ YOU GOT THIS!

Be the woman who fixes another's crown without telling the world it was crooked.

Amy Morin

There is a moment where you have to choose whether to be silent or stand up.

Malala Yousafzai

I am learning everyday to allow the space between where I am and where I want to be to inspire me and not terrify me.

Tracee Ellis Ross



Learn your favourite song in 10 minutes

Studies have shown that memorizing songs is very healthy for your brain and will improve your mental capacity. Spend 10 minutes listening to the song carefully and then try to sing along. Listening intently and then reconstructing the song engages the focus center of your brain causing it to produce a chemical called acetylcholine which enables brain plasticity and helps to make your memory more vivid.

To-Do List

Sometimes I have a lot to do, or my mood is low, and the thoughts of doing things is overwhelming. The motivation is low or non-existent. This is where the To-Do List, the one piece of advice from my father and a piece of the Grow program does their magic.

First is the To-Do List. I make my list the night before. Quite often if I have a number of things to do the next day and it can seem a lot, the things revolve around my head. However, when I write them down the list is not as big as I imagined. It looks doable. It also gets it out of my head. I make peace with what needs doing. Its also like signing a contract - I make a commitment.

When I get up in the morning I'm organised. I have a plan of action. Sometimes that's enough and I'm going. Sometimes I'm still low or lethargic. Then I remind myself of my father's one piece of advice. "The motivation comes after you start." I have found these words to be true. They inspire and reassure. And true enough awhile after I begin, I get on a roll and the energy flows.

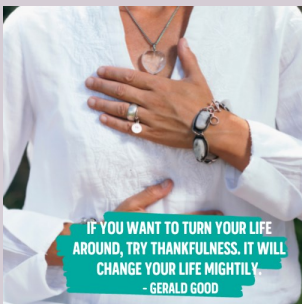
Lastly at times, and quite often, I use that nugget of Grow wisdom, "I can compel my muscles to move in spite of my feelings." Here some will power is needed to jump start you with the faith that you will get moving and get the job done. You always feel better after you get the job done. Gives you a healthy pride.

It's a pleasure, satisfying and motivating to tick things off your To-Do List.

Jonathan

Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other.

Pansh



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

Morgan Harper Nichol

Together We Are Stronger

Naturalists have said nature is about the survival of the fittest. But now they understand that cooperation and bonds of love are stronger. There are many instances in nature of individuals of a species caring for each other and are greater than the sum of the individuals.

Bees of a hive work together and produce not just enough, but an excess of honey. By weight of mass the humble little ant and termites are the most successful creatures on the planet. Mammals nurture their young with love and can heal each other's sadness's and wounds with compassion. One individual will lick the wound of another.

Bonobo monkeys are especially caring. The young are raised by all the troop. One naturist observed in one troop that one Bonobo was elderly and blind, and the other monkeys would pick her up and take her to where she needed to go.

Lone wolfs are intelligent hunters but in a pack, they are a lot smarter and more capable. Meerkats keep lookout for each other. Shoals of fish and flocks of birds find safety in numbers. It is now known that crows are organised. At the end of they day they communicate with each other as to where the locations of food are. In the morning most of the crows will fly to the food sources. However a number volunteer to find new sources of food and will relay their discoveries at the end of the day. Recently naturalists have discovered that trees in a forest are connected by roots and fungi fibres and share water and nutrients with each other. Sometimes with different species of trees. By looking after individuals, you look after the whole forest too.

Many of us have experienced times when we struggle and feel weak. Often the love and kindness of a fellow being not only heals but makes us stronger and renews courage. Love casts out fear and helps bear all. Together we are stronger.

Jonathan

Organiser & Recorder and Leadership Meetings

- O&R Monday 27th March at 7.00 pm Zoom
- Leadership Meetings in recess for now,

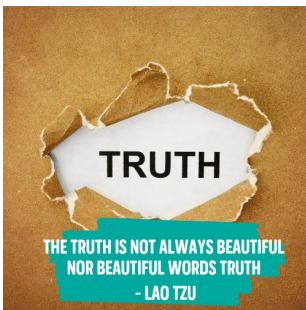
Check with your Area Co-ordinator for further details .

Grow



Do the little things while they are easy and the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin as a single step.

Lao Tzu



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

Lao Tzu

Grapes and Humility

Now what on earth do grapes have to do with humility? It is certainly difficult to find a connection, don't you agree? But in Hebrew, the word for grape is "Ah-nav" and the word for a humble person is also "ah-nav." True, there is a slight difference in the spelling, so it's not the same word, but we are going to see that there is a relationship between them.

So what is the relationship between the grape and a humble person? Simply this:

A grape is something that by itself has no importance. No one buys one grape. Grapes are bought in bunches. A humble person is a person that sees no self-importance to him or herself. His/her place in life is an entity of importance only when he is relating, sharing and linking. Together, with his society, he shares his life with others and for others.

A grape is also something that improves when it is crushed. Can you compare the worth of a cluster of grapes to the worth of wine that was made from it. Wine is a much more valuable commodity. Only when the grape is squashed does it reveal its true excellence. The same is true of humble people. Only under pressure and difficulty comes the true worth of a person. A humble transfiguration. And a truly humble person can come out of a difficult situation unscathed by being so small, without a big ego or self that would clash with and become entangled with life. In wine all the grapes are one.

Eliezer Cohen

The Wise Man

People have been coming to the wise man, complaining about the same problems every time. One day he told them a joke and everyone roared in laughter. After a couple of minutes, he told them the same joke and only a few of them smiled. When he told the same joke for the third time no one laughed anymore. The Wise man said

"You can't laugh at the same joke over and over. So why cry about the same problem over and over?"

Worrying won't solve your problems, it'll just waste your time and energy.

Area Coordinators Contact numbers

Amanda Dempsey : 086 136 7423 Kildare
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Trish Williams : 085 841 7665 South Dublin
Louise Carroll : 086 770 6067 North County Dublin

Gratitude makes sense of our past. Brings peace for today. And creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melody Beattie

When life gives you rainy days, play in the puddles.

Unknown

Time is a created thing, to say I don't have time is like saying "I don't want to."

Lao Tzu



The Funeral

Recently I attended the funeral of a neighbor of mine. This gentleman had been ill for many years, and as his condition worsened his world grew smaller. He was largely reliant on oxygen and needed help with the activities of daily living. Often, we would exchange pleasantries, and when I asked him how he was I would try to hide my shock at his deterioration. At his repose family and friends gathered to pay their respects, with the deceased dressed formally in an uncharacteristic style. Once sympathies were relayed to the family, we gathered into little groups and watched the departed's life portrayed on a screen in the centre of the room.

In this funeral parlour, the human condition, and the commonality of each one of us congregate. We will all, at some point, mourn, console, and die. Our core humanity is encapsulated in the traditional impulse to comfort the bereaved. We understand their pain and want them to know they are not alone in their sorrow. Although our words may seem inadequate, we know that it is in their saying, in our warm embrace, in our presence that comfort can be gained.

This is the essence of what we give to one another in Grow. We know that when a person is at the apex of their suffering, much of our efforts to comfort may be of little help. But this should never thwart us. We know their pain, know their sense of defeat, but we also know the importance of support. Our roles will change over time. Just as in the funeral parlour, we are sometimes the mourner, sometimes the comforter.

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

Maria

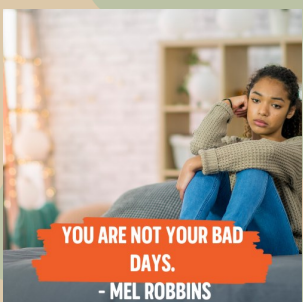
Submitting Material for the Newsletter

Please submit poems and articles as a Word document or Rich Text Format if possible and also send pictures to your Area Coordinator by **April 30th** for the Summer newsletter. It's great to see such wisdom and creativity among our Growers.

Grow

What you do makes a difference. And you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

Jane Goodell



It is better to look forward to the summer than to curse the winter.

*Matshona
Dhliwayo*

Mental Health

"Mental Health, like dandruff, crops up when you least expect it."

Robin Worthington.

We're responsible for the effort but not the outcome. Frequently, a single problem or many problems overwhelm us. We may feel crazy, unable to cope and certain that we have made no progress. But we have. Each day that we choose a relevant part from the Grow Program we feel is helpful to us we consolidate our recovery. In this way we are moving more securely toward mental health as a stable condition.

We perhaps felt strong, secure on top of things last week or yesterday. We will again tomorrow or maybe today. When we least expect it our efforts pay off—quietly, perhaps subtly, sometimes loudly—a good belly laugh may signal a glimmer of our mental health.

No one achieves an absolute state of total mental health. To be human is to have doubts and fears. But as faith grows, as it does when we follow our Twelve Steps, doubts and fears lessen. The good days will increase in number.

Looking forward with hope, not backward is my best effort today.

Maria

Staying Present

Living in the present frees us from the sadness of the past and anxiety of the future and helps us move beyond the thinking mind and into silent pure awareness.

You can use your body as a way to awareness. It can be as simple as staying mindful of your posture. You are probably sitting as you are reading this. What are the sensations in your body at this moment? When you are finished reading and stand, feel the moments of standing, of walking to the next activity, of how you lie down at the end of the day, Be in your body as you move, as you reach for something, as you turn. It is as simple as that.

Just patiently practice being here and now. The body is always here and now and awareness of the body will ground you into here and now. In time it can become second nature to know even the small movements you make. If you are reaching for something, simply notice the reaching. You are moving, you can train yourself to be there, to feel it.

Its that simple. Practice again and again bringing your attention back to your body. This basic effort, which paradoxically is relaxing back into the moment, gives us the key to expand our awareness. Do not underestimate the power that comes to you feeling the simple movements of your body throughout the day.

She was powerful
not because she
wasn't scared but
because she went
on strongly,
despite the fear.

Atticus

**To be liberated
woman must feel
free to be herself,
not in rivalry to
man but in the
context of her own
capacity and
personality.**

Indra Gandhi

I attribute my
success to this: I
never gave or took
an excuse.

Florence
Nightingale

Eastern Regional Team News

- Congratulations to Clare Murphy as our new Eastern Regional Team Chairperson.
- Regional Teams will be called Regional Programme teams in due course.
- Jeff and Gerry met with Traveller Group in December. All women at the group. Hope to get men involved. To meet again soon.
- Amanda is working to start a new group in Leixlip soon.
- Mary Walsh is to hold a coffee morning on the First Monday of the month at 11.00am. Zoom Meeting ID: 875 2299 8071 Passcode: 542954
- Online Leadership course is in progress for staff across the country. With a view to rolling it out to Grow members in due course.
- Some matters arising from the Portlaoise meeting were discussed. Including the new Grow Vision Statement that's been finalized, "An Ireland where no one needs to navigate mental health challenges or life struggles alone.". Also there are plans ongoing to renew regional structures for Grow. Which may include development of new Regional Programme Teams.
- Xmas dinner donation of €25 was well appreciated by members.

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, - 7.00pm Zoom.
- Monday, Balbriggan, Flemington Community Centre, Main Str, over 18 welcome—2.00pm in person
- Monday, Tallaght Village, Dominican Priory—7.00pm in person
- Tuesday, Whitefriar Str, Carmelite Centre, 56 Aungier str, 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
- Wednesday, Dundrum, Rosemont Family Resource 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,-7.30 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



Sometimes the bravest and most important thing you can do is just show up.

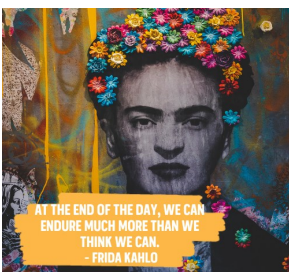
Brene Brown

I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship.

Louisa May Alcott

If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present.

Lao Tzu



Into Your hands

Having generalised anxiety, for me, means living with a certain level of anxiety all the time. Functioning with my constant companion, my bully and my comfort. The energy used while on high alert is exhausting, waiting for danger or imagining dangers. The quote "I've lived through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened", attributed to Mark Twain, always makes me smile. On a daily basis I have lived through debt, sickness, several accidents and usually a death or two, all by teatime. Moreover, none of which happened, except in my mind. I said anxiety was my comfort too, strange as it might seem, but I am familiar with anxiety, it has been my life long companion. It feeds but drains, it's constant dialogue makes me lonely and it creates a fiery energy to the point of burn out. However accustomed I have become I know that this way of life is not good, for me, nor those around me and for my health and wellbeing. I searched and found Grow.

Discussing different techniques to help my anxiety with a group of people who understand and have empathy has been so helpful. One technique that is working at the moment is – handing over the problem to another, the Universe, Greater Power, God or my Grow group. I imagine myself saying, "This is too big for me at the moment so I am handing it to you" I even physically stretch out my hand and feel what it would be like to give this problem into the hands of someone else to take care of. When a problem or worry, particularly those outside our control, fill our heads with anxiety we need a break. So, for a while imagine handing the problem to someone else and letting them mind it for a while. As in Grow we say, "I trust in the care of a greater power and in the support of my fellow Grow members".

Susan



- Grow Introductory Course – a six-week online course running a various times throughout the year online: <https://grow.ie/online-support-for-mental-health-free-6-week-course/>
- Grow Podcast – February was about personal value: <https://grow.ie/grow-mental-health-podcast-personal-value/>

Be who you are,
and say what you
feel, because those
who mind don't
matter and those
that matter don't
mind.

Bernard M.Baruch

**Every sunset is an
opportunity to
reset. Every sun
rise begins with
new eyes.**

Richie Norton

Lean in, speak out,
have a voice in
your organisation,
and never use the
word 'sorry'.

Trish Berluzzi



Better Day's Will Come

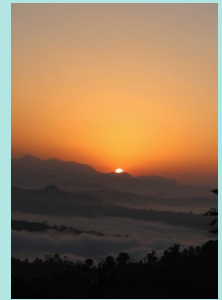
When everything's darkness
And you feel so alone,
When the rain doesn't stop
And you can't make it home,
When it feels all is lost
And you just want to run,
It can't rain forever.
Just wait for the sun.

When family is pain,
When friends can't be found,
When you just want to scream
But you can't find the sound,
When it's all your fault,And you feel like you're done,
Just wait for the sun.
The sunshine will come.

The storm always passes.
It won't last forever.
The rain always stops and gives way to good weather.
The brightest and warmest of days still to come.
Please wait for the sun.
The sunshine will come.

People who need you,
People who still love you
Can warm up your soul like the sunshine above you.
You're never alone,
No matter what's done.
Wait for the sun.
Just wait for the sun.

Dark clouds always pass.
I promise you, hun.
We're all waiting with you.
Just wait for the sun.



Coping with the Winter Blues

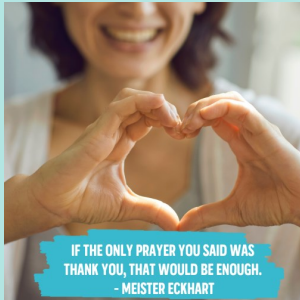
A highlight of the year for me is December 21 – the usual date for the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere. The winter solstice is the shortest period of daylight and the longest night of the year. The cloudy, cold, short dark days have slowed me down, left me feeling sluggish.

This is the day when visitors go to Newgrange, Co Meath to see the work of our ancestors – ordinary people who did extraordinary things! Without computers nor mobile phones – our ordinary ancestors, just by observing the world around and above them, were able to build this huge burial mound, stone by stone. Newgrange is an ancient monument from about 3200 BC – built before the Egyptian pyramids and still here!

The visitors, wait, inside the monument, for that “aha” moment. They wait to catch a glimpse of the winter sunlight as it enters a stone roof box over the entrance along a rising passage (Irish weather permitting of course). The sunlight travels straight and perfectly lights up the stone passageway

Gratitude is wine for the soul. Go on, get drunk.

Rumi



The real gift of gratitude is that the more grateful you are, the more present you become.

Robert Holden

It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up.

Eckhart Tolle

and chamber. The darkness is dispelled. Can you imagine the workers excitement when they finished their project and waited for that moment to test the work of their hands? WOW!! I'm sure it worked wonders for their mental health.

That "aha" moment gradually happens in our Grow groups too. Our life gradually seems to click into place, we light up to wellness and recovery. "We are an expression of 'the Greater Power of life and love'".*

Once the days start getting longer with extra sunshine, I feel lighter, more optimistic, more energised. I feel well. I can look forward to life and events e.g., St Brigid's Day, now a Bank Holiday, Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, and Easter. I love to see a "stretch" in the evenings. The increasing daylight and more sun are like a tonic for me. The sunlight boosts my vitamin D levels. Any lingering lethargy or downness soon disappear.

Everything begins to look different for me. I feel excited and touched by what I see and hear. Everything just seems to know it's time to wake up and be alive again. It is like magic. So gradual, I can barely see the change. I believe this magic happens in our Grow group too! I change; transform; slowly. Only when I stop and look back do I see, or I am told, how I have grown -. [Grow'n]. For some people with seasonal affective disorder (SAD) this lift can take a bit longer. There are Light therapy boxes now that can help speed up recovery.

Between the Grow Program and my WRAP** I use what works for me to stay well now e.g., consciously breathing in the fresh sea and mountain air as I move about; I also like to pay attention the local nature reserve, including a lake, and observe how the animals and plants have overwintered.

I again have the energy for the simple things e.g., go out for a cup of coffee, catch up with friends and even have time to watch a flock of geese, regularly take off, in formation, from the lake and honk as they fly around the shopping centre before joining their mates on the small islands in the river.

Wherever you are on your recovery and wellness journey, remember to set aside time to do the things that you know help you to be well and stay well. Gradually you will find out that you are feeling better and can get out and about, socialise and sense our world as any lingering winter blues melt away. Remember, "You alone can do it, but you cannot do it alone". *** Remember, your Grow group is there to support you and has your best interests at heart – "In Grow we believe in one another, we love one another and we trust one another".****

Finally, I wish you peace of mind, bodily health "and the best in life, love, and happiness"***** so you can enjoy some splendid moments and lovely sunshine this Spring.

George

Notes:

- * = Page 97 The Grow Program
- ** = Wellness Recovery Action Plan
- *** = Page 16 The Grow Program
- **** = Page 17 " "
- ***** = Page 51 " "

John's Story "what has got me through was the Grow meetings."

I think I always struggled with my mental health, but it only came to light in 2017 when I had my first break down. As a child growing up I felt responsible for my dad's death as the last memory I have of him is both of us having a row. He was trying to help me with my homework, but we had a row and then he died in hospital and I was the only member of my family who was not at his hospital bed. Through the years my drinking got out of control. This was my way of controlling how I was feeling and as a 12 year old boy I carried this issue and realisation for many years until I went to talk to someone and put this issue to bed.

In 2017 I had my first ever issue with depression and anxiety. I was working in the homeless sector and when I look back at it now I was suffering from burn out. I had been working with the same team for many years and I wanted a change and when I look back at it now it was the worst change I made – I ended up out sick suffering with stress and anxiety and at that time, I was coming up to mark 20 years in recovery and being 50 – but my head said I should not feel such a fraud/ failure. What got me through that was the love and support of my friends and family.

In May 2021 I have my second issue with depression and anxiety. The pandemic came and I went from being a busy person, always having stuff on, to coming home at 4pm not knowing what to do. Missing the social contact with people. The in-person meetings with friends for coffee. I managed to get into zoom and when I look back at it now it was the best thing I did was to try zoom.

I happened to be talking to a friend and member of another fellowship and she mentioned how her mental health had taken a dip and how she had started going to Grow – when I look back at it now it has been the best thing I have ever done – I remember sending an email to Grow and my area co-ordinator replied to my email, giving me details of the zoom meeting on a Thursday which I went to every week and things began to change. I started to get my life back. My mental health was nowhere as bad as it was in 2021. If I am honest it has not been plan sailing all the time there has been dips in my mental health but if I am honest what has got me through it is the Grow meetings, the group I became to be a member of, and the people I have met on my journey – I would not be where I am today without Grow.

