



The wellbeing way – Waterford

“With room to breathe and room to think, we can live a more meaningful life. And this type of 'room' is not necessarily physical space; rather, it is the absence of all that is extraneous alongside the sweet feeling of liberation that comes with realising that you have enough, and that you are enough, just as you are.”
(Michelle Ogundehin)

The day breaks as the sun casts its crimson glow across the bay on this summer solstice morning to announce the arrival of a new dawn. If this time has taught us anything, it's that time itself is precious. We stand here on a stepping stone between all that has passed and all that is yet to come. This moment matters!



It is not always easy to slow down in a world that moves at pace. Exertion without rest drains us to the core and dims our coordinates. We heave our way from one target to the next on the treadmill of life and rarely connect to source. The last year has been a ‘wake up’ call for us all. It has made us slow down a little and given us the space to weigh up what matters. It is good to press pause now and again. Here, by the water’s edge, we learn to let go of the excess, to shed anything that does not serve us well. The waves roll to shore with unwavering ease to remind us that we are part of something far greater than ourselves – that we are not alone.

Everyone needs a little solitude, a chance to retreat to your very own ‘still zone’ and just be. From this place of silence, we find peace. We are ready then to rise and allow the light we have drawn from source guide us the rest of the way. It is good to break free to the waters and the wild, to breathe in the freshness of the open air, to feel the breeze on your face, to freewheel in

the slipstream of the natural wonders that await around every bend. There's a life force at play here, something primordial, elemental even, that carries you along. Once we step off the beaten track, we leave the world as we know it behind for a while. It feels good to be alive!



We all walk the Camino of life with a cadence and a spirit that is uniquely ours. No two people are the same. Unscripted moments along the path often lead to unknown places you would never find on your own. People pass your way for a reason, each with their own story to tell, their own song to sing. We've discovered this for ourselves over the last few years on our Camino trails. Two such people, Deirdre Lawlor and Sinead Gaynor, joined us on a Camino weekend last September and a 'spark' was lit. They're stuck with us now! These encounters do not always happen by chance. I'll let our two friends, part of the aptly titled the 'Hiking Hussies' from Prospect, Ballymoney, tell the story from here...



Deirdre - It was September 2020 and we just about got to squeeze in our trip to Waterford before everything closed down again! A friend had booked a group of us for a weekend on the Waterford Camino. I had no idea what to expect but was happy to be getting away!

From the moment we arrived, Elaine and Phil made us feel like we were visiting old friends. We only stayed for one night and reluctantly left on Sunday after our boat trip in Dunmore East. Over the course of the two days we laughed, we cried, we reflected and we ate! Spending time in nature with Phil and Elaine as our guides was an experience that stayed with me long after we got home.

I have been passionate about wellness and self-development for a long time. My background is in early years education and I was always fascinated by the beautiful and curious nature of

children and the change that happens when they get a bit older and become conscious of what society expects from them. They say we are born knowing love and learn to fear - it's so true.

During a particularly turbulent time in my life, I looked for answers everywhere but eventually realised that everything I needed was inside. That spurred me on to train as coach and NLP Practitioner specialising in personal wellbeing and development. Many of us carry hidden wounds in life. I guess life has taught me that real healing comes within. The weekend away in Waterford awakened something in me that had always been there. Sometimes it is good to give yourself a little space to retrieve from within the reserves you need to help you handle what life throws at you. Time with Phil and Elaine did just that. It got me thinking...



Sinead - As I look out tonight across a magnificent sunset sky, I am in awe of the beauty all around me and find myself counting my blessings. To the forefront of my mind and my musings are my friends, 'the hiking hussies', that have become such a big part of my life in recent years. We were the fortunate ones last Autumn stealing away from Covid fatigue, our families and commitments to enjoy some much-needed down time in each other's company.

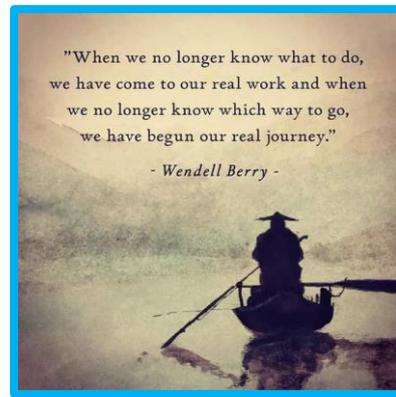
I knew there were plans to walk the Waterford Greenway, experience the now extended Dunmore East Cliff Walk and hike in the Comeragh mountains, but nothing could have prepared me for the memories I know I will cherish and remember for many years to come. I immediately liked both Phil and Elaine, and was struck by their passion and energy, their wicked sense of fun and their clear, genuine intent to give us 'hussies' a truly great holiday. Little did we know that some weeks later we would join forces to begin a partnership that has culminated in an exciting new business venture - the Wellbeing Way.

As we hiked through some of Waterford's most spectacular scenery, I got to know Elaine and Phil and they got to know me and my good friend and business partner Deirdre. I shared some of my own background, what was important to me and how much I admired what they were doing with Waterford Camino Tours. They listened. I just knew deep down something special was happening.

My passion and interest in Wellbeing has stemmed from my 20 plus year practice as an executive coach and leadership development facilitator. In running my own corporate training and development business I have always appreciated and valued the importance of self-care and I live by the motto 'you cannot pour from an empty cup'.

My own cup was overbrimming with renewed passion, energy and vitality following our mini-Camino and so I wondered if there was a way of channeling our collective gifts into creating a

‘time-out’ that was unique to us and built on the natural synergy between the wellbeing, resilience and personal development work I was doing for my clients, the life coaching expertise Deidre brought to the table and the magic of Phil and Elaine... a few months later, here we are, on the cusp of where we want to be...



Our wellbeing way has the beautiful surrounding of Faithlegg House Hotel in Waterford as our base where you will have a chance to relax and unwind after spending the day walking along the headland in Dunmore East, or cycling a stretch of the Waterford Greenway, swimming or paddle-boarding in between and having the craic! The universe works its own unique brand of magic. We just create the conditions and allow the rest to happen. We will be rolling out our ‘Wellbeing Way – Waterford’ this autumn. It will evolve in its own way as it is meant to. We can’t wait!

Time out off the beaten track is good for mind, body and soul. It's strangely liberating to leave civilisation as we know it behind and abandon ourselves to the power of the great outdoors. Our ‘Wellbeing Way’ is more than just a break away. It draws you into something deeper in the universe, in you!

“Make of yourself a light,”
said the Buddha,
before he died.
I think of this every morning
as the east begins
to tear off its many clouds
of darkness, to send up the first
signal — a white fan
streaked with pink and violet,
even green...
Even before the sun itself
hangs, disattached, in the blue air,
I am touched everywhere
by its ocean of yellow waves.
No doubt he thought of everything
that had happened in his difficult life.
And then I feel the sun itself
as it blazes over the hills,
like a million flowers on fire --
clearly I'm not needed,

yet I feel myself turning
into something of inexplicable value...
(Mary Oliver)



Phil and Elaine are excited to be teaming up with Sinead Gaynor and Deirdre Lawlor to roll out 'The wellbeing way - Waterford' this autumn along with our 'Celtic Camino in the steps of St. Declan'. Our autumn schedule is almost fully booked and our followers will be delighted to know that our bookings for 2022 are already shaping up well. We've some lovely announcements to come. Watch this space! There are places available for our 3 Day Wellbeing Way from Tuesday September 21st with Faithlegg House Hotel as our base. For more details and pricing, you can email us directly at info@waterfordcamino.com