12. Niamh Gunn
As founder of The Well, Gunn is intent on bringing mindfulness to Ireland and providing, shelter from the mind’s storm. After experiencing burnout, trauma and grief in her own life, Gunn founded The Well, with stress release and emotional support as its modus operandi. The Well boasts a programme of events, workshops and retreats designed for the heartsick and run by well-being experts. After initially setting up camp at Liss Ard estate in its pilot stage, Gunn’s venture is on the lookout for a permanent home. Keep track of Gunn’s progress at twitter.com/ngunncork

The opportunity to upskill is free, as it works on a ‘barter for knowledge’ system: take a class, in other words, and pay it forward by volunteering.

13. Dr Mark Rowe
Waterford-based GP Rowe believes modern medicine emphasises the “pill for every ill”, but strengthening the foundations of our physical and mental health is what is needed most.

His one-man show, A Prescription For Happiness, highlighted the impact of negative and positive emotions when it was presented at a Waterford theatre in January. He also appeared at this year’s UN World Happiness Day event in March, an annual initiative supported by the Dublin City Council.

14. John Evoy
Fully aware that most men would balk at the idea of a “men’s health centre”, John Evoy set up Men’s Sheds Ireland (menssheds.ie) instead: a charity that encourages Irish men to gather, specialise and get stuff off their minds that they might ordinarily not feel comfortable talking about in public.

While working as a community worker, Wexford-born Evoy realised that several Irish men were grappling with challenges, and were reluctant to reach out to others. Inspired by a similar model in Australia, Men’s Sheds Ireland was created in 2009 and now counts over 170 sheds in Ireland, supporting thousands of men.

15. Phil Isard
Canadian-born Phil founded the Dublin chapter of Trade School, a collective that offers classes in subjects as diverse as knitting, Russian, essential oils, painting and writing.

The opportunity to upskill is free, as it works on a “barter for knowledge” system: take a class, in other words, and pay it forward by volunteering at the school or running a different class. Their website is tradeschool.coop.

16. Eileen McCarney & David Culver
Given that mindfulness is helpful for those experiencing anxiety or depression, Eileen and David offer free mindfulness meditation classes in Drogheda.

For details of weekly sessions, see breathworks.ie (information on other meditation classes and workshops around the country is also available here).

17. Paul Dunphy
A recipient of this year’s Rabotheetees award for most humorous Twitter account, Paul Dunphy is the master of the 140-character comedy cracker. Follow his account @pauldunphy and enjoy regular laughs on your Twitter feed.

See also: Amy Huberman’s candid and hilarious tweets (@amyhuberman), and Colm O’Regan’s unending, ticklish stream of Irish Mammies’ wisdom (@irishmammies).

18. Fionnuala Wall
Breaking up is hard to do (and will definitely make you feel miserable)... but help of a professional shade is finally at hand.

Heartbreak coach Fionnuala Wall has been guiding the lovelorn of Ireland through their relationship trials and tribulations, and is never short of sensible advice on matters of the heart. She can be found at fionnualawall.com.

19. Peter O’Brien
As the mastermind behind Happenings, O’Brien is has made many a sunny day in Ireland even better.

Using social media, the folks at Happenings announce an open-air event in Dublin or Limerick city centre with only hours to spare. From outdoor cinema and music gigs to yoga circles and mindfulness sessions, Happenings organise something for everyone. See happenings.ie for information.

20. Jonathan Gunning
Actor/professional clown Jonathan often brings his inimitable physical comedy to festivals, events and schools across the land. In 2007, with his pal Colm O’Grady, he co-founded Clowns Without Borders Ireland (cwbireland.com), a voluntary organisation that performs and offers circus arts workshops to communities in crisis, both at home and abroad.

21. Anne-Marie Downey & Claire Gardiner
Ostensibly a self-help course for people who don’t readily warm to the idea of self-help, Kickstart is a six-week course run in Dublin’s Smithfield by Anne-Marie and Claire that helps people make changes from the inside out.

Lectures will cover areas such as the importance of diet and detox, how to make behavioural changes, and more importantly how you can sustain new, good habits. Common sense, in other words, without the tree-hugging stuff. More details can be found at dublinherbalists.ie.

The folks at Happenings announce an open-air event in Dublin or Limerick city centre with only hours to spare.

22. Karma
Providing the Dublin street art scene with a brilliant shot in the arm, stencil artist Karma (karmastreetartist.com) has been brightening the streets of Dublin, and elsewhere, since 2006. Keep an eye out for his wryly-amusing wall art; guaranteed to bring a smile to anyone’s face.

23. Christy Collard
West Cork-born artist/builder Christy ensures that the great outdoors looks even greater on his watch. Since his teens, he has been making structures from wood, and is the man behind the tree houses, pagodas, garden and stages at the Body & Soul festival. His beautiful structures can be seen around the country, too: see futureforests.net.

24. The folks at Clonakilty Macra na Feirme
West Cork is renowned as an enchanting and cozy enclave, making it a rather fitting backdrop for the annual Clonakilty Random Acts of Kindness Festival (raok-clon.com).

Aiming to “cut the misery and spread the positivity”, the festival celebrates community and camaraderie with a slew of music, food and street entertainment. If you want to experience the kind of weekend that raises everyone’s spirits, look no further.
25. The Dublin Favour Exchange
Skill swapping has enjoyed a boost in recent times, and the DFE have created a group of lovely folks who pool their resources for free.

Members can teach a skill to others, give away belongings, or even help out with things as diverse as babysitting or moving house. In their words, “the idea is to give freely to the group just for the love it”.

26. Jolanta Burke
Positive psychologist Jolanta shares wisdom on how to be upbeat and mentally well thanks to a series of radio interviews and podcasts, all of which are available on her site jolantaburke.com. From bullying and singledom to workplace optimism and positive parenting, no stone is left unturned as Jolanta offers advice to listeners on how to be happier and healthier.

27. Dave Dunn
As the owner of Monkey Business Ireland, Dave is on a mission to get Ireland laughing. In addition to holding regular laughter workshops for schools and businesses, David also plans to organise group game nights and events across Dublin in coming months. Schools and businesses can email him at dave@dunn.ie; keep an eye on his Facebook page (search for ‘Monkeybusinessireland’ for details of events happening later this summer).

Not only is Harper’s a great place to get a great cup of joe; the cafe also participates in the ‘suspended coffee’ initiative.

Facebook page (search for ‘Monkeybusinessireland’ for details of events happening later this summer).

29. Sadanand Magee
Sadanand and the team at the Sri Chinmoy centre in Dublin offer free meditation classes to anyone on the path to inner peace and happiness (see dublinmeditation.com for details, as well as info on occasional classes in Cork and Galway). The centre also works closely with Happiness In Ireland to celebrate the UN International Day of Happiness, held in March each year. See happinessireland.com for information.

30. David Keegan & JP Swaine
We all know that minding one’s own mental health is paramount, and David & JP have turned the task into a two-week creative arts festival.

Billed as Ireland’s mental-health themed arts festival, First Fortnight boasts a programme packed with film, theatre, spoken word, visual arts and spoken word, all of which address mental health issues.

In 2018, First Fortnight also established the First Fortnight Centre For Creative Therapies, which provides art therapy for people experiencing homelessness and mental ill-health.

The festival happens in January, but keep an eye on their website (firstfortnight.ie) for events that happen throughout the year.

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