

PINK FLOWER  
RESEARCH

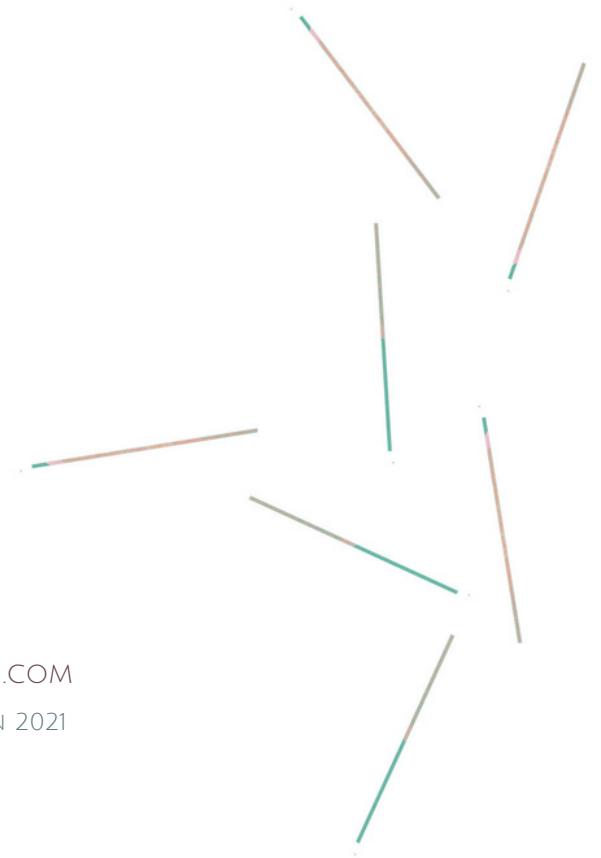
# EXPLORING & TRANSFORMING

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE  
& EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

INNOVATIVE VISUAL METHODS

[WWW.PINKFLOWERRESEARCH.COM](http://WWW.PINKFLOWERRESEARCH.COM)

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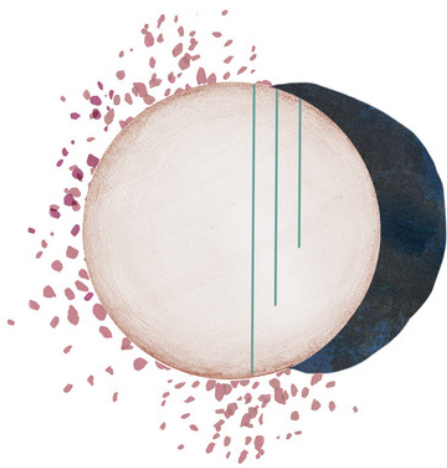
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# PINK FLOWER RESEARCH

## DR MARIA QUINLAN: FOUNDER

Dr Maria Quinlan is a sociologist and founder of Pink Flower Research, a consultancy which specialises in the use of creative, person-centred, trauma-informed methods which facilitate people in sharing their lived experience. Maria uses these methods as an innovative means of exploring organisational culture, the employee-experience; and as a way of co-designing solutions to organisational challenges. Her projects focus on issues of culture; engagement; equality and inclusion; mental health and wellbeing; and have been nominated for a variety of industry awards. She has worked with many organisations over the past year exploring how best to support employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Maria lectures in Talent Management and Organisational Behaviour at Queens University Belfast, is a collaborative research fellow at University College Dublin, and was formerly a Human Capital consultant at Deloitte Ireland.



## INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR INNOVATIVE ORGANISATIONS

Our work draws on over twenty years spent researching organisational culture, and working with a diverse range of organisations on projects related to diversity and inclusion; employee engagement, mental health and wellbeing; and work life balance. Our research highlights how these various organisational issues are intimately connected, and we bring together the key threads which organisations can focus on to deliver improvement simultaneously across all of these areas.

We provide innovative solutions for organisations who want to:

1. Be leaders in the field of inclusive talent management and employee engagement.
2. Build intentional cultures, where action is aligned with espoused values.
3. Leverage the extensive research evidence-base which shows that taking the time to reflect and build value-based, purpose-driven cultures leads to highly engaged employees and leadership.
4. Who wish to reap the productivity and bottom-line benefits of inclusive workplaces and highly-engaged teams.



DIVERSITY &  
INCLUSION

ENSURING EQUITY  
OF OPPORTUNITY

HOLISTIC D&I  
AUDITS



WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE

FOSTERING  
RESULTS-  
ORIENTED WORK  
ENVIRONMENT



BUILDING  
INTENTIONAL  
ORGANISATIONAL  
CULTURE

ALIGNING VALUES  
WITH ACTION



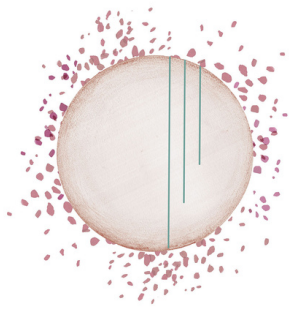
MENTAL HEALTH &  
WELLBEING

EMPLOYEE  
ENGAGEMENT



TRAUMA  
INFORMED  
ORGANISATIONS

DEVELOPING  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
SAFETY



# PHOTOVOICE

## THE PINK FLOWER WAY™

### UNIQUE ADAPTATION OF THE PHOTOVOICE VISUAL METHOD

Photovoice projects use photography combined with in-depth group sharing and discussion to explore people's lived-experience. It is social research method traditionally used as a way to work with communities who often find themselves marginalised within society. Dr Maria Quinlan has taken the original photovoice methodology and has adapted it, incorporating a variety of other creative methodologies, to design a unique approach to organisational analysis and employee engagement.

Maria pioneered the use of this methodological approach within corporate settings with a photovoice project exploring cultural diversity at Deloitte Ireland in 2018. Since then she has gone on to explore issues including work-life balance; mental health and wellbeing; employee engagement; and the impact of COVID-19, across a range of organisations and industries using these creative approaches to research design. She draws on her training in yoga and meditation to create a deeply held safe space for participants to gently share their experiences in a way which embodies the essence of trauma-informed practice.

Photovoice helps articulate the human stories within an organisation and allows us to understand issues of culture, climate and employee-engagement in a deeply nuanced manner. Using photographs to give voice to people, who often feel unheard and unseen is a person-centred and co-created methodology that can be both a powerful and positive experience for the participants while also being an impactful way of providing deep insight into an issue for the wider organisation.

"At Pink Flower Research,  
we combine photovoice  
with ethnographic  
interviewing, design-  
thinking, experienced-  
based co-design; and use a  
trauma-informed lens to  
create a unique approach  
that we call The Pink  
Flower Way™"



CREATION OF A  
SAFE SPACE



INTRODUCTION  
TO VISUAL  
LITERACY



FACILITATED  
GROUP  
DISCUSSION



SHARING OF  
PHOTOS



PARTICIPANT  
REVIEW AND  
SELECTION



"The visual impact of the photos alongside the personal stories created a step change in engagement across the firm, as people were able to connect with the individual and the stories in a totally different way to data from a focus group or survey."

**VALARIE DAUNT**  
**PARTNER IN HUMAN CAPITAL**  
**DELOITTE**

# WHAT OUR PROJECTS DELIVER

01

## DEEPER LEVEL OF ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

- **Generate deeply nuanced actionable insight while boosting engagement, belonging and trust.**
  - Our methods bring the rigour of sociological enquiry to bear on organisational challenges which are often complex and multi-layered and which can be hard to truly assess and/or change. Issues such as systemic racism; gendered organisational dynamics; organisational trauma; cultivating cultures of belonging and meritocracy; and fostering effective leadership require a depth of root-cause analysis which sociological methods can provide. It is real-world applied research which leads to direct, practical action and change.
- **Explore complex organisational problems in a way which illuminates blind-spots and which is solutions-focused.**
  - An extensive body of research shows the positive impact of employee engagement, wellbeing and overall healthy organisational cultures have on an organisations' productivity, and yet for many organisations these issues remain difficult to understand and challenging to positively change. Our methods get under the skin of issues, and reveal any hidden blind spots to change – often simple actionable solutions are quickly revealed.

02

## STEP CHANGE IN ENGAGEMENT

- **Centralise and amplify the employee-voice - harnessing the wisdom and insight of your biggest resource.**
  - Both the process and outcome of our projects lead to a step change in engagement. The inclusive forms of knowledge creation we use is research by and with people rather than 'on' people. As such it taps into the biggest resource an organisation has, and preferences their voice. A sense that your voice matters is consistently found to be central to providing the right context within which innovation and productivity flourish. Creating space for employees to share their stories, fears, concerns, and hopes is key to achieving inclusive, happy workplaces.
- **Space for groups who are often silenced to share their experiences.**
  - Minority groups within organisations often carry the emotional labour of 'fitting in' to the dominant cultures within organisations, these methods aim to give control, power and agency to people who have their voice silenced by dominant cultures.
- **Powerful advocacy tool.**
  - By their nature photovoice projects can be shared in high-impact formats, via photo exhibitions and online galleries. This sharing helps foster organisation-wide conversations on often sensitive or hard to discuss topics.
  - People feel heard and seen in a way which other engagement approaches often lack; and there is an increase understanding of, and empathy and compassion for, other people's experiences.
- **Positions your organisation as a leader and innovator in this space.**
  - Our methods have their roots in social activism and our projects aim to be calls to action towards positive social change. At an organisational level we aim to take talent management and employee engagement to the next level, with a focus on helping organisations build healthy, inclusive cultures which are trauma-informed.

03

## MENTAL-HEALTH & WELLBEING INITIATIVE

- **Trauma-informed narrative therapeutic technique.**
  - As well as being a research tool, photovoice is also a narrative therapeutic technique. It has been found to be a powerful tool which can facilitate us in making sense of challenging experiences, and which can facilitate post-traumatic growth through the gentle and empowered process of reclaiming our narrative and sharing our stories.[8]
  - Our methods help people to navigate times of change and uncertainty. We use these creative practices to facilitate management and staff in exploring the emotional-culture of the organisation and in co-designing trauma-informed approaches. These are particularly helpful in reintegrating into workplaces and developing new ways of working in the wake of COVID-19.



“...the power of Re Balance for me is that it’s giving people an opportunity to share their very personal specific stories. ...it’s a powerful piece of social research, but at a very human level it’s a way of seeing how connected we are because we see other people having our experiences and at a time when we are apart, I think it helps us with a sense of community.”

**TIM HYNES**  
**CIO, AIB**

# HOW WE WORK: PRINCIPLES & VALUES

## 01 INTEGRITY, RIGOR AND EVIDENCE BASED

- At Pink Flower Research we combine academic rigor with real-world industry practice to develop methods which provide a deep root cause analysis of issues. Our key aim is to producing actionable insight which adds real value to an organisation. We do this by being committed to integrity, creativity and excellence in our approach.
- The organisational challenges that we focus on tend to be complex and multi-layered, and so require sophisticated methodological approaches to truly understand, and to deliver solutions-focused insight. Many so-called 'sticky' problems, such as lack of diversity and inclusion within organisations, require us to be courageous and creative in our approaches, to shift the locus of control to those who's voices are often unheard, and to illuminate the shadows.
- At Pink Flower Research our key driver is positive social change – building organisations, communities and societies which are inclusive and which provide equality of opportunity for all. To affect meaningful change, we need to use methods which have a strong evidence base in doing just that. Bringing together methods from a variety of disciplines, which can influence individual mindsets; organisational cultures and societal structures is key. We like working with methods which do more than one thing – they provide insight; are solutions-focused so lead to action and change; and at an individual level aim to be a positive, often cathartic, healing experience for participants – a space where people feel seen and heard. They are solutions-focused and aim to really move the needle for individuals, organisations and societies.

## 02 PARTICIPATORY & TRAUMA INFORMED

- Pink Flower Research's approach is rooted in a person-centred, trauma-informed philosophy. The aim of each of our projects is to create a safe space where people feel comfortable exploring their experiences in a gentle and reflective way. All of our projects embody the key components of trauma-informed practice – including choice, consent, compassion and empowerment.
- We bring our knowledge and insight on wider societal trauma and inequality to bear on all our projects, ensuring that we embed a nuanced discussion and understanding of issues such as racial trauma; gender-based violence; and the need to be aware of our positionality and to decolonise our practice.
- As we strive to centralise and amplify the voice of participants within our projects, ethics and safety are a key bedrock of our approach. We have developed a specific phased approach to informed-consent, which ensures participants are both protected and empowered at each stage of the process.

## 03 INNOVATIVE & CREATIVE

- We want our work to truly affect positive change – for individuals, organisations and society. To do that we like the freedom to be radically innovative in our approach – to be intuitive and organic in how we work with organisations, designing bespoke solutions which are evidence-based and which directly target the issue that the organisation wants to address. We do this by firstly aligning ourselves with organisations who share our values of inclusivity, equality, excellence and integrity; and who are courageous in their desire to be innovative leaders when it comes to talent management.
- Pink Flower Research is known for our methodological innovation and creativity. We have a unique approach which draws on our multi-disciplinary background – combining industry-based analysis techniques, social research methods, with a trauma-informed lens to create truly different offerings tailored for each client's needs.
- We love to innovate, to try something new - we work closely with clients to co-design exciting new methods and creative approaches. We are consistently inspired by new research, and best-in-class cutting edge techniques.





# DR MARIA QUINLAN

FOUNDER  
PINK FLOWER RESEARCH

## SOCIOLOGIST

- Maria is a sociologist who specialises in the use of creative, person-centred research methods which aim to facilitate people in sharing their lived experience. She is founder of Pink Flower Research, a research consultancy which focuses on creating actionable insight regarding issues of equality and inclusion, using person-centred, trauma-informed methods.
- She has a PhD from Trinity College Dublin, where she explored gender and career progression within the Financial Services,

## SCIENCE MEETS PRACTICE

- Prior to working full-time in the area of academic and social research, Maria worked for over a decade in industry where she held a variety of market analysis and strategic insight roles within the Financial Services, Telecoms and MedTech sectors.
- She draws on this expertise to further enhance her methodological approaches, drawing on design-thinking and traditional strategic analysis tools to analyse social and organisational issues

## AWARD-WINNING CREATIVE INNOVATOR

- Maria's innovative practice and the impact of her projects has been recognised by a variety of professional industry bodies.
- Her work has been nominated for several industry awards, winning the CIPD 2020 award for employee empowerment and trust.

## INNOVATIVE RESEARCHER

### Multi-disciplinary researcher

- Maria has a strong track-record in generating new and innovative insight across a range of organisational and social issues. She has over 20 years' experience as a researcher conducting both qualitative and quantitative projects; and from 2013-2017 was Research Lead at the Applied Research for Connected Health centre at UCD.
- She has successfully designed, managed and implemented a variety of independent research projects for clients in the public, non-profit and private sectors; providing end-to-end design, implementation and project management

### Writer and speaker

- Allied to academic publications, she has produced a range of peer-reviewed research reports; white-papers; & position-papers for public, private and non-profit clients. A selection of these can be downloaded at [www.pinkflowerresearch.com](http://www.pinkflowerresearch.com)
- Regularly presents her research and thought leadership at national and international conferences.

## EXPERIENCED EDUCATOR

### Lecturer

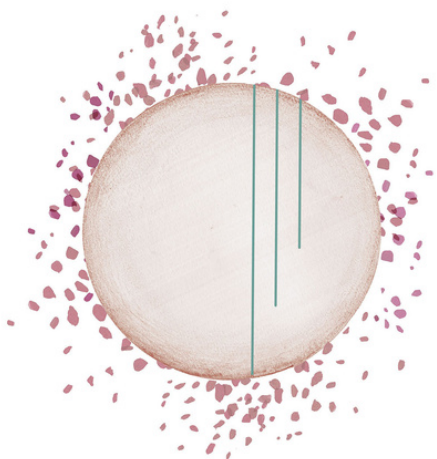
- 2018-Present: Part-time lecturer in Talent Management and Organisational Behaviour at Queens University Belfast and Univesity College Dublin.
- 2013-2020: Head of Research at the Institute for Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy, Dublin. Lecturer in the Sociology of Mental Health; the Sociology of Equality; and Advanced Research Methods - with a particular focus on research ethics; participatory and trauma-informed methods.

### Bespoke workshop design and delivery

- Has researched; written and delivered bespoke workshops and seminars on an extensive range of organisational and social issues, for both practitioners and students.
- Most recently has designed and delivered a series of workshops on visual methods for PhD students in UCD; and on Trauma Aware Practice for community-based organisations..

## TRAUMA-INFORMED WELLNESS PRACTITIONER

- Maria is a qualified yoga and meditation teacher, and has developed a series of short courses which combine the therapeutic and self-reflection elements of photovoice with yoga nidra meditation, breathwork, freewriting and other creative exercises rooted in her research. .
- Drawing together multi-disciplinary insight related to mindsets and our nervous-system responses, she has delivered bespoke versions of her courses for corporate clients as part of their employee wellbeing initiatives.



# RECOGNITION

## AWARDS – MEDIA – CASE-STUDIES

Pink Flower Research's work has been recognised for its uniquely innovative approach and its significant impact on employee engagement, at a variety of industry awards; in media articles; and in industry best-practice case-studies.

## AWARDS

On Balance, our photovoice project on work/life balance within AIB Technology teams, won the CIPD 2020 Award for Employee Empowerment and Trust, and was a finalist for the European Employee Engagement Awards 2019.

Different But Equal and Time Is Of The Essence our projects on respect and inclusion commissioned by Deloitte Ireland, were finalists for the CIPD 2019 award for Diversity and Inclusion, and for the Business to Arts award for engagement in 2020 respectively.

“

The judges were very impressed with this unique and innovative approach to organisation development, which led to significant improvement in trust and flexibility in a challenging sector.

This project gave voice to people's lived experience and created a relatable photography exhibition. The judges praised this for its risk taking, its super unique approach, a real employee-led listening strategy and then great metrics to demonstrate how it developed trust and engagement.”

**CIPD 2020**



Business to Arts  
Awards 2020



# INDUSTRY BEST-PRACTICE CASE-STUDIES

Different But Equal, our project exploring the lived-experience of international employees based in Deloitte's Irish offices was featured as an example of best-practice by both Business in The Community, in their Inclusive Employer publication; and by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, as part of their industry CSR HUB. Both case-studies highlight the significant business impact of the project.

“The photovoice project has helped move us to a new stage in our cultural maturity around inclusion. While before we may have had to push the inclusion agenda to our leaders, we now have leaders coming to our Respect & Inclusion Council asking if we can support them to drive greater inclusion by opening up conversations within their teams, reviewing training programmes, speaking at events, etc..”



An Roinn Gnó,  
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta  
Department of Business,  
Enterprise and Innovation

## MEDIA

Pink Flower Research's work has been featured in a variety of media outlets, including:

THE IRISH TIMES

The Sunday  
Business Post

Irish Independent

★ siliconrepublic

nt  
newstalk

Belfast  
Telegraph

thejournal.ie  
READ, SHARE AND SHAPE THE NEWS

Irish Examiner

# SAMPLE PROJECTS

## & WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY



**Deloitte.**



**Time is of the essence... exploring the lived-experience of parents within Deloitte Ireland**

A participatory-photography project  
conducted by Dr. Maria Quinlan



"The impact of this project was incredibly powerful as we had a combination of mothers and fathers with very different family situations participating, in addition to a member of the executive group. The honesty of the parents around the challenges they can face told a very compelling and impactful story. It also provided clear insights as to what supports they value and where Deloitte can make a positive impact. The photovoice method helped us get under the skin of an inclusion issue in a totally new and fresh way, which really engaged people and brought the conversation to a deeper level than before."

**VALARIE DAUNT**  
**PARTNER IN HUMAN CAPITAL**  
**DELOITTE**





© Ian | 2019 | Deloitte

I spent a lot of time this week taking pictures of abandoned school bags, clothes on beds, because your experience of the family is often the stuff that they leave behind, especially if you're late. I try to get home every night by 7.00 or 7.15 but if you don't, all you see are the remains of the day kind of thing, you see stuff that's left around. But that's the only trace sometimes, if everyone's in bed. Occasionally if it's needed I'll be there in the morning but I'm almost never there in the morning now.



© Sinead | 2019 | Deloitte

What I was trying to show here was the different faces of me, sometimes I feel like I'm a split personality.....I have work and I am a mum but I'm probably not much else outside of that in reality... like my own time to do my own thing that just doesn't sort of exist.

**Deloitte.**



**Different but equal... exploring cultural diversity within Deloitte**

A participatory-photography project conducted by Dr. Maria Quinlan, University College Dublin



"We wanted to explore people's thoughts, feelings and experiences of diversity, respect and inclusion. We also wanted to find out what challenges they faced in a way that surveys and focus groups would not have achieved. The stories were so powerful; you were left with a real sense of the individual... The initiative and exhibition have helped us think about ways to attract and retain global talent. It has also strengthened the dialogue around inclusion among leaders. We've seen a change in their desire to increase awareness, drive different conversations within their teams and look for support in building inclusion,"

**TORUNN DAHL**  
**HEAD OF TALENT, LEARNING & INCLUSION**  
**DELOITTE**



© Mona |2018 | Deloitte

This is a picture of a busy street on a Monday evening. There's a Luas, there are cars and there is a bus captured all in one image. ...they are all headed in one direction, and they are all inclusive in the street, no matter what their destination is, or who is inside them. Similarly, in Deloitte we all work as one, we should be united in strength. There will be cultural differences, but I think we can come up with more events or campaigns or training on inclusion – because I'm not sure that people are aware of the Respect and Inclusion programme we have in Deloitte, and that we are striving towards a more united, stronger community.



© Melody |2018 | Deloitte

It's a blue sky, that's not a view we have very often in Ireland! .....there were several instances where people just assume you're from China which I didn't like. Sometimes I have conversations with managers or partners and they say, "when are you heading back to China?", but I can't exactly say to them, would it be better for you to ask me where I'm from rather than just assuming I'm from China? ....Sometimes it feels kind of awkward, so do I tell them, no I'm not from China, I'm from Malaysia, and then they'll feel awkward and I'll feel bad because I made them feel awkward?. So, I think it would be better to just ask rather than assuming where that person is from. It's things like that that make me feel uneasy, uncomfortable. Just like the Irish weather, don't make assumptions.



## Navigating uncertainty

Exploring the lived experience  
of people within Deloitte  
Ireland during Covid-19

**Deloitte.**



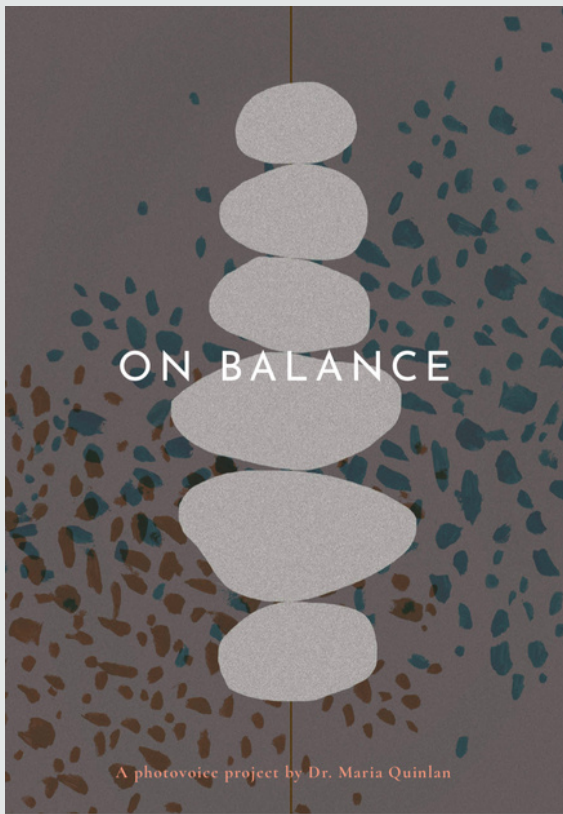
“We are living in a period of prolonged uncertainty and uniquely challenging circumstances....our third photovoice project explores the lived experience of our people during Covid-19. The photovoice methodology uses a unique combination of discussion and photographs taken by participants to share aspects of their experience of living through the pandemic: what works for them, what they’ve learnt about themselves, and how their perspectives have changed. They illustrate tough points which all of us can relate to, and offer nuggets of wisdom which give us a moment to pause and reflect. The range of perspectives offered in this report shows that the impact of the pandemic is felt in a wide variety of ways. I’d like to thank Dr Maria Quinlan for once again leading the creation of this unique piece of work...it is such a meaningful, insightful and worthwhile read.”

**HARRY GODDARD**  
**CEO**  
**DELOITTE IRELAND**



© Caitlin | 2020 | Deloitte

Work, parenting, housekeeping, wellness, relationships, email. A busy but manageable life in the best of times, now feels more like this. A jumble. Type, colour, function – overlapping, lines blurred no sense of order, all boundaries gone. When I open my mind to complete a task, speak, write, and listen – I’m sifting, constantly sifting through the bombardment of information, old and new, unrelenting. I’m paralysed with overwhelm – where to begin, to dig in and set things right. What to build first?



“Having come through the process and seeing the outputs, I was blown away by how effective it was, how quickly it got to the heart of the work/life balance topic and the output on how work/life balance and agility is working for AIB, the involvement and inclusion of people in it – the energy that was created around it and really the feel-good sentiment that resulted from it”

**WENDY BEESLEY**  
**PEOPLE AND TALENT LEAD**  
**AIB**



© Nick | 2019 | On Balance

This is a picture of downstairs, the barrier. I just try to keep work in work and get outside as much as possible. Obviously there are times when you might have to come in on the weekend to finish something or log on at night, but if I can help it I leave it and I pick it up at 7:00am again the next day. It was just a nice visual of a barrier – keeping things in and out. If you can, you try to set a clear definer, your work and the rest of the stuff outside of it.

.....you don't want to be remembered necessarily as someone who just worked the whole time. There are other things to life, this is just a part of what you do



“

“One of the biggest surprises was how a group of people who hadn’t met each other before were able to open up and actually really really engage throughout the process. From the very first day that we got together everyone was in a comfortable environment to be open and talk about their experiences.”

**BRIAN DILLON**  
**BUSINESS BANKING ENGINEERING**  
**AIB**





© Dec | 2020 | Re: Balance

With apologies to Michael Jackson, I call this one 'Man in the Middle' as opposed to 'Man in the Mirror'. Man in the middle of no one. That cushion was bought for me by the grandkids, but there's nobody sitting either side of me or sitting on my lap, so there's not much point in sitting there in the middle. So that's the loneliness aspect of it, I suppose. Every time I've looked at that cushion over the last six weeks, it's something that's struck me, you know. Oh, we have video calls and what have you with them most days, but still, you just want to grab a hold of them, throw them in the air, tickle them, roll around the floor with them, whatever.



© Aoife | 2020 | Re: Balance

This is on Camden Street. It's been there I think since I moved to Dublin. One time when my parents were visiting me, my dad commented on it and we looked it up and it's related to the poet Seamus Heaney. When he was on his deathbed, he sent a text to his wife in Latin, and the translation is 'Don't be afraid'. And then I passed it the other day on my walk and thought that's quite relevant to just now. I usually pass that on my way home from Camden Street on a Friday night or early hours on a Saturday morning and don't pay too much attention to it, so to see it in the light of day is nice and actually it means something right now.