

Video Transcript

Tony's Story

Tony Breathnach is my name. I'm 74 years of age. I'm retired now since 2015. I left school in 1968, having done my leaving certificate. I wanted to go to university, but my parents couldn't afford to send me to university. I would've loved it. The first chance I had to go to university is DCU when I retired the Age-Friendly University, DCU.

I'm blessed with a good memory. I always said to myself, I'd love to do some writing and put down you know, my thoughts and my experiences on paper. So there was a, a writer's course going on as part of the AFU, it was offered on the open day, and I joined that class. I think that's about five or six years ago, and I've been attending classes ever since.

You know, the main thing about the writing classes I find is the camaraderie and the friendships. And what we actually do is even when the semester is over, we meet out in the garden outside over the summer, a group of us from the from the classes, we keep in touch with a WhatsApp group. I don't know if I should be saying it, but we meet and a few of us bring along hip flasks and stuff like that. So it's very enjoyable.

There's a two edge thing, it's the learning and it's the camaraderie and the friendship and that's what I find good about it. We've a few Dubs, we've people from Cork, all over generally, you know. And the great thing is, do you know there used to be a song out years ago *On the One Road*, maybe the wrong road. But we come from all different backgrounds, but we've just gelled so well, and It's absolutely fantastic.

AFU also offers the facility to go into the university class with the students that have just come out of, you know, after doing the Leaving Cert and that we don't have to do exams. We don't have to do assignments. We're just there now. We can do the exams if we want to. It's extra to sit the exams. But for the sake of, you know, the experience and the learning, and as I said, I'm particularly interested in Irish history, I feel I'm catching up on stuff I missed out on when I was younger.

I got sick in 1992. I didn't mention what the sickness was, but it was depression. Thankfully it was one episode of depression. I was hospitalized, but I came out of it. But when you feel yourself a little bit vulnerable, you know, particularly retirement, you've got to keep your mind active and not let yourself get down. So with the stimulus of the AFU and the support of the AFU, you know, it's just marvellous craic. It's just incredible. You know, I never got the opportunity to go to university. Now I can say I go to DCU.