

Vision Beyond Sight: *Fiona Demark's Journey of Resilience and Empowerment*

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW BY NAIDA NUÑEZ

As the founder of The Collective Today and owner of Dear Naida, I am always on the lookout for extraordinary individuals who inspire and motivate others.

Recently, I had the pleasure of interviewing Fiona Demark, a woman who has turned her challenges into opportunities and is now using her experiences to help and inspire others.

Fiona Demark is a name you may or may not be familiar with, but her story is one that will leave you in awe.

Fiona is a wife, entrepreneur, inspirational speaker, resilience coach, and advocate for accessibility and inclusion. She is also visually impaired, but that has not stopped her from living her life to the fullest.

During our interview, Fiona shared her journey of growing up in a small town in western New South Wales, where resources were limited and opportunities were scarce.

She spoke about how she developed resilience and learned to adapt to her surroundings, even when the odds were against her.

Fiona lives with rod-cone dystrophy, a condition that affects her vision. She has less than 10% vision left, and her peripheral vision is better than her direct vision. Despite this, Fiona has not let her disability hold her back.



She uses a screen reader on her computer and relies on high contrast and descriptions of products while shopping online. Fiona's experience has taught her the importance of accessible websites, and she hopes that more businesses will prioritise accessibility in the future.

One of the things that struck me during our interview was Fiona's positive attitude towards life.

She emphasised the importance of self-care and making time for activities that nourish the mind, body, and soul. Fiona's rest is active, and she ensures she takes time out to do the things she is passionate about.

She believes that setting boundaries is crucial and that taking care of oneself is essential to being able to give back to others.

Fiona's journey has not been an easy one, but she has used her experiences to help others. She is an inspirational speaker and resilience coach, using her platform to advocate for accessibility and inclusion. Fiona's story is a testament to the power of resilience, adaptability, and a positive attitude.

When asked about her experiences with bullying and trying to fit in as a child, Fiona shared how these struggles shaped her into the determined and driven person she is today. The desire to prove her capabilities and not be seen as different fuelled her to excel in all areas of life.

However, it wasn't until later in life, when she began working in the disability sector, that she truly embraced her identity and saw her disability as a strength rather than a hindrance.

Fiona's transition from trying to fit in to embracing her uniqueness was a journey in itself.

Surrounded by individuals who proudly identified with their disabilities, Fiona realised that she had been hiding a part of herself for too long.

Her role as an inspirational speaker and resilience coach became not just a profession, but a mission—one where she could empower others by sharing her story and encouraging them to see challenges as opportunities for growth.

Today, Fiona uses her experiences to guide others on their journeys of resilience. Through her coaching, she helps clients recognise and harness the strengths they've developed from overcoming past challenges.

Her work with organisations also promotes accessibility and inclusion, helping to create environments where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can thrive.

Fiona Demark's story is more than just one of overcoming adversity; it's about the power of embracing who you are, challenges and all.

Her message is clear: resilience is not just about bouncing back—it's about moving forward with a positive attitude, adapting to change, and using your experiences to inspire and uplift others.

As I wrapped up our interview, I was reminded of the incredible strength that lies within each of us. She is a living example of how embracing one's identity and challenges can lead to a life full of purpose and fulfilment.

Her story serves as a reminder that our true strength lies not in fitting in, but in standing out—proudly and authentically.

Connect with her through the links below.

