**TRANSCRIPT**

**Ep 48 IDPwD Focus on Motivational Speaking**

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**Carers Qld voiceover**

Choice and Control is a podcast celebrating meaningful inclusion of people with disability in our communities. Brought to you by Carers Queensland, your NDIS, Local area coordination partner in the community. Each episode provides a conversation space for people with disability, their families and carers to share their stories with you. We also hear from members of the wider community, local businesses and community leaders who share information, ideas and possibilities to give you more opportunity and more choice and control in life.

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**Tracy (voiceover)**

Kerry-Lee Gockel, also known as The Wingless Warrior, has delivered her message of strength and resilience on stage now for a number of years. I started by asking Kerry-Lee about her life growing up and what led her to become a motivational speaker.

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**Kerry-Lee**

Well, I think it's probably relevant to start with the fact that I was born without arms, but I was born into an incredible family. So my parents took my disability in their stride and they never, ever dwelled on why I was born with no arms. Their focus was always just on making sure that I accepted my normal and accepted that my normal was different and that I felt really confident in my own skin. I can safely say that they did succeed in all of that. I also have a younger sister, Nikki, and our family, which now includes my husband Paul, and my brother-in-law Daryl, and three gorgeous kids that belong to my sister and Daryl. And we are all extremely close. We have a very close-knit family, and we love each other. Lots and lots and lots.

I was actually born in South Africa, and we immigrated to Australia when I was ten in 1993. So I'm actually extremely grateful that my parents took that fairly bold leap and left everything that they knew and moved to a new country, because it really did give my sister Nikki and I the best opportunities in life. I don't think that we would have had the opportunities that we have had had we stayed in South Africa. I married my soul mate, Paul in 2015, and while we have chosen not to have children of our own, we do love being Aunty Kerry and Uncle Paul to all of our nieces and nephews.

I obtained a dual degree in Law and Business at QUT and actually started my career in private legal practice. Admittedly, I was actually quite disappointed when I realized that a career in law wasn't going to be for me. And in 2010 I joined Queensland Treasury. So I absolutely don't regret that decision. I really enjoy my job. But it was it was a little bit of a, I suppose, a reality check that sometimes the plans that we make don't always come to fruition.

So I had my heart set on being a lawyer for quite a number of years, so it was a little bit disappointing when I realized that that wasn't quite the career that that was going to going to suit me going forward.

As I mentioned, I work for Queensland Treasury and for the last couple of months I've actually been hitting up a project to implement some changes to legislation that my department, department administers. It's been a really, really big project and it's been lots of moving parts, so it's really kept me on my toes. I've been involved with coordinating multiple teams across our organization to deliver an improved experience for our clients who are the people of Queensland.

Prior to that, I was actually a team leader of a client facing team of eight people. So that team was responsible for assisting a cohort of our client base with meeting their legislative obligations. So I'm actually really grateful that even though I'm no longer practicing as a lawyer, my job is still very much in that legal world, and I essentially administer legislation that directly contributes to the Queensland economy.

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**Tracy**

How did you first consider becoming a motivational speaker and why?

00:04:28:12

**Kerry**

It actually happened really organically. I started, you know, speaking at schools and sort of in my early twenties round about the time I'd finished school, you know, my high school asked me to come back and have a chat to the students about, you know, the career path that I'd taken. And I actually really enjoyed that. But I found that I've got a really clear idea of what my message is, once I had actually been in the workforce for a couple of years and had a bit of life experience behind me. And certainly in the last couple of years I've spoken a bit more in a corporate environment and I just really enjoy sharing about how I've built my resilience so that when life throws me a curveball like it does everybody else, I can respond in a really constructive way.

I also just think that my message is quite relatable. It's not specific to someone with a disability. I think that, you know, the message is quite broad, and you know, a lot of people can relate to what I have to say. And I really love it when somebody who does hear me speak comes up to me afterwards to share what resonated with them or how it's changed their view on a particular issue.

So I also just think that speaking gives me that opportunity to really connect with people, which as a classic extrovert, is the one thing that really fills my cup.

My message has always been that not everything is possible for me, and I don't expect everything to be possible for me. But I do believe that everyone, not just people with a disability, but everyone can explore and expand what is possible for them. Now, in saying that, though, it is important to remember that in terms of exploring those opportunities, it's our collective responsibility to make sure that we remove any barriers that are in the way and that we all Endeavor to have our environments and our attitudes as inclusive as possible.

My experience has actually been really great, so I haven't come across any significant barriers in that space at all, as I've done more and more speaking, I’ve obviously become more aware of what works for me and what doesn't. So for example, I generally need a lectern, and a lapel mic is something that works much, much better for me than obviously a hand-held mic, but also even a fixed mic on a lectern, you know, it doesn't enable me to move around the stage, whereas a lapel mic just gives me that little bit of freedom of movement.

So now that I'm more aware of what my specific needs are, when I am on stage, I make sure that I actually engage with it and organize it quite early on in the piece. I am very transparent about what those needs are so that we can make sure everything's in place before I arrive on the days, because I really don't enjoy, you know, fussing around on the day. It just makes me look a little bit unprofessional and the event doesn't run smoothly as it should. I've also been, you know, I'm also really not shy about the fact that I need assistance from other people with most of my day-to-day activities, and that includes when I'm up on stage speaking. So I always bring an assistant with me to help me with turning the pages or organizing my notes, or if there's a PowerPoint presentation that I need to translate words with, that may change over time. I'm sure that there's technology out there available to me that I haven't just come across, but for the time being, one of my needs is to have somebody there with me. So again, I'm transparent with the organizers about that. And most of them and all of them have been extremely accommodating and it's just not been an issue. So it's been a really, really positive experience for me so far.

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**Tracy**

What's been the most rewarding experience about speaking at events and sharing your lived experience?

00:08:10:02

**Tracy**

I think in a nutshell, Tracy, it's just knowing that I'm perhaps changing people's perceptions about disability and what people with a disability are actually capable of. I also love the fact that there have been many, many moments in my life that I have laughed out loud, and I really enjoy sharing some of those with people and having people laugh along with me because we can't take ourselves too seriously. I don't take myself very seriously at all. And my life has actually been full of joy and I really enjoy sharing that with others.

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**Carers Qld Announcement**

LAC connect. It's a new way to stay in touch with your Local Area Coordinator, Carers Queensland, with everything you need right here on your device. It's a handy app to keep track of your LAC appointments, browse workshops and events, check out information and support and get the latest news stories and podcasts. It's available on Android and iOS, so whatever device you have, you can stay in touch. Head to our website to sign up at www.carersqld.com.au dot and look for LAC connect.

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**Tracy**

When you think about the way people with disability are represented in the media, how do you want to be represented in the media and generally?

00:09:25:00

**Kerry-Lee**

I just really like to be represented as a normal person who, like everyone else, has got a unique story. I think we're all unique in our own way. I absolutely don't want to be portrayed as a victim whose life has been some sort of battle because mine hasn't. As I said earlier, like most people I've had to overcome challenges and my approach is perhaps a little bit different to everybody else's. But my life really has been full of joy. I also don't want to be put on a pedestal as some sort of superhero who can achieve the impossible, because again, that's not my reality. Not everything is possible for me. I think also, Tracy, it's really important to represent people with a disability, just as every other person would want to be represented. So for me, that's someone who has a career, it's someone who likes to challenge her physical limits, it's someone who cares a lot about her health and wellbeing, someone who's happily married to her soulmate and someone who loves to travel and explore other parts of this world. ***I just think that when the diversity in society is on full display, we create that awareness of the different capabilities and needs of people in our communities***, and it actually makes it easier for all of us to be as inclusive as possible.

00:10:46:07

**Tracy**

Do you feel comfortable when people say you're an inspiration?

00:10:46:07

**Kerry-Lee**

I am comfortable with being called an inspiration so long as I am inspirational for the right reasons. And so what I mean by that is, I don't particularly like being held out to be inspirational because I can chop veggies or because I can type with my toes. But I do want to be inspirational because I have found ways to adapt. I have a solutions focused outlook on life. I'm positive about my life. I regularly set myself goals and challenge myself. Those are the sorts of things that I'd like to be inspirational for, not just for being able to get up and exist and feed myself and all of that.

I think, again, it's a whole concept about not expecting everything to be possible and really looking at what well, how we can all explore and expand what is possible for us. And also just looking at opportunities for removing those barriers. I'm really keen to share my experience in the workforce because I've been very included in my workplaces.

I have never actually felt excluded in my workplaces and I think that some of the things that have helped with that inclusion have been really, really simple things to do.

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**Tracy**

Can you give some examples?

00:12:18:04

**Kerry-Lee**

Yeah, sure. One of one of the things that stands out for me is at the moment, my workplace is relocating to a new building. So one of the first things that I was involved in was some consultation around whether or not the facilities were going to work for me. I was taken on a tour of the new building. One of the big things to me is an accessible bathroom. Now, when we speak about an accessible bathroom, I think people think of grab rails and lots of space. But for me that that's not what accessible means to me. Accessible for me means having some privacy within the bathroom. Because when I go to the loo, somebody comes with me. So I have somebody pop into the bathroom, help me take my clothes off, and then they exit the bathroom. So in order for them to open the door and exit and re-enter the bathroom, I do need some privacy within the bathroom. Otherwise I'm on full display when the door opens. So there was that consultation around. Okay, well, how can we make this space work for you? And I was involved in that process. And I think that that's a key. You know, we hear that message time and time again of, you know, make sure that people with a disability have a seat at the table when decisions are being made that impact them. And that's exactly what happened here. I had a seat at the table. I was able to provide some input and now I can go to work knowing that this space that I work in meets my needs.

00:13:50:02

**Tracy**

Did you actively have to push for that seat at the table or were you invited?

00:13:55:02

**Kerry-Lee**

I was invited. I was invited. So that's why I said, I think that this is just it's always been a positive experience to me. I'm very grateful that I don't have to push for that. One of the other things that has been wonderful is that the environment at work or culture at work is one that's really centred around being vulnerable and, you know, sharing, sharing when we need help.

So that's just not on a personal level, but, you know, as a workplace culture. And it makes it so much easier for people like me who have personal needs to be comfortable with showing vulnerability and saying, well, these are the sorts of things that I actually need help with on a day-to-day basis. And what happens then is that you just create that awareness, you know, with your colleagues. And I've got colleagues who at work have become my friends and who will, you know, who help me with those day-to-day tasks. So I go to work, and I don't have to worry about all of those little things like… you know what if I need to go to the bathroom and who's there to help me, do I need to arrange a formal support service or, you know, can I access this? I just know that I've got a support network there who are more than willing to give me a hand if I get stuck. I think that consultation is key. I think it comes down to asking questions and not making assumptions. I think when we start making assumptions, that's when we perhaps even remove accessibility or don't get accessibility and inclusion quite right. Start by having an open and honest and transparent conversation. And for people with a disability who are invited to be part of that conversation, please accept the invitation and participate and be open and transparent as well about what it is that you need to feel included at work and have your workplace accessible. Because when you've got that open and transparent communication, that's when the magic happens.

And prior to those connections being formed at work, I have relied on formal support services, which is, which is great and I'm grateful that I had those support services available to me. But it was really restrictive because they came at 1030 and 2:00. That's it. So, you know, there's so much power in in sharing, you know, sharing of vulnerability and being transparent with those around you because it took no time at all for people to just start offering. They said, well, “if you get stuck and you need a wee in between 1030 and 2:00, ask me. I'm happy to help you.” And I've now been able to dispense with full support services because I've got this network of women at work who've all said to me, we'll help if you need it.

So it doesn't have to be this big, coordinated, structured thing. You know, it can be as simple as having the conversations and being comfortable with being a little bit vulnerable, and you'll be surprised at the amazing connections that you form with people… and humans are designed to… we want to help each other. That's what I realize every single time. Humans want to help each other out. We're not supposed to live in isolation of each other, so that's probably been the biggest awakening for me, is the more you share, the bigger your network grows and the more support that you have.

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**Tracy**

And that was Kerry-Lee Gockel. And if you'd like to learn more about Kerry-Lee's story, visit our website at: carersqld.com.au/NDIS

00:17:20:05

**Tracy**

Dean Clifford has been delivering his motivational message on stage now for nearly 20 years. We started by asking Dean about what first interested him in becoming a motivational speaker.

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**Dean**

Yeah, it was something that I didn't really think I'd ever do, like that with my work as one of the sort of people supporting my charity, the DEBRA Association, which is the acronym for my Skin condition, from a really young age I was attending, you know, different events and just sharing tiny little bits about my story to raise awareness and hopefully raise as much money and support as we could. I can remember as a ten-year-old drawing raffles and, you know, being a part of different fundraising events that we always tried to do mostly to get the awareness out, but also to raise as much money as we could for my skin condition. So I've sort of always got a little but me personally, I didn't think I had a story that worth sharing on a larger scale or larger platform. I just thought it was my life. It's pretty mundane… I grew up in a very small country town and I thought, you know, no one would want to hear my story. And it wasn't till I got older. It was reflecting and looking back on things. I thought, well, yeah, it is a pretty unique story of how I survived all the really difficult times and how I overcame all the really negative, dark periods in my life. So I sort of thought about it a bit more and I thought, well, I'd love to try to help people that were feeling a bit hopeless, so feeling a bit sort of worthless at times at their life that just didn't have that sort of direction that I felt at different stages in my life as well.

So I said I thought that was my main driving factor, to connect and touch base with those people that were going through really, really challenging periods of their life. So piece by piece I started to think about different stories and different things that I had achieved and overcome, and worked out that what my headspace was like at that time, and so that the mental side of how I overcame all the different challenges and spent a lot of time just thinking through all the different phases of my life and different, you know, mindsets and dealings and how things made me feel, how I overcame them, or how I rise above the challenges.

So then I had this skeleton, as I say, in a lot of the times, this sort of this skeleton of how I overcame everything to get to where I was. This is now 20 years ago. And so, yeah, just started instead of going out to those fundraising events and just sort of branching out a bit more about my story and businesses that attended those things said they'd love to hear me and thought I could motivate their staff… And so within 12 months after actually deciding I was going to do it, we had a national career traveling around Australia, then talking to everyone, from you know, people in the disability employment sector, to people they'd really struggling to find employment and health issues.

And then it just grew to, you know, business is getting me to speak at different events that they were having. And as I said, within 12 months I was flying to Canberra to meet with the politicians and share my story, on disability employment issues and the healthcare and practices that I sort of experienced, you know, within the government sectors, health or the other different sectors that disability issues touch on. And it just sort of all of a sudden after yeah, that first year I sat back and I thought, wow, we've had calls and enquiries in Brisbane here, back in my hometown of Kingaroy. We've also got bookings for Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne and before I knew it, I'd conquered the East Coast. We were national within that 12 to 18 months traveling all over Australia.

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**Emily**

That must have been a vibe, it must have been a great feeling to travel around?

00:22:15:11

**Dean**

Yeah, it sort of happened so fast that at times I didn't really take stock of how busy things were and how much momentum was behind me. Looking back, I sort of think maybe I didn't, you know, quite capitalize on a few of the opportunities that I was presented with because there were just so many things happening to land in Canberra that at that time and I think it was very early 2005, but I'd already been speaking for 18 months to 2 years, just about, and I landed in Canberra literally just for a meeting with an employment agency that wanted to share my story, very similar to International Day, I think it was Disability Action Week, it was, which used to be separated as two different periods I think, if my memory serves, Disability Action Week 20 years ago was around March, April, I think if my memory serves, and yeah, just landed in Canberra to go to that event that day near Lake Burley Griffith and landed in Canberra there was a missed called from the Prime Minister's office. They had heard I was in Canberra and wanted me to come in to meet with them to see what I was doing.

So to have those sort of, you know, moments that occurred, it was something that, as I said at the time, was just like I go, you didn't really realize how amazing it was to get, you know, calls like that coming through and then invited to speak at Prime Minister's invitational dinners. And you know, the whirlwind that occurred back then was really, really amazing at the time.

There's always things you would have loved to have changed or have done slightly different. But I think the biggest thing with me is true to myself to just you know… I've had a lot of people sort of say, are you could be earning 10 times more if you were putting out DVDs and you were doing, you know, a lot of online glossy things that we could capitalize on my appearance and try to capitalise and get a lot more sponsorship and things like that, but if it's not what I feel actually representing me and telling my story in an honest and genuine way, it's not really something that I'm very interested in pursuing. So yeah, it's sort of one of those things that in hindsight, yep, I definitely could have done things better, could have been a bit more… The ducks lined up to capitalize on things as well. But I also loved that organic nature just being me and a team of one, that does everything. You know, with me. I've got my family and my nurses that come when I'm doing overseas or when I'm doing long trips interstate overnight bookings to help with my medical stuff, that it is just me usually that organizes the flights, organizes everything. I am linked with a couple of speaking agencies and things like that these days, but the bulk of it all still is and organically self-driven thing that is me, you know, taking the enquiries. And again, I still set my prices I believe in being genuine and honest and sort of saying, look, is there a budget, is there a cost restraint?

And that's something that a lot of speakers a lot of people do. They have their set figures that they don’t waiver from. But if it's something that I feel is really worthwhile, really important to me at what I'm trying to achieve, I'm happy to do very low-cost events and, you know, strip it right back at it, the big sort of corporate stuff that we think that a lot of the agencies and a lot of the speaking networks sort of chase. It's great. Yeah, it's good to fly business class and you know stay in five-star luxury and things like that, but it’s still got to be my story. It's still got to be a genuine story that's going to have an impact. Otherwise, I don’t see the value in just doing it for the sake of the pay check, if that makes sense.

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**Carers Queensland Announcement**

Real inclusion of people with disability is led by people with disability and acknowledges the diversity of disabilities in our communities. Be an inclusion ally this International Day of People with Disability and look for books, music, film, TV, podcasts and social media created by people with disability. Support events and live performances created by or featuring people with disability. If you can't find anything, ask, let the broadcasters, publishers and event organizers know there's demand for content by creators with disability. Listen to learn rather than respond. Even if what you hear challenges your assumptions and include people with disability in important conversations and decisions for your business, club, sports team or community group. Be a part of building a future Australia that is more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

00:27:56:12

**Tracy**

After working as a motivational speaker for many years now, Dean has noticed some positive changes in social attitudes towards people with disability.

00:28:05:22

**Dean**

Yeah, there definitely is. I think as a society there's a lot more opportunities for disabled people in the community. I still think there's a few sort of difficult mindsets, people's preconceived ideas that’s sort of the biggest thing that you've got to break down. And I think a lot of times people sort of still see somebody, whether it's physically disabled or intellectually or whatever the case may be, instantly categorized. So there's a lot more opportunities for disabled people these days. That can also be frustrating because there's still a lot of old-fashioned mindsets, I guess you could say, even in today's sort of modern society. But I definitely think we've made huge progress over the 20 years that I've sort of been in the public field and the 20 years before that as well, it's been a huge change. And the corporations and the business sector, I think people are definitely a lot more open to disability opportunities or opportunities for disabled people, I should say. So that that side of things, I think getting your foot in the door in business and in that sort of business community, it's a lot easier these days, that's for sure.

00:29:36:09

**Emily**

Yeah, that's right. So what’s a day in your life, when you're not motivational speaking? Talk me through what you're up to and still powerlifting I understand?

00:29:50:09

**Dean**

Yes. So normal day for me is where, if I've got nothing planned for the day that, my alarm goes off at 5 a.m. and at that time, then I start to I just get out of bed and start the process to get my skin in the best possible condition. So that involves about 4-to-5-hour process. My nurses arrive about an hour or an hour and half after I first wake up and get out of bed. And so in that time we've checked over literally from the skin on my little toe to the skin on the top of my head. We've got to check over every single part of my body to make sure my skin isn't breaking down on a surface level, but then also some sub layer cellular level. And we've got a bandage the worst affected areas, which I'm very lucky. It's not contained to… but the worst affected areas now are my feet and arms and my hands these days. So in the past it was literally all over my entire body. My entire body was bandaged up, you know, right around my torso and at times across my face and everything… but the skin is sort of slowly healed and repaired itself enough over the course of my life, to be contained to the worst affected areas on my feet and my arms. So as I said, from start to finish, that's about a 4-to-5-hour process that that that means that the rest of the day I'm able to get on with my day completely independently and live to what I class is a really high standard.

I am very proud of the life that I lead and if people find that inspiring because it is, you know, I'm the first to admit it is rather extreme, the medical side of my life that I have to go through. If people get inspired by me doing everyday things. I'm sort of like, well yeah that's true. It was a bit of a challenge to get up and get out of bed to get to, you know, the cafe, to hang out with friends that should, which would be for anybody else. Say if you find that inspiring, you know or then it doesn't bother me, I know quite a few other people sort of get a bit offended by that and they know it's just an everyday thing. It's sort of like, well, for me to get here is pretty amazing to me, to you know, be a functioning member of the community. So if you're going to take inspiration from that, then yeah, so be it. I’m more than happy for somebody to feel that way, so it doesn't really bother me whether you're inspired but me just doing the everyday things, going to do the groceries at the shopping centre or your inspired because I'm standing in front of, you know, 7000 people speaking.

And once I feel that the skin is settled down and at the best level, then I'll start pushing the boundaries and pushing things to include my physical strength both in the gym and just different other activities. I've got a gym set up here in my house. I could be working out on the treadmill to keep the muscle strength in my legs. Usually there's something on every day, we could be focusing on the core and on my back to make sure, you know, my general body strength is strong so I can walk around, be stable on my feet and not sort of be, you know, top heavy or, you know, fragile in any one particular part. The upper body is where I sort of thrive in the gym with bench press and weights and everything. So that's sort of my greatest sort of passion when I'm exercising to focus on the upper body side of things, so probably 3 to 4 times a week, the gym lifting really extreme weights. And then the rest of the time I’m they're just focusing on, you know, the rest of my body, making sure everything's working to the best of its ability then.

00:34:27:01

**Emily**

So what's extreme weights? Come on, wow me (laughs).

00:34:30:01

**Dean**

(laughs) Well, my current record in the gym which I’ve been to a few times now, is bench pressing 150 kilos. So it's well over double my body weight. So it's something that is great fun to be that that top end super heavy category. It sort of puts me some somewhere you know, I believe, according to my trainers and my mates who are really heavy to the fitness side - It puts me somewhere like the top take 2 - 3% of the in the world whether you're able bodied or disabled – sort of having the body weight/strength to power ratio, right up there within an elite athlete. It’s something… we had no idea 19, 20 years ago when I first started just to try to get healthy, as healthy as I could be because of all the speaking engagements and all the travels it was, yeah, it's easy enough to take the wheelchair and take the scooter with me, but it's a lot better when I'm just, you know, getting out my car, doing my everyday things to just sort have that upper body strength and physical strength in myself to just sort of be able to jump out of the car racing and grab the milk bread and basic things. You don't have to disassemble the scooter and set everything up for you know, a five-minute little trip. So that was the theory behind it all… I wanted to just try to push myself to get as strong as I could, to be able to do the everyday things easily. And then that led to where we are today, where it's sort of again, it's it gives a lot of self-confidence and everything to sort of know that I’m physically strong in my core, my leg strength in strong, I know longer need to 100%focus on the wheelchair. I can sort of, you know, physically stand and, you know, walk around and manage stairs and manage the everyday things. You get that sort of confidence to sort of know that you’re strong enough to handle yourself in everyday situations, or the crazy things that might occur every now and then.

I’m a big goal setter, a big, big believer in setting a goal for today so that you can get a boost, and it might be literally as silly as, you know, playing with a Rubik's Cube or playing with a you know, a computer if you've got to repair it. But just having that goal is like, I am going to fix this computer and get this working. Or you know, I've got to solve this puzzle in as quick a time frame as possible, and just getting that little bit of adrenaline and a little bit of, you know, a boost. Yep. And you know that's where the gym side of things comes into things. So you can be having a really frustrating day or, or physically you can be really limited in what you're capable of doing because my skin is flaring up and things just aren't quite working the right way, but you can go back to the gym, pump the aircon down to super cold or whatever you need it to be and just do X amount on the treadmill. Or if my feet are really bad, just reduce the weights at the gym, take it down to what I class as a lightweight category which is still, you know, you still looking at anything around 100 kilos. If it's sort of below that, it doesn't even feel at times like you're lifting the weight. You can sort of strip it right back to those hundred kilos and it's super easy for me, so then you could just set that or do resistance work to get a bit of flexibility, whatever the case may be. You can always sort of stop and think today really sucks, but let's work out something to get a boost today. Or like I said, have that end goal of, okay, if I can continue this, you know, in three months, I've got this event booked already, that's going to be so much fun. So I've got to make sure my health is at this level to be able to do that.

So, yeah, you've got all these short- and long-term goals that I’m really passionate about setting up personally, business wise, whatever the case may be. Then you've got that target when you're having those bad days, sometimes you've just got to have those complete full bad days and ride through that whole cycle. And then, you know, I said, set the alarm for the next day and think, okay, tomorrow, when the alarm goes off, we’re getting out of bed. We’re ging to focus on this target or this objective and just being able to address it in your head. Understand that yep today's not working. My way, tomorrow’s going to be different. The fact that you get that get that mindset back on track. I think everybody needs to ride through the bad times, you know, but the key is not to let it consume you… and one bad day can become a week of bad days, to a month of bad days becomes your whole life then. If you can address it, find it, feel okay this this happened this sucked because of this. Now we put a stop to it. Or even if you can sort of pinpoint why it happened, just this happened. Now we've got to work out to rise above it and work out ways around it. I think that's sort of the key philosophy that I always taken, you know, knowing the bad, feeling in it, but then working out how you can get on with it and achieve what you want to achieve.

Yeah, it doesn't matter whether your passion is video games, or your passion is, you know, puzzles, whatever it might be. You know, your therapy can be whatever you enjoy, and you know, working out… Okay let's, let's make that that the turning point and let's find you know… I believe everybody's got a capability of being the best at something, you know, it might just be the best at their family at whatever it might be. But getting that sort of sense of, you know, yeah, I won, and I beat the odds. Getting that little adrenaline boost and then working out how you can build on that from there, to work out how to get to the next little goal or to get the next challenge. And so they progress from there.

It comes down to what you want to get out of life. I firmly believe you can…. you know, in the 20 years I've been speaking, I've talked to so many people and everybody has different challenges, you know, and so, like what I class is a huge challenge, somebody else might look at it, think, well, actually I would have done it pretty easily. I would have, you know, and vice versa, I can sit there and listen to somebody and think, well, you know, you can't stop them. And say mate, you've got nothing to worry about but it's big to, them. So you've got to take it on board, like I said, I use my experiences to sort of be like, well how do you overcome that and try to try to guide people to finding the solutions themselves. I think if you're if you're handed 10 step miracle cure to the world's problems, people, people a lot of times grab it and then before you know it, they're back in a deeper hole because they’ve just sort of skimmed over it and they're not really addressing the big problems that got them there to begin with.

So I'm all for, you know, just hanging out with people wherever I can, speaking, sharing my story, interacting with people but then going away, and letting them put the pieces together and work it out for themselves. It's, you know, I definitely said my story is as you know, not a glossy motivational speech that you see on TV or you know, a cliche, sort of motivational speaking lectures and things like that. It's very much just me sharing my journey, it’s very much the case that I guess that it worked for me and now it's up to you to put the pieces in your life and your journey and hopefully you can take what I've given you, work it out for your life then and, you know, run with it from there.

And so that sort of has the fact that interacting with people, hearing people, like I said, it is five years later, contact me instead and say, I sat in the audience at this event, and it was great. You know, some people just say I love the weightlifting stories; I loved this side of it… didn't really get, you know, whatever else you were talking about but loved the weightlifting and love this. But then all of a sudden, a situation occurred in my life and bang, all the pieces made sense then. And to be able to have that impact, you know, five years, ten years, 15 years later that my stories stayed in their head and resonated, I think that's sort of what I’m most thrilled about… it's not something that you hear, you walk away, you know, a week later you're scratching your head trying to remember what’s it all about kind of thing.

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**Tracy**

And that was Dean Clifford. If you'd like to learn more about Dean's story, visit our website www.carersqld.com.au.

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