UCL Remarkable Stories

Season 2 Episode 2 – Fiona and success mindset

Transcript

**Gia Lulic**

We are UCL and these are our remarkable stories. Hi, my name is Gia Lulic, and I work in the UCL organisational development team. In each episode, I will be in conversations with the UCL guests as they share with us their remarkable stories, experiences and life lessons. In this episode, we meet UCL Chief Operating Officer Fiona Ryland who will take us through her fascinating career journey from her humble beginnings to where she is today. Hello, everyone, and welcome to UCL remarkable stories podcast. Today. I'm so excited to be speaking to UCL Chief Operating Officer Fiona Ryland. Fiona, welcome, and thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us.

**Fiona Ryland**

Hi, I know it's lovely to be here. Thank you.

**Gia Lulic**

So, before we dive into some big topics, Fiona, why don't you tell us about your background and where this career journey first started?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, no, no problem. And I'll try and keep it brief. I went to university, and I studied Chemical Engineering at Bath University. But since I was 16, I was working for Safeway supermarket. And I really loved working in retail, and especially supermarkets because it's very people orientated every day is different. It's really fast paced. So, when I graduated, I actually started full time with Safeway. And at first, I was an admin manager. But then when they restructured, I was fortunate enough to have an opportunity to be an assistant manager. And that was like my first proper kind of management leadership position at 21, and I really enjoyed that. And I stayed with Safeway for a couple of years doing those kinds of general management positions. And then what I really loved though, was, you know, recruiting people training people developing them seeing people flourish. So, I thought, actually, maybe I'll move into a career in HR. So, I joined as the, as what was called a store personnel manager then. So, there's a store in in Charlton, and really loved ASDA it was a really great organisation and learned loads. And then I just built my HR career in retail. So went to work for two different retailers after that, so Dixon source group and Comet in electrical retailing. And then I moved to a food service organisation. And after I'd been there for a few years, I was promoted to HR director. So that was my first HR director position, I looked after their UK and Ireland business. And after doing that, for a few years, I was really I spent all my career in retail and food service, which is very fast paced, very operational, you know, great for that operational experience. But I wanted to try something different. And I saw the HR director’s role advertised at UCL. And of course, I knew about UCL, its fantastic brand, it's fantastic University. But when I looked into the history of UCL, it really spoke to me, you know, I grew up in, in London, five miles from UCL, and I was the first in my family to go to university, and I, I know how much that's changed, changed my life. So here was a university in London, whose founders felt it was really important that everyone had the opportunity to go to university. So, I just felt like this could be a real place for me a bit nervous because I've never worked in a sector. But I thought I would apply and then you know, I was over the moon when I was offered the job. And then after being here for a while, the Chief Operating Officer role came up. And yeah, I decided to go for that as well. Because I loved being at UCL, I saw an opportunity to really join up professional services more and again, you know, a bit of a bit of a chance in terms of, you know, moving from an HR director to COO, but I went through the process and you know, I was delighted the second time to be given this opportunity. So that was quite a whistle, whistle stop tour of my career, but that's how that's how I went from a checkout system at Safeway to COO at UCL.

**Gia Lulic**

I just think it's remarkable how far you've come and one of the things that I always wonder with people like yourselves who are in such high functioning positions was back then when you had that first retail job, was that a vision that you had back then or was there even an inkling of this is where I might end up or where you just kind of rolling with whatever came?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, I mean, definitely rolling whatever came and I feel with this you know, these types of questions I always just said yeah know I had a career plan, and it was all mapped out and I hit my milestones. But, but that, but that's not true. You know, I just worked for organisations, that seemed right for me doing jobs that I loved. And, you know, none of this was planned. And actually, if you'd spoken to me back when I was 21, and working for Safeway, I think I'd be shocked if you told me this is what I would end up doing. And, and back then I always thought people at the top of organisations, you know, they, they were born with something different, they had something in it, I didn't have and that's that that's not true. You know, there's obviously lots of talented people at all levels in, you know, in all organisations. So, so yeah, it wasn't planned. I think my younger self would be surprised that I'm doing what I'm doing. But I've always just tried to do jobs that I love for organisations that that I feel at home with.

**Gia Lulic**

And I think that so much of that sort of limitation that you have about what's possible for everyone else, as opposed to what's possible for you what stops people from going for certain roles, or even trying certain things out. And imposter syndrome is such a big theme for a lot of people, but especially women. Would you say that this imposter syndrome was something that you had to sort of face and handle? And how? And if so, how did you, how did you overcome this, because I think for most people, myself included, this is really the main thing that's stopping me from doing most of the things that I want to try out. And I believe that you probably are for our staff and students as well.

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, I mean, it's, it's definitely has been, and still is an issue for me. So, I feel that I have always suffered from a bit of lack of, of confidence. And, you know, sometimes I have taken a bit of a chance of my career. So, you know, moving into HR in the first place, and then moving from HR, into being a COO, I'm lucky enough to have always had people around me who encouraged me, who gave me that chance, took a risk on me, sometimes, but it often, it often felt uncomfortable. And sometimes I had to take a deep breath. And, you know, just go for it and see what happens. And I haven't always got every job that I've gone for, for either, but I think it's a real issue. And early on in my career, you know, I didn't even know it was called imposter syndrome, I just felt that, you know, I lacked confidence, I sometimes felt that I wasn't doing the job, I felt that I might be found out and people would realise that perhaps they promoted me a bit, a bit too far. Now, and, and for me, it hasn't been anything that I've completely conquered. So, I remember six months ago, when we were realising, you know, what COVID-19 might mean? And I felt would I be able to lead UCL through this, you know, really difficult time, you know, in terms of my role. And actually, I have, because I think if you can, if you can take that step forward, if you have a good team around you, if you have people that you can turn to and you can admit, when you don't feel confident, or when you're struggling, I think they're all the things that help you through. But I do agree that sometimes it impacts women in particular, and I feel that women, when they're applying for different roles really feel that they need to take everything off the list. And you don't need to do that, you know, you don't need to have done everything fits on a job description and job descriptions are my particular bugbear in terms of what people ask for, in terms of essential criteria. People have lots of transferable skills, if you sit down and realise some of the things that you've done, they may not look exactly like what's on the job description. But they're really key skills that you can then apply to different situations.

**Gia Lulic**

You mentioned that there was a level of apprehension and fear in relation to leading UCL out of the COVID-19 situation. If you could go back to that moment, could you talk to us a little bit about what your thought process was to overcome this doubt and fear and get back to a more balanced state of mind?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, it's such a good it's such a good question. So, one of the things that I did do was, was kind of ask a few of my team to join a call, where basically I said, look, this is going to be a tough few months, we didn't know how long it would last, then obviously looks like it's gonna last a bit longer than we thought. And I said to them, I don't have all the answers. So actually, can we just have a session where we go through what we think we need to do, and who do we need to involve in this and, you know, how do we understand how our teams are feeling how we can best support our teams. And for me, that was just such a great session in terms of going to the team and saying, I don't have all the answers, and I need your help. And I think the team found that because they told me this afterwards, you know, quite empowering, that they felt that they could input into how we would take this forward, and how we would check in with our teams and all the things that we needed to do. So, I think that's really key, you can't, I don't think you should be afraid of saying, I don't know, I don't know everything that we need to do, or I don't know how to deal with this situation. That's why you have a great team around you. And I think you can go and ask that team for help, which is what I did.

**Gia Lulic**

Just to touch there, on your point about encouraging collaboration and having the courage to show vulnerability to your team Fiona? Because I think it's an incredibly important point to make. I wondered, was it a strategic decision you made to lead in that way? Or is it something that's integral to your personality? And so, it just comes naturally?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, I think it's, I think it's a bit of all of those things. I mean, I think people understand that people don't always have the answers. And I think I've seen some leaders where they feel that they can't be vulnerable or say they don't know. And I think people can tell anyway, so I think it's always better. It's better, to be honest, but I think there was, there was a bit of a lightbulb moment for me when I was promoted at compass, which was the food service organisation, and I'd worked there for a really great HR director who had been promoted. And for the first six months, I kept thinking, you know, what would this person do, he was, you know, I just thought was such a great HR director, I kept going through each situation and thinking, you know, what would Robin do in this situation, or, you know, and then after that, I realised there isn't a template for a great HR director, or a leader, they came, they come in all different personalities, and different strengths and, and different ways of doing things. And, and, you know, it's a lot, it was six months for that to click with me. But then I realised, actually, I just need to approach this job as I've approached every other, by being myself and bringing my unique strengths to this. And also, you know, my unique flaws and development areas. And for me, that just then became, you know, a lot easier. It wasn't without challenges, but I felt I could do this job differently. And I could still do it, as well. And that was fine. So, I always refer back to that moment now, actually, in terms of being yourself.

**Gia Lulic**

Thank you for sharing that, Fiona. And I feel like again, it's such a powerful point to make. And such an important one as well, that actually, what makes an amazing leader is someone who's able to step out into the unknown and be innovative and pave a new way. And be an example of something that hasn't actually been done before. So, and I think that's one of the things that makes you such an effective and outstanding leader for UCL. So, I wanted to touch on briefly what you said before about being a woman in this industry or any industry really, as I wondered if, if you felt that that posed a challenge for you, in any way in getting to where you are today?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, that's a really interesting question. I think a lot of the barriers were my own internal barriers that I placed in front of me. So, I think that's what I would say, when we talk about the lack of confidence, and the imposter syndrome. I felt a lot of that was going on, in my head that made me certainly at the beginning, less confident in board meetings, for example than that, then I felt that I could be as quite hard on myself around coming out of those meetings and thinking, you know, did I say enough, did I contribute? Well, and it would almost hold me back from saying things in the future. So, I think for me, a lot of it was in my own head and my own battle, at what I would say that there's been lots of situations, particularly coming through retail, where I have been one of the few women in the team. And I think that is difficult, not that my colleagues weren't supportive because they were I've been lucky enough to have really great colleagues. But I feel it's just such a barrier when you are the only woman in the room. When I joined the compass UK board, I was the only woman but pretty soon others other women joined the board, which was great. And it just again, it just felt like an environment that I was more comfortable in. Yeah, as opposed to feeling the odd one out. So, so for me that that was the two things, you know, feeling different, and the internal barriers that I put to myself.

**Gia Lulic**

So, one of the things I wonder with your whole career journey and how far you've come. Did you have a certain person supporting you or did you have a mentor during the course of that because for me I think one of the most encouraging aspects of getting anywhere is having somebody to kind of keep you accountable and have someone to speak to or did you, were you your own sort of, you know, mentor that whole time?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, it's a great question. And I haven't had one consistent mentor throughout my whole career. But there have definitely been key people in my career, who I've either been line managers or other senior people in an organisation who have really helped move that confidence thing, so encouraged me to go for opportunities that otherwise I wouldn't have gone for, you know, I'd have a tendency to say, I'll wait for that vacancy to come up again, or I'll wait for a year because then I'll be more ready. And I have been lucky enough to have people around me that say, you know, don't be silly, go, you know, go for it. Now you're ready for it now. Or even if you don't get it, you know, that will, it will be a great experience and don't, and don't shy away from it. So, I haven't had one consistent mentor, but I've certainly had people in organisations and then to the latter part of my career, it's been really good to see more senior women. And so that's been great to be able to speak to other women. And that's where I realised that it wasn't just me that struggled with this confidence, imposter syndrome. You know, it's what lots of people feel like. And that was quite liberating in itself, because a lot of the time I was thinking, you know, this is just me, everyone else is in the senior level are sorted. And they never worry about these sorts of things. And, you know, they're so polished, and they're so confident. So, it was really nice to be able to confide in people and understand that that's how they felt at times, too.

**Gia Lulic**

And this is why it's so important to get to open up that conversation and just have everyone be open and candid about what they're all experiencing. So, it doesn't feel because one of the things about imposter syndrome is that you feel incredibly lonely. And you think that everyone else, as you said, has it all together. So, Fiona, if there are certain qualities, let's say three certain qualities that you could attribute to your success as a leader or success throughout your career, what would you say?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, that's a really great question. I mean, I think I think one of the things is just, you know, a drive to be better and do the best possible job, which I think I got from my dad, actually. So, he, he left school quite long, young age with no qualifications. So, he was always, you know, you've got to do your best you've got a, you know, you can achieve whatever you want to achieve, and you should just go for it. So, so I think he's been really instrumental in terms of, you know, how I felt growing up, but also how has encouraged me afterwards, I think there is that drive to, you know, kind of, you know, be the best. I think another thing I got from my parents as well, is, is just empathy, and kindness, you know, I sometimes see people who are lovely people, and then suddenly, in a work situation, you know, they lose that kind of empathy side of them. So, I think it's really important to, to understand what's going on in other people's worlds, and to support them. And to just to just show some, some kindness. And I think the other thing is curiosity. So, this is the thing I've got as a kid, as well just ask all, you know, 1000s of questions. Why is the sky blue? And why is the sound yellow and all of that kind of stuff? And it's never left me. And I think that's such an important trait, because I think it's that curiosity that helps you really understand an organisation you work for, really understand what's important to people and to get under the skin of what's working, and what's not. So, I think it's that kind of drive kindness, and curiosity.

**Gia Lulic**

Amazing. Thank you. And I think one of the things that your colleagues, myself included admires about you is your is your humility, and how personable you are with everyone in the organisation, again, is that something that is just natural to you? Or is that something that you consciously made a decision of? I'm going to remain grounded, or was it something, is it just innately part of who you are as a person?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, I think I think I did make a conscious decision that, you know, whatever role that I did, I would remain true to myself and grounded and I remember how I still remember how I felt when I started out in my career and more junior and people, you felt you couldn't ask for advice from people. And I do feel like I say I have had some key people in my career, who did take some time and then and supported me and gave me advice. And I feel I feel I've been really lucky in my career, because people have taken that chance on me and spent that time and I really feel that that's what I want to do for other people as well. Because it can, you know, it can feel really difficult, particularly when you're at the start of your career, and you don't always know how things work and you know, you need to go somewhere for advice. So, I feel really consciously that I want to help the people that are starting on their careers now or people that want to move in terms of their careers. So, I think that was a conscious choice in terms of being available to people. And if I can help them even in just a small way, then I feel that that is part of my role as a leader.

**Gia Lulic**

So, Fiona, you mentioned that UCL was a place that you really wanted to work at, what was it like to, to get that job? In the position you were in at the time? And how did you feel?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, no, well, first of all, I've been I was just absolutely delighted, I was so excited. As I said, you know, I just thought what this wonderful world class institution, but after that, I started to kind of get a bit intimidated or worried because then come to this place, and it's just like, full of the cleverest people that I ever would have known. And, you know, that UCL asked for some information about me. So, they could make the announcement and I remember going home to my husband and say, Oh, you know, because I mean, I'm really proud I went to university, and I'm really proud that I did chemical engineering. But yeah, I got a 2:2, and I went to a university that wasn't a Russell Group. So, you know, in hence my husband, and I said, Oh, my God, you know, what are they gonna want, they're gonna think I'm not the most academic, of people. But actually, you know, I shouldn't have worried because, yeah, I bring something different to all of those clever people that work at UCL because of my operational experience. But I think that's the other side of the coin at working at such a high achieving amazing institution, is that it can be quite intimidating for a normal person to come in and be part of that community.

**Gia Lulic**

You mentioned before that your father was one of the people that sort of installed that confidence. And I think, just from my own personal experience, I think your parents are sort of those first, the first people that reflect sort of your self-esteem back at you, if you could tell us a little bit more about that relationship, and how that kind of played a role in where you are now. And the lessons that you got from him.

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, and, and, you know, I feel so lucky to have the parents that I had some I think I said before, that my dad left school with no qualifications. So, for him, education was always really important. So, he encouraged me to read so I used to read a lot. When I was a child, and he said, you know, you've always got to do really well at school, which I guess was what most parents tell their children. But I think what he was really keen to get across was, you can achieve whatever you want to achieve, and don't let certain things hold you back, you know, like, where you grew up, or you know, the circumstances, or your background, you know, so he was always pushing me forward in terms of going to university, and he had no particular career path in mind for me, but he was like, whatever you want to do, please make sure that you do you do it, and you don't, and you don't hold yourself back. And I've really carried that around. And, you know, even the UCL job, you know, I went to speak to my dad and said, you know, is this something I should do? And he said, look, I can tell that you really love this organisation, you know, you should just really, you should really go for it. And so, he's just been such a constant source of inspiration and encouragement for me. And I think that's so important, because again, I think it is about the barriers we put in front of ourselves. And some of that is because of the sometimes the families that we come to, I mentioned that neither of my parents went to university. So, it wasn't something that, you know, as a family, they could really guide me with, but they just said, do what it is that you want to do, do whatever you dream of, because that will be possible for you. So, I think that encouragement, particularly when you're younger, and for me, lacking in confidence was just so important.

**Gia Lulic**

And I think that for our students, for example, who are just starting out in a job, if you could give them one piece of advice about relating to work ethic or anything to do with helping them to reach that next step. What might that piece of advice be?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, and I'm probably going to break your rule and have a few pieces of advice, if that's okay, and one is-

**Gia Lulic**

Please do.

**Fiona Ryland**

one's definitely related to be yourself. There is no template for what makes a good manager and leaders and I think often you know; we have these management competencies or leadership qualities but actually you can be a leader in a million different ways. So, I think people really have to be true to themselves and do it in a way that that reflects them. I think people shouldn't be afraid to take risks, you know, some things will work, and some things will don't. But if you don't take that step, then it will, it will never happen. And, you know, it's okay not to get a job, it's okay to make a mistake. That's what makes us resilient. And it's really all, you know, it can be really awful when, you know, those kinds of things happen. But they do happen. And the career is not just, you know, each step forward, there are setbacks and their sideways moves. And that's absolutely fine. But if you if you never kind of take a risk, then you know, you'll never, you'll never move forward. In terms of that. And I think that's really important. Not everything will go your way. But and but I think the other thing is, is, is really think about what are those internal barriers that you're putting in front of yourself, what is your internal voice telling you that you're not very good at, because often, that's not important, you can overcome it, you can find someone to help you with it. And the other thing I think, is learned, I know, I probably shouldn't say this, either. But it's about feedback. So, I remember getting a lot of feedback when I was early on in my career about how I lacked gravitas, and that really fed into that lack of confidence. And to be honest with you, I didn't even know what they really meant by that. But I think it meant that I didn't make a good, you know, initial impression or impact on my presentation skills weren't very good. And I just felt that really held me back. And, you know, feedback is good if it's very thoughtful and given by somebody who really cares for you as an individual, but you don't have to believe every piece of feedback, you get either. You know, you can do it, you can do it your way. So that would be my advice.

**Gia Lulic**

Thank you, Fiona. And I really, I so relate to your last point, because I think as a young person, you're so impressionable, where our students are now and everything, everything that's said to you, you sort of do internalise, because that's the feedback, the only feedback you take is what's kind of being reflected back to you from your external world. So, I think that is incredibly important to know. So, one of the questions that I feel like a lot of people would want to pose to you and the sort of high demand role you're in, is how you keep a healthy balance between your work and life, and whether that's a challenge for you. And if you have some tips around that.

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, it's a great question. And it is, it's a real challenge for a lot, a lot of people me included, because particularly as I've got two more senior roles, I felt more responsible for delivering what I said I was going to deliver, there's more people relying on that. And you know, and I'm a really conscientious person in that respect. But I think it is about setting boundaries. So, you know, I do some work at some weekends, I do some, you know, some work at some evenings. But I also don't lose sight of the stuff that I love doing outside of work. And I will always schedule that in. So, if I have to do some work at weekends, I'll pick one day and the number of hours. And I'll say, right, that that's my time for catching up or working on a particular project, where I know that I've got a deadline, but I'll make sure that I feel the rest of the time, even if it's only reading or you know, doing something like that. So, I think it's about those boundaries, and making sure you don't lose sight of all the stuff that you love, outside of work, and is difficult, because I feel like I say as I've got more senior, that there's more responsibility for me to do whatever it takes to deliver what I need to deliver. But you also have to say to yourself that you need to be an effective leader. In order to do that. You need to have time off and you need to be rested. And you need you need a break from what you're doing. So actually, it's not an unreasonable or selfish thing to make sure that you do have plenty of downtime, because it actually makes you more effective as a leader and you know, don't stop doing the stuff that you love outside of work.

**Gia Lulic**

And just to that point, Fiona, I wonder, in your opinion, how important is it to love your work and kind of view it almost as a hobby and for it to be aligned with sort of your own what you like and dislike personally or is that important? Is that an aspect of being successful in your job?

**Fiona Ryland**

I think you have to; I think you have to believe in the organisation that you work for. I think you have to feel that those organisational values and cultures are a good fit for you because you know, I love my job. I love UCL. I don't love every single aspect of my jobs. You have to find, you know your kind of dream. If you do, I think that's that. That's brilliant. But I think what you do need to feel is that you are aligned with what an organisation is trying to achieve and the way that it does that, and the values and culture that it has. And yeah, that's why I feel so happy and at home at UCL.

**Gia Lulic**

And just to backtrack a little bit with the point you made about, about the importance of taking risks. I think one of the kinds of paralysing outcomes of taking risks is failure. How do you, what is your What is your perspective on failure? And how have you used that to kind of fuel your fuel your success, as opposed to let it let it hold you back?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, and I understand that fear of failure. I think I mentioned before that I'm a real warrior. So that does that does weigh on my mind. And, you know, particularly the beginning of my career as well. And I made a lot of mistakes, and I got a lot of things wrong. But in a way, I thought that was helpful to do it so early, because I really learned from that and I felt better prepared, going into situations later on in my career. Because A- I've built up, you know, quite a lot of resilience. I've learned, I mean, you just learn loads when something goes badly, you learn so much more than for when something goes well. So, for me, I always try to reframe those. I mean, you always feel disappointed, or you always feel bad in the moment. But I tried to reframe into what can I take from this? You know, what have I learned? And I think the other thing as well is that, certainly, I think most people are like this, but I'm like this is you just focus 10 times more on the stuff that doesn't go well. And I think one thing that I did learn from a training course that will stay with me for a long time is to reconnect to your successes. Because if 10 things go well, and one thing doesn't, you know, like 95% of your time will be taken up with the one thing that doesn't, and I think you know, when that happens at the end of the week, or at the end of the month, if you could just reflect on what has gone well?, because I think as humans, we just don't spend any time doing that. And I think that would help balance it as well. You know, there's many more things that go right for people than then go wrong. But I've learned so much from the mistakes that I made. And I think it made me more resilient earlier on.

**Gia Lulic**

And I think that's one of those one of those key messages that we should have been taught in school at some point, because it's just so pivotal to how we move forward, not just through our career, but also through life as well. And I do find that these days, for some reason, the pressure that, you know, students and young people are facing to get things perfect is for some reason due to the media, or I don't know what but it's that much more than perhaps, you know, it was a decade ago or something like that. Would you agree with that? Is that what you're seeing as well? Do you think people are under more pressure to get things right these days? And they're less likely to just, you know, everyone kind of takes themselves too seriously in that way, and is not willing to kind of fail or face any negative experiences to get to where they're going? Or is that just my perception?

**Fiona Ryland**

No, I think you're right. I think if I contrast my experiences as a student, a long time ago, with what students face now, I think there is a lot more pressure, either through what they feel themselves or through society, or other areas. And, and I think it is a shame because I think if you're if you're frightened of making a mistake, or if you fear that you're not going to get the type of degree you really wanted is much more, it's much more about the bigger picture. And there's much more to a person and you know, the degree that they got or where they went to university to get that. You know, I probably in my early career, I drew as much on my early experience of working in Safeway, interacting with people as well as the degree that I did, which obviously did give me a lot of skills and different experience. So yeah, I think there is more pressure and I really feel for young people. But but we need to look at, you know, people in the round, it's not just about their degree or where they went to university or the results that they got, but I understand that that is really hard for people, but people have got a lot more skills. If you think about what people do outside of university or the clubs and societies or the part time job they've got, you know, there's just got such a wealth of skills and experience that sit outside of that.

**Gia Lulic**

Absolutely. So, Fiona you mentioned that you like to read books. Is there any particular book that you've read or anything that you've watched that's had a particular impact on you?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, I think the book that I keep going back to is “Don't Sweat the Small Stuff.” Because I mentioned before that I do worry a lot. So, I like to go back to that book. That helps remind me and gives me tips and techniques for not worrying so much. So yeah, that's the book. That's my go to book.

**Gia Lulic**

Amazing. I think I've actually heard of that book. And I'm definitely going to check it out. Because I love all this content. So, my final question to you Fiona would be, and it's the question that we always ask in the end, is, what would Fiona now tell a younger Fiona about career and life in general that would kind of soothe her and make life easier for her?

**Fiona Ryland**

Yeah, I would definitely tell a younger me to stop worrying about everything. And to just focus on doing what I enjoyed, and to believe in myself a bit more. But not to be so anxious, and so worried about everything that I do, which was probably a very common thing for me, particularly when I was younger, and to, you know, enjoy some of the experiences a bit more, you know, the fact that I was worried about what people thought of me, I was worried about the feedback that I was given. I was worried about if I was good enough, I think meant that sometimes I didn't enjoy, you know, some of the experiences that I had, so I think a big message for younger me, stop worrying, enjoy it a little bit more. Some things will happen that you're not happy with, but that's absolutely fine.