

Graeme Dingle Foundation Q & A



Melissa Moon

We reached out to Melissa Moon, MNZM, one of New Zealand's best long distance runners to hear what she had to say about the Graeme Dingle Foundation and the mahi we do.

Melissa has completed an Outward Bound Course, spent 10 years volunteering and working with homeless at the Soup kitchen therefore shares similar values with the Foundation.

Fun Fact: Melissa Moon won a race up the Empire State Building running 86 flights of stairs in 2010.



**GRAEME DINGLE
FOUNDATION**

Empowering kids to overcome life's obstacles
Whakamanawatia ngā tamariki kia eke panuku

Q.

When was a time you had to be resilient in your career?

A.

A time of resilience was during the Blue Planet Run, a 95 day relay run around the world for charity - to raise awareness of the 1.1 billion people who don't have access to safe drinking water. I was one of 20 international runners who ran for 95 days, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

We covered 25,000km which tested me both **mentally, emotionally and physically** like **I had never been tested before**. We survived on very little sleep, bitten by Siberian horse flies, stomach upsets in China and endured the 49 degree heat of the Gobi desert in Mongolia and Mojave desert in Nevada.

There were many times **my mind was telling me to stop** but I had made a commitment to myself before the relay started that **no matter what** I would complete those 95 days. I worked hard to keep my attitude positive by being in control of my thoughts, reminding myself **'pain is temporary, quitting lasts forever'** and once you learn to quit it becomes a habit.

The most important thing was **'Perspective'** I reminded myself constantly of the 6000 human beings who die every day because they lack safe drinking water.

I had **NOTHING** to complain about and this perspective changed my attitude, thoughts and mood - it kept my mind strong!

Q.

What would be your advice to those thinking of becoming a peer mentor?

A.

Seeing the **potential** of a human being shine through can bring you the greatest satisfaction especially knowing you have **made a difference** in that persons life.

As a special needs teacher and volunteer at the soup kitchen working with the homeless I learnt to interact and understand others and their personal situations without being judgmental.

When an individual feels **valued** they will be **motivated** to perform/act better, gaining their **trust** and seeing **potential** in everyone. You can still be fiercely determined with compassion, working alongside people with flexibility and sensitivity and the most important quality is showing **kindness**.

I think if you have the above qualities you will make a fantastic peer mentor and get so much satisfaction in return.

