

Felicity Chapman

Weaving New Stories



“The WiRE Program has created a valuable support network - It has encouraged me to stay on the entrepreneurship journey”

YOU AND YOUR VENTURE

What words would describe you as a person?

Creative, compassionate, an awesome cheerleader, shy, nurturing, caring, funny, stubborn, sarcastic, curious, a lifelong learner

Describe how you would pitch your venture

I am a weaver. I am passionate about working with communities to weave together creative ideas with human and financial capital to deliver strong sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes for indigenous families and their mobs.

At what stage is your venture?

Probably a better word is ‘project’ not venture - Initial start-up

What is your service or product?

Project development, grant writing, training on setting up a business, mentoring

What is the structure of your venture?

Sole trader

What type of venture do you have?

Community development

Does your venture reach local/national/international markets/audiences?

Local

If your venture is not reaching an international market, do you wish to extend your venture to do so?

At present no



IDENTITY

In one word, characterise your life as an entrepreneur

(Why this particular word?)

Unpredictable – because you never know what opportunities are just around the corner that may take you in a totally unexpected direction

What does success mean to you?

Making a difference to an individual or community

What is your favourite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

Flexibility

MOTIVATION / MINDSET

What mindset(s) helps make you successful?

Having an open mind

What ignited the spark in you to start a new business venture or to make significant changes in an existing business?

Wanting to be able to give back to the local indigenous community that has welcomed me with open arms

How do you conquer those moments of doubt that so often stifle or trip or stop so many entrepreneurs with great ideas... what pushes you through?

I used to get paralysed by fear when I needed to take a big step. However having a near death experience has put all those 'big fears' into perspective. It is better to try and fail, than to sit quietly on the sidelines wondering 'what if'.

What is your favourite quote?

"When women gather together, they intuitively create healing and positive change that ripples out across their communities and throughout the world. Never forget how powerful you are" (Felicity Chapman 2018)

VISION

What is your vision for your venture

To equip indigenous women with the skills and self-confidence to follow their dreams, weaving together their artistic gifts and growing a successful business



SELF-EFFICACY AND SKILLS

To what do you attribute your success in progressing your entrepreneurial journey?

Curiosity, intuition, and perseverance

What would you say are the top three skills needed to be a successful entrepreneur?

Research, flexibility, perseverance

What was your biggest mistake in an entrepreneurial context?

Financially propping up a business that wasn't going to become self-sustaining

What was your biggest barrier you faced in your entrepreneurial journey and how did you overcome it?

Developing the confidence to talk to strangers was my biggest barrier, learning to use the right words helped overcome that barrier

What sacrifices have you had to make to be a successful entrepreneur?

Spending quality time with my family, and maintaining my health

In your view what factors help individuals make the transition to self-employment?

Knowing that having independence and flexibility far out-weighs the security of a regular pay cheque

STRATEGY

What would you say are the top three key elements for starting your business?

To meet an unmet need
Freedom
To create financial independence

What has been your most successful form(s) of marketing?

Word of Mouth, Festival stalls

What are your thoughts on the value of partnerships?

It depends on the definition of partnership. I have seen a lot of partnership business structures fail, so I often think it is better to go alone. Developing partnerships with businesses/individuals that have a particular skill-set that will help build your business, I am open to as long as the roles are very clear and specific.

Where did your venture funding/capital come from?

With my previous venture, I already had an existing successful business, so surplus funds were utilised to help start up a new venture. With my current venture there is no funding available as I haven't earned an income for 12 months, so it is definitely working on the presumption of a no cost startup as I am using my skills, my existing tools, and working from home.

What creative strategies did you use to execute on minimal cash flow?

Everything is done by me, so I have become the 'Jill of all trades'

What habits helped make you successful?

Time management, being a lifelong learner, perseverance, being able to look outside the box to find creative solutions

What are your top two tools that you use in your venture (i.e. online tools)

None, not working online at present

Do you want to grow your business? How will you do this?

Eventually yes. At the moment my priority is regaining my health and I am only taking on a small project to stop me going stir crazy at home

How do you stay motivated when things get busy with family and other things?

I have the unique ability to stay focused on multiple demands and I am an excellent juggler of time and roles

NETWORKS

To what extent do you agree with the following statement and why?

"The connections and networks that exist between people and enabled cooperation is one of the most important things in entrepreneurship"

Yes, however it is important to find the right networks and connections that have the right synergies with your business and lifestyle to make them successful

What kinds of networks do you access to help your entrepreneurial journey?

At the moment I am connecting with a number of diverse Aboriginal elder, business and health groups, to help with this particular project



IMPACT OF THE WiRE PROGRAM

Why did you decide to participate in the WiRE Program?

Because it was focused on women in rural, regional and remote areas, most programs are very city centric and don't have a clue about the unique challenges faced by women outside of the city areas.

What knowledge have you acquired?

Improved my understanding of Marketing in it's different forms

What skills were developed?

How to tighten my language and to focus on one thing at a time

How useful were these skills in developing your venture and/or your future career?

They gave me the confidence to look at a project I have been considering and circling around for about 15 years

What has been the impact of the WiRE Program?

(on both you personally and your venture)

The WiRE Program has created a valuable support network and I have made some great friends along the way. Venture wise it has made me realise it is okay to walk away when something isn't working and to try something new.

What benefits have you derived by participating in the program?

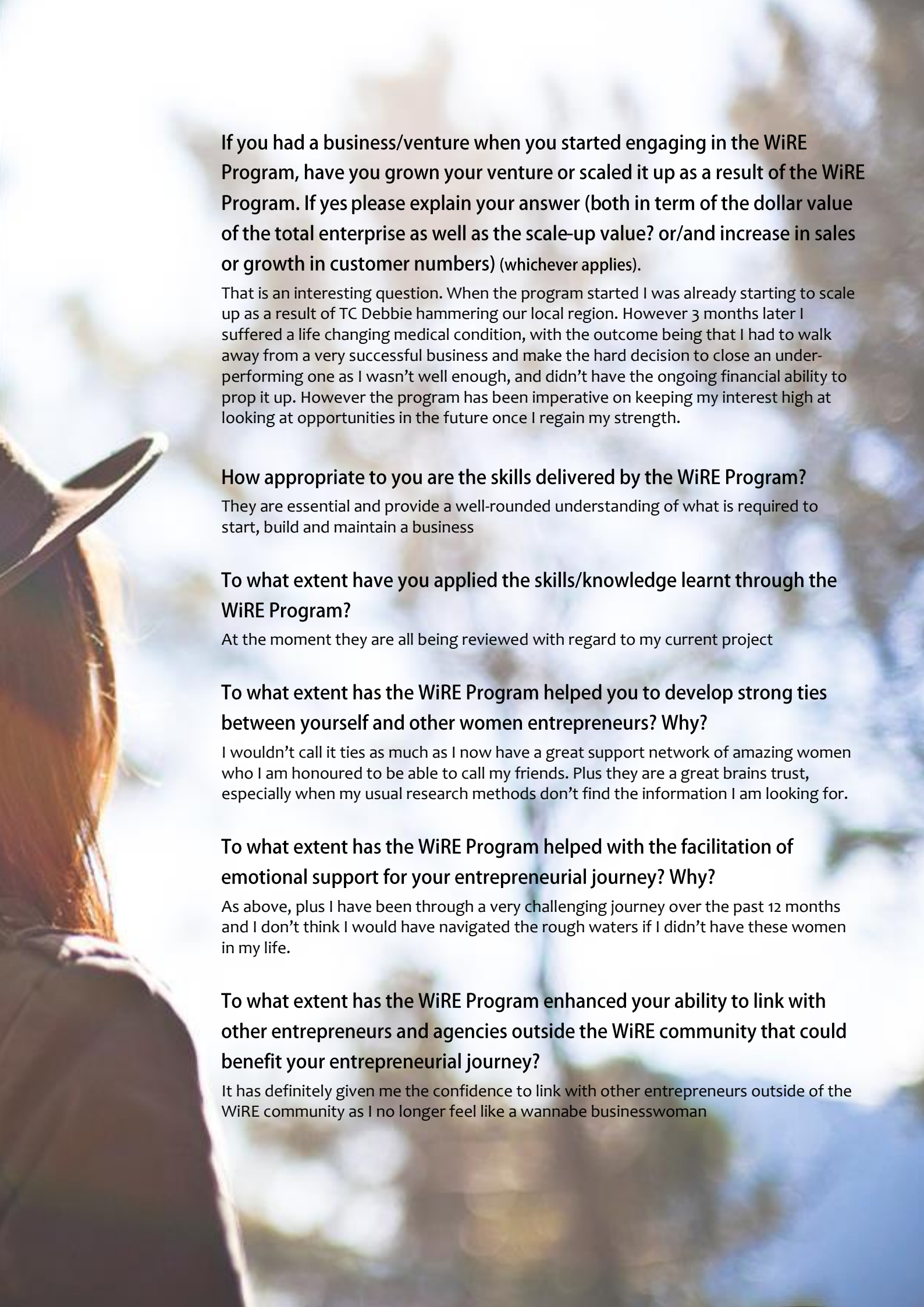
Definitely an improvement in self-confidence, I feel supported not just through being educated but also emotionally

To what extent has the WiRE Program affected your attitudes to entrepreneurship or employment more generally?

It has encouraged me to stay on the entrepreneurship journey especially as I don't enjoy the structure of being a long term employee, though I am happy to be engaged as an employee on a project basis

If you have started a venture, what do you think are the chances of its survival?

It will definitely be a slow organic growth as working is not my priority at the moment



If you had a business/venture when you started engaging in the WiRE Program, have you grown your venture or scaled it up as a result of the WiRE Program. If yes please explain your answer (both in term of the dollar value of the total enterprise as well as the scale-up value? or/and increase in sales or growth in customer numbers) (whichever applies).

That is an interesting question. When the program started I was already starting to scale up as a result of TC Debbie hammering our local region. However 3 months later I suffered a life changing medical condition, with the outcome being that I had to walk away from a very successful business and make the hard decision to close an under-performing one as I wasn't well enough, and didn't have the ongoing financial ability to prop it up. However the program has been imperative on keeping my interest high at looking at opportunities in the future once I regain my strength.

How appropriate to you are the skills delivered by the WiRE Program?

They are essential and provide a well-rounded understanding of what is required to start, build and maintain a business

To what extent have you applied the skills/knowledge learnt through the WiRE Program?

At the moment they are all being reviewed with regard to my current project

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped you to develop strong ties between yourself and other women entrepreneurs? Why?


I wouldn't call it ties as much as I now have a great support network of amazing women who I am honoured to be able to call my friends. Plus they are a great brains trust, especially when my usual research methods don't find the information I am looking for.

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped with the facilitation of emotional support for your entrepreneurial journey? Why?

As above, plus I have been through a very challenging journey over the past 12 months and I don't think I would have navigated the rough waters if I didn't have these women in my life.

To what extent has the WiRE Program enhanced your ability to link with other entrepreneurs and agencies outside the WiRE community that could benefit your entrepreneurial journey?

It has definitely given me the confidence to link with other entrepreneurs outside of the WiRE community as I no longer feel like a wannabe businesswoman



If relevant, have you influenced someone else through your WiRE experience to start or grow a venture? “Passing it on” .

Yes

Name the biggest overall lesson you have learnt in your entrepreneurial journey so far that could be passed on to other women

Never give up, and it is okay to walk away from something that isn't working, and to try out different ideas. You only get one life, so make the most of it.

Please share some final thoughts about the WiRE Program

(See video)