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Can-do expert

Jodie De Ruvo inspires people to aim for the stars and achieve their potential, writes **Dannielle Elms**

BEING paid to spend all day on Facebook is a dream for many people. Yet this is an everyday reality for Jodie De Ruvo, 25, the first disability social facilitator with Nova Employment, an organisation helping people with disabilities find work.

De Ruvo took up the role after being approached by Nova Employment CEO Martin Wren, who wanted to reach out to a younger generation. He believed her likable personality and constant optimism in the face of her own disability made her perfect for the job.

"I love inspiring people," she says. "Part of my job is to cheer up people if they are in a bad frame of mind. The best thing is to hear them say to me, 'Thank you so much, you've made my day!'"

De Ruvo, who was born with brittle bone disease, communicates with people with disabilities and has learned that she can best relate through her own experiences.

"I want to help people with disabilities to realise that just because you cannot walk, or are hearing or sight impaired [does not mean you can't] do anything you want to and anything in this world is accessible."

Her correspondents are dealing with home, lifestyle and employment issues.

De Ruvo has experience of the latter after being unemployed for a year.

Some employers continue to have misconceptions about how much people with disabilities can contribute in the workplace, she says.

"I'm so lucky to now be in a position which allows me to try to alter this mindset."

De Ruvo maintains a blog site and a Facebook page with inspiring stories of people with disabilities.

This involves researching, interviews, writing and editing, skills De Ruvo says come easily even though she has had no formal training.

"I always wanted to be a presenter and I've always enjoyed writing. People have said I'm a natural," she says.

De Ruvo had previously worked as a customer service representative, a receptionist, and with promotions, dealing with people on a daily basis. She is also taking a leadership course to help develop her mentoring skills. And she watches other people's interviews to help develop her own techniques.

"I'm a perfectionist so I'm always working to improve. I watch my interviews thinking was there something I could have done differently," she says.

And learning will continue, as Nova helps De Ruvo realise her potential.

"I've found the perfect job. Nova has accommodated my disability right down to the right height desk; they have made everything so easy," she says. Find De Ruvo at candoability.com.au or on Facebook as Jo Blogs.

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Dream job: Jodie De Ruvo revels in her role at Nova Employment
Picture: Katrina Tepper