

# Transcript- Episode 61 – The Blind Sport Podcast Pioneer Ironman Gillian Walker

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## Introduction

This is episode 61 of The Blind Sport Podcast entitled Pioneer Ironman Gillian Walker.

Hi I'm Mike, and this is The Blind Sport Podcast. The sports show for the blind, the partially sighted and the supportive sighty.

On the show we'll be talking with Gillian Walker from New Zealand about Ironman Triathlon. Gillian has completed 17 full Ironman triathlons including being the first blind person to compete in New Zealand as well as the home of Ironman Hawaii.

A 3.8km swim, a 180km cycle followed by a 42km marathon run makes for a big day out. So how does a blind person compete in this endurance multi-sport? With some good old guts and determination I'd say.

Hi there, I hope this episode finds you fit and well.

Before we chat to Gillian, I would like to thank you for the feedback received re episode 60, where we spoke with Mel Scott from BlindAlive.

Some of the comments that I received included:

From Len. What a wonderful idea BlindAlive is. But I do miss being able to see those fitness chicks on the TV.

From Katy. It was nice to hear Mel's story. I guess my only excuse now for being fat and lazy is being fat and lazy LOL.

Please email me with any comments

**Contact Jingle** - To contact Mike or comment on The Blind Sport Podcast, submit a feedback form from the website [www.theblindsportpodcast.com](http://www.theblindsportpodcast.com), email [Mike@theblindsportpodcast.com](mailto:Mike@theblindsportpodcast.com), send us a tweet or follow us on Twitter @blindsportmike, or visit The Blind Sport Podcast page on Facebook.

## Interview

Mike – Welcome along Gillian.

Gillian - Hi.

Mike - Veteran pioneer Ironman, really ay?

Gillian - Dinosaur if you like?

Mike - I wouldn't go quite that far. I wanted to sit down and have a chat with you about your experience of Ironman and triathlon because especially in NZ but I'd probably say worldwide you're probably one of the first ones to actually get into the sport of triathlon, especially Ironman.

Can you please start off by telling us what your initial story of vision loss is? How did you lose your vision in the beginning?

Gillian - Ok, well. When I was about six I was diagnosed with chronic iritis, a rare eye disease and the pupil and the iris were stuck together. That was the lay terminology. And I was given corticosteroids so that they didn't pull apart and tear and in doing that I would have lost my sight by the time I was probably eleven. So these corticosteroids gave me ten years of reasonably good sight. And it was really important because obviously going through school, education, it was really important.

By the time I was nineteen I was blind. In my left eye I was blind when I was thirteen, in my right eye that carried me through pretty much until I was nineteen. But even then I felt like I could see more than probably I could. I've always believed that sight is your imagination and I've always had a great imagination. I guess that's the explanation that I've come up with.

Mike - Awesome.

So once you lost your sight, you got in to triathlon. So why triathlon over other sports? What was the big thing that got you started?

Gillian - It was by default really because when I lost my sight and I thought like a lot of people do, oh well this is my lot and I'm going to do my best with what I've got and obviously a lot of ball games were out at that stage and I didn't have a lot of hand / eye ball coordination for obvious reasons so I thought I could swim and I've always done water skiing from an early age, from the age of five. Fell off the skis enough and had to swim to my skis so I guess I knew I could swim.

I was always a reasonable runner. No big running, just picnic running and school running and that sort of fun running.

And cycling. Well I cycled to school I guess so I knew I could cycle. And I knew there was such a thing as a tandem so those were the three sports I thought hey I

can do with a reasonable amount of achievement. And I didn't know at that stage, well I don't think there was such a thing as a triathlon.

I was doing those three things just as a way of fitness and to vent some of the frustration that the blindness caused me. In the first years of losing your sight, well for me, everybody's different but it was really frustrating. And I felt great when I got my fitness up a little bit. I was able to handle things a lot better.

Mike - Cool.

So in the beginning, how did you find your initial guides?

Gillian - Well, initially I had a job on a switchboard, AMP switchboard and I really enjoyed it but it was sitting down and it was a long day, 9 to 5. I'd been there seven years and I had had some migraine headaches. I got in to massage which helped me with migraines.

Then, I thought wow, I wouldn't mind learning how to do this. I really would have loved to have been a physio but that was off to England, no guide dog and five years wasn't doable for me at that stage. So I learnt how to massage and I was working down at Warehams in Takapuna and that introduced me to the sports industry. It's a huge industry.

I'd heard about the Golden Girl through one of my clients. She had done the Golden Girl. Alison Roe actually. And I thought wow, I'd like to do that. And it was quite a short achievable goal, I thought. It was a 500 metre swim, 20 kilometre bike and 5 kilometre run. And so I asked one of the guys that was organising it, do you think it would be ok if I did it? And he said yeah, yeah. So I got another guy that was in the army to help me actually. I didn't realise the Golden Girl was, I should have thought, it was just for girls. So here was this guy Rob in the army, in his element because he's surrounded by all these girls helping me in the swim, and then on the bike, on the tandem and on the run. And he was telling other girls where to change their gears and it was quite funny when I look back.

But it was great. I really love the comradery and I came well up in the first twelve or something, I think I came twelfth. It was a good field, about two hundred people. I hadn't done a lot of training and I'd walked a lot with my guide dog. Walked to work and it was in Takapuna, I live in Birkenhead so it was a good start actually. And went from there.

The next triathlon I did, I doubled the length so it was the standard triathlon or Olympic triathlon. And oh, that was a pretty stormy day. I swallowed a lot of water and brought most of my breakfast up on the bike. It didn't put me off so I really got hooked.

And then I decided on if I double this, I can do a half Ironman. And then somebody suggested an Ironman's only twice a half Ironman, and usually add a half hour so I started looking at the logistics of doing an Ironman and one of my clients, Paul McDonald said oh well, Frog. That's my nickname. You've really bitten off too much to chew now. And um, that's all anybody needed to say and needs to say to me now and I think, I'll show you.

So I started training and Alison Roe said, yip, you can do it but you have to have a good training program and I'll set your training program. And ok, the first triathlon, Ironman triathlon or triathlon you do, you never do it for time. You just do it for completion. And she gave me a really good triathlon program. I trained for a year before the first Ironman and I had a lot of trouble, not trouble but it was a challenge, getting people to accept that I was blind and I could do this sport that sighted people could do.

For instance, the Chelsea swim was the first swim that I did and Bert and Mamie Raper were the organisers and she'd been in the Empire Games so we're really going back there. I might be a dinosaur but I don't know what that makes her. Anyhow, so they said yes she can do the swim but you know, you've got to have a swimmer on either side and a boat to make sure she doesn't need any rescuing and got to go right at the back, be after everybody else has gone. We did all that.

If you want to join in, sometimes you've got to just suck it up and not make too much fuss and prove that you can do it well without inconveniencing anybody else and then you're away. And after I'd done a few of these swims and a few bikes and a few runs, people were really inspired and they we're offering actually to help me as guides.

Mike - Cool. What about as far as the event coordinators? You know, you're doing some big events. You did Taupo Ironman here in New Zealand what, seventeen times now? What about those big events? How did they actually look upon you as far as a blind athlete competing when no one else had really done it before?

Gillian – The first time I wanted to do it, the Ironman was in Auckland actually, the first I think seven that I did. And two guys came from organisers and at that stage the whole of the admin staff organising the Ironman were men. So two of them came, the manager of the biking section and the manager of the swim section. They said yes you can do it but here are the stipulations. You can have four swimmers, one either side. That's how I used swimmers as my human lane ropes, at that stage that's how I swum. And they would just keep me in a straight line. They'd kind of keep me inside of.....

Mike - So you were swimming free between them?

Gillian - Yes, between them. But I felt a bit like a ping pong ball at times and when they pushed me if I was going a bit out of kilter, it would change your whole direction.

But I did that for the first, at least five years and it wasn't until I met somebody from Australia and he had visual impairment. He had sight in one eye and the other eye that was blind, he had a bicycle tube on that leg so that the guy protected him from his blind side so I started doing that then.

But anyhow, going back to the administration managers, they said yes you can do the Ironman and you can have four guides for the swim, we'll have a life boat half way so that they change over so you can have two swimmers for the first 2 kilometres and two swimmers for the second half. And I thought well I don't need that because lots of people can swim three point eight kilometres. Then you can have four runners, one to do 10 kilometres each or two to do a half marathon each but when it comes to the cycle, you have to do the cycle with a girl, which is fair enough and here's a big thing, they said. You have to have the bike changed, the gearing changed so you do most of the cycling. And I looked at them and thought oh, what do you think I am, Superwoman? You know that was just crazy.

And so I got in touch with a guy, I think his name was Graham Bell from memory and he was in charge of cycling for the Olympics and he explained to them, that is not how a tandem works. A tandem works on momentum and you've got to have equal peddling. Nobody can carry anybody for that length of time, for that duration of time. So they insisted I do it with a girl and that was fine, that was ok. I managed to get good girls but after about seven Ironmen I was really finding it hard one year to get a girl to cycle with me because a lot of girls, and remembering when I first started there were only seventy girls that did the Ironman and so I had to really look at getting a cyclist. I just couldn't find one, one year so I said look can I do it with a guy? And from then on, I've done the bike with average Joe Bloggs guys. Now I've done faster times in all of my Ironmen with girls then I have with guys.

Mike – Oh, ok.

Gillian – Yeah and I think it's just the logistics of the weight. Guys are usually bigger. I don't know, I don't know but go figure that's just the way it is. And everybody has realised, hey I hold my own in the swim and the run and if I do get a bit of an advantage in the bike and I doubt that I do because I over compensate on the bike a bit I think. I'm sort of aware that a lot of people, oh she's not peddling on the back and I sort of try to peddle twice as hard. I don't know, but hey if I do, I do you know. I'm not out to win the thing.

Mike – So out of the three different disciplines, everyone has a favourite, but what do you find the best? What do you enjoy the most?

Gillian – I think I like the running because nobody can actually say hey she's getting pulled along, hey the person that is swimming with her can find the current and drag her along. I mean, you wouldn't think that would happen but it does. It doesn't happen in America and it hasn't in Hawaii and it hasn't happened in Australia but I don't know whether it's a tall poppy thing in New Zealand but hey, you know, it has

been there. Not so much now because I'm doing half Ironmen now but there has been an element oh it's not fair, she's got a good swimmer that drags her along and "Who was on the front of the bike!" You know, that's the question if you do a good time. But you've just got to suck it up and get over it because as sad as it is, there are a few people like that and those are the ones that you notice. For everyone one of those, there are ten other people that think it's great and just embrace you.

Mike – So out of the seventeen full length Ironman events you've done both internationally and within New Zealand, what would be the standout one? The fastest one? The international ones?

Gillian - The fastest one was in Canada and that was 12.01. I just didn't quite break that twelve hour.

Mike – That would be so annoying.

Gillian – I'd love to have been able to but it was hard but it was great. Everybody got behind us. It's kind of that American... I know Canadians wouldn't be happy that I said they were like Americans at all but people having tea parties in their backyards and there were kids doing the Ogotogo Party because they are supposed to have a monster related to the Loch Ness Monster in the lake and so the kids have an Ogotogo party and it was just such a lot of community spirit. That was probably a really good one from that point of view and also I did a good time.

But in Switzerland we had an electrical thunder storm and the hills just went black and it was fork lightning and there were grapes and corn cobs and apples washing down the road. Now, I was a bit peeved at the beginning of the race because I wasn't intending to do that. I'd gone over to do the Austrian Ironman. And then on the train back to Paris we were looking through a triathlete magazine and my friend said oh there is an Ironman in Switzerland in two weeks' time. And I said oh, we should go and do it because we're over this way. And I wasn't happy with my time in Austria because they didn't have porta-loo's and you had to go to a toilet in a restaurant and wait for them to open up with a key. So anyhow, so I said thought be good to do another one.

Mike - So how far apart were these two full Ironmen?

Gillian – Two weeks.

Mike - Good grief.

Gillian - Yeah, but remember I didn't race them. It was a bit of a slow time. 13 hours.

Mike - Yeah, 13 hours. Yeah, good on ya.

Gillian – This Swiss Ironmen, half way through, I was cold, it was hailing and one of the people watching gave me a rubbish bag. So I put a hole through the top of the rubbish bag and I'm riding along in a rubbish bag.

Mike - Keep the wind off.

Gillian - With V-Dubs that all the press gallery had, purple V-Dubs and they were tooting their horns. It was really memorable. It was one of those things I was coming third to and second to last with another guy. We were playing cat and mouse. When we got to the tent after the bike, it was just ankle deep in water and at that stage I said where is everybody? It was just like there was an evacuation of all the tents. And they said 395 people had pulled out. So all of a sudden it didn't matter that we were second to and third to last, we still did it. And it was great, it was one of those things. We could have pulled out because we were all sore, we were cold, we were tired. But we kept going and that's really the spirit of an Ironman isn't it?

Mike - Too right.

Gillian - Yeah. Sometimes those people that take a long time, of course if you're a gun like Cameron Brown, hey, I take my hat off, he's a legend but the people that take a long time, they're all pretty special too.

Mike - It's sort of a hard day out isn't it.

Gillian - It's a long day, yeah, yeah.

Mike – Obviously it's a very long endurance event which takes a lot of long endurance training. How do you structure that amongst your life? Because to do that properly, everyone would sort of want to commit fully to it but we've all got to live and pay bills and have lives.

How do you get that balance between work and training to get to a level that you're happy with for that type of event?

Gillian – Look, it really suited me at the time because I lived on my own. I was obsessive / compulsive and I think to a degree, anybody who does Ironman is obsessive / compulsive. And I say that, tongue in cheek, but it has to be your lifestyle and the only thing I didn't like about it was leaving my guide dog when I went on the long bike rides and I did that a couple of times a week. But he was great. And it was a time of my life I didn't have to think about anybody else. I massaged. I was moving around the circle of sports people and they're pretty focused people. Some people will say they are pretty selfish but I think they're pretty focused, that's the word I'd use and pretty inspiring so it's just a time of my life it suited. I wouldn't do it again now because I've got other things and I probably like to think more

balance in my life. But I wouldn't have changed that time for anything. It was a great, great thing to do and yeah.

Mike - Cool.

And you mentioned guide dogs and obviously dogs have been a big part of your life? Have you got any stories that relate to your guide dogs and how they've related to anything to do with triathlon or Ironman?

Gillian - I've usually kept my dogs at home. I haven't taken them to an event but on one particular occasion I was going down to do Napier Half Ironman, which I think is now the Maori Half Ironman?

Mike - The Iron Maori?

Gillian - Iron Maori. Yeah, it's that. Anyway, the swim course is a triangular course and you go out two or three times and so I said to the two kids that I was with, a boyfriend and his son and the little girl from next door, and I said to the kids, now you stay with Fletcher. I tied him up to the fence. I couldn't get an adult to hold on to him. I said, don't leave his side. Just stay there until my guide got out of the swim from helping me and yip, yip, that's right. Anyhow, they went down to the water's edge while I was swimming and Sophie turned around and looked just to check on Fletcher and the leash was just hanging on the fence. And she thought, oh no he's gone. She was really worried about it.

In the meantime, we're out there swimming and I had two guides, one either side of me and one of them Neil said he took a breath to the right and thought oh there's a dog there. A dog, oh my god, that's Fletcher. And he'd picked me out, out of all the people, all those swimmers in wetsuits, we all looked the same. Black wetsuits you know, a bit of colour maybe. And he'd picked me out and he'd swum out to me. So he was on the national news actually just gaining on all these swimmers in their fancy six hundred dollar wetsuits. And at the end of it I had to smile to myself because a few people were talking as you do after the event. Oh, I didn't do a very good swim. Some dog swum over the top of me.

Mike - Got beaten by a dog.

Gillian - So Fletcher was pretty up there in the swimming, ay.

Mike - Good on him. So how much of the training can you do alone?

Gillian - That's the beauty of triathlon I believe. And the more I've done, the more I've done training on my own. As I've got more in to the sport, I've realised for time it's easier to do training on your own. Because you've got to organise people to meet, you've got to fit in with their time and I massage for a job so I'm pretty flexible but having said that everybody has got their routine and time that suits and doesn't



suit. So you can do all the training for triathlon, you can swim at the pools, you can wind train and that's really efficient training and you can run on a treadmill and early in the piece, I got a treadmill and my neighbour, it was Dick Tout at the time. He's an ultra-distance runner or was. He said oh that will be a nine days wonder but I have used that treadmill so much and the neighbours have all heard Elton John and all the rest of the classic music blaring out of the garage.

Mike - All the music that keeps you going for those two / three hour runs.

Gillian - But you do have to have time with your guide for the run and the swim. Maybe one session a week of each?

Mike - Just enough to sort of get that gelling, relationship thing?

Gillian - Especially on the bike. You've got to have trust on the run and they've got to know how to guide you in the swim but you get good swimmers and good cyclists and they're a must I believe. And a runner. Actually to be fair, I think all the guides have to be or should be a lot more efficient than yourself, a lot better. Because they have to look out for you and themselves and other people and if they haven't got the energy and they fatigue too early, you're asking for trouble and I have had a couple of experiences coming face to face with a lamppost and a bush in the middle of the street and it's not much fun and the people don't feel very good about themselves either. So you're better off to just try and find a few really good people and they're out there. But you do have to ask and be prepared to have people say no.

Mike - The interesting part of triathlons I think this whole transition thing. So going from the swim to the cycle and the cycle to the run. They're just generally mayhem. So how do you get through those because that's where everyone sort of congregates. There are bikes going everywhere. There are people flying around, putting shoes on and changing.

Gillian - Before you go in to triathlon, well in to the actual day of the event, you've got to go a bit earlier, a lot earlier and you've got to set yourself up on a towel and you've got to know exactly where your shoes are and all your gear that you need to put on and you've got to coach your person, your guide to put you on that towel and let you do stuff. You want them to help you a bit with putting your hat on or whatever. That's fine but you can't let them take over because that kind of, everybody is trying to do everything twice. So that is hard but the interesting thing is and this irks me a bit actually. When I did the World Champs a couple of years ago, everybody had to wear blackout goggles because it was a ITU, and all the rules are real, supposed to be real tight. And one girl said can we take off our blackout goggles in the transition and the guy said yes. Now I thought, how does that work does? You know, you've got to wear black out goggles in the swim, in the run, on the cycle but in the transition, that's the hardest, slowest part and he said you can take them off and I was floored.

Mike - And that's possibly when you're either the most dependent or the most independent?

Gillian - Others, were sort of running along their guides and that's the hardest part for a total blind person and if you're going to have categories, you've got to do it right ay. It is a hard part but you do have to practice and everybody has to practice. That's the slowest part for most people. If you can make something take two minutes, would take five minutes if you didn't practice. It's a no brainer aye.

Mike - Cool. Now at the end of these epic long Ironman's and stuff I think everybody probably visits the medical tent at some point. Have you got any medical tent stories?

Gillian- Yeah. I've been to the medical tent. The first time I really needed it was Hawaii and I got to the end and the media were there and they wanted to do a bit of an interview and I was just talking a lot of rubbish so the guy that was with me just carted me off to the medical tent and they put me on a drip.

But when I was in Auckland, no Taupo it was. I got to the medical tent and all of a sudden, we're taking you in to recovery and I said, no, no, I'm ok, I'm ok. They said no, you're not and they put me straight on the stretcher. And then the doctor came and looked at me and pulled my eyelids up and checked my stomach and he said are you ok? And I said yeah I'm fine. I'm just a bit tired and a bit hungry. So he said I'll come back in ten minutes but if you're not a lot better you're going to hospital and the word of hospital I thought oh my god. No, I'm not going to hospital. And I said to Wayne, he was my guide. I said, what's the matter, what do they think is the matter? He said look I don't know but he said they're talking over there and it looks as if they're a little bit concerned about something so when the doctor came back Wayne said what's the story mate? And he said well her eyes are still dilated and Wayne started to laugh. He could hardly get it out. Hey, mate she's got prosthesis and the guy just went quiet, really quiet. And Wayne just disappeared and here's me lying on this stretcher and Wayne's in stiches and he went over to Allan Russell, he was my sponsor, Asics Manager, he went over and told him and they are both laughing in the corner of the tent. And I'm thinking, what's going on. Meanwhile, I'm still lying on the stretcher. And I said to the guy, you know I'm fine, it's just that's what my eyes are, they are just prosthesis. And he said oh, well, well, it wasn't just that, it wasn't just that. So I was out of there fast.

Mike - So what about after the event? Because obviously recovery from that level of endurance event is pretty important. What would be your golden tips to recovery?

Gillian - I just drink copious amounts of water and electrolytes and usually that's the best way to recover. Just keep drinking, drinking, drinking electrolytes. And just go for a little jog the next day just to loosen and keep everything flowing through your body, loosen your muscles, keep your blood flow. And for most people that I know, we've all gone through a bit of a pretty flat patch, not the day after, not the day after

that but the next few days. It's like you've been on this huge high and then you just go flat and it's pretty unavoidable from what I can hear. It's a big contrast.

Mike - Yeah, yeah. None of us are getting any younger and like you've said you're now in your fifties and possibly the full Ironman time of your life is behind you and what-not but you're still very, very active in half Ironman's and a lot of other half marathons and various events around the country and even overseas shortly I believe? What keeps that drive going? What's the inner thing in you that makes you want to keep going?

Gillian – Yeah it's a strange thing really but I guess you start off because it's fun and you are attracted to those disciplines and then you get really hooked, so you get competitive and I've done what I believe is my best with the Ironmen and I don't accept that you get slower as you get older. In fact, my times have got better as I've got older but for medical reasons I won't do a full Ironman. But I'm doing half Ironmen and trying to get those times down a little bit.

Mike - You're doing a pretty respectable half Ironman.

Gillian - Yeah, I am. I think you've always got to keep it in perspective of your age group. Obviously I'm not going to be able to do what I could do 20-30 years ago. I've got a pace maker which I earnt last year and so I've got to take all of that in to consideration. I think it's the fun. And it's good to be alive. And I don't know what drives me but I think it's a way of getting out and meeting people. It's great when you're around a half Ironman. When you've trained for it, the key is you've got to train for it. And as long as I can do it and do it with enjoyment I will. If it's not fun anymore then I'll stop and hopefully it will always be fun.

Mike - So if we flipped that question around, what would life be like for you if there wasn't sport in it?

Gillian - No, sports is like my religion and I think it probably is for a lot of Kiwis.

Mike - Don't mention the rugby.

Gillian - No, no.

Mike - So how has triathlon and especially Ironman helped you grow as a person?

Gillian – I learnt a lot about myself. I didn't start doing triathlons until I was probably 30, late 20s anyhow and because of sight loss had never been successful in a sporting environment. I was always the last at school, sitting on the court or second to last with the fat girl, you know. Waiting to be picked for a netball team and I hated it. When I got in to triathlon, I realised, ok I can't see but my legs can go as fast and I can swim not as fast but I can swim as far as anybody else. And you can pass some

people. That's a great feeling when you're coming through the run and you're passing people. I'm competitive I guess but there is nothing wrong with that.

Mike – That's the comical thing isn't it? I'm in the situation, we're both in the situation where a lot of people we know are in their forties and fifties and what-not and they openly say that my competitive years are over but as soon as the gun goes off, they're in it.

Gillian - And they'd push you over if you're in their way. Yeah.

Mike - So at the point where you're at the end of an Ironman or end of a triathlon and you're really digging deep and what-not, is there a favourite saying or quotation that you use or that you pull out of the bag to help you along at that point?

Gillian - I guess there have been various things that I've thought of depending on what time in my life that I've been but generally when I'm really tired and I'm coming to the end of a half Ironman, whatever, it's quite a nostalgic time and I always think well I've done a lot of training and a lot of people have supported me and it's pretty neat. This is when I know I'm going to cross that line. And I feel quite humble by the time that people have given me and there are for every successful sports person, there is always a backbone of people helping you, whether it's helping you with transport or good food or just company or motivation and I always think of those people. Those are the people I really think, well this is who I'm doing it for, really. Yes, you do it for yourself. Of course you do but in actual fact when I was doing the Wanaka Half I was coming through about the 3 kilometre mark from the end and I said to Brendon oh this is pretty cool aye. It's quite sad it's going to come to the end. And he said we can do it again if you want and I said it's not going to happen.

Mike - Do another loop? I always like the good old saying, behind every successful man is a surprised wife.

Gillian – {Laughing}

Mike - So before we finish off here, what would be your key words of advice for anybody who is considering getting in to triathlon as a sport?

Gillian - Give it a go. If you think you can, you can and if you really want to do something, you can. So long as it's in the realm of possibility and it is, you know. There are a lot of people out there that have done a lot of running, want a little bit of an extra challenge so they'll run with you a lot. There are a lot of people that have done a lot of cycling and they've never cycled on a tandem. You've just got to find the right people. It's a great sport, really great. It's a little bit expensive but then you've got to spend your money on something.

Mike - Too right. Hey thanks Gillian, that's been awesome. You've painted a good picture as to your story, how you got through things and obviously what a great part of your life Ironman and triathlon has been so thank you for sharing with us.

Gillian - Thank you, thanks. And your Podcasts are great Mike. I really enjoy them. So inspiring.

Mike - Excellent.

**Jingle** – You're listening to the blind sport podcast with Mike Lloyd. The sports show that's dedicated to blind sport.

## Quotations

OK some quotations for episode 61 based around the concept of "pioneering".

Albert Einstein - "The person who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. The person who walks alone is likely to find himself in places no one has ever seen before."

"We are all time voyagers leaving history in our wake, pioneering into the future."

"Don't try to prove to everybody that the reason why you can't is that nobody could. It's no excuse. You can break the tradition by being the first person to make it happen!"

"It's quite a scary path to walk on, when you have no one's past experience to lean on, or learn from. It's all new and uncharted. But nothing is finished unless it is started."

"Critics are loud, but success is louder."

"Don't be a prisoner of the past, become a pioneer of the future."

## Closing

I hope you enjoyed our chat with Gillian Walker from New Zealand. That was pretty cool. A huge thank you to Gillian for sharing her Ironman experience and stories with us.

If you have done an Ironman or are training towards one, then do send me an email and tell me what you're up to.

If you have a story or know of a person who you think would be great to feature on a future show, then do contact me and let's make it happen.

Likewise, if you have any comments or opinions on the show then please do fire me off an email. [mike@theblindsportpodcast.com](mailto:mike@theblindsportpodcast.com)

That would be super awesome.

**Contact Jingle** - To contact Mike or comment on The Blind Sport Podcast, submit a feedback form from the website [www.theblindsportpodcast.com](http://www.theblindsportpodcast.com), email [Mike@theblindsportpodcast.com](mailto:Mike@theblindsportpodcast.com), send us a tweet or follow us on Twitter @blindsportmike, or visit The Blind Sport Podcast page on Facebook.

Mike - To help me with the growth of The Blind Sport Podcast I need your help.

If you know of others who may get value from listening to this show, then please do tell them about it.

Tell your friends, your family, your club members, your work colleagues, whether it be face-to-face or via social networks, let's get the word out there.

If we do this together, we can promote the awareness of Blind Sports and make a difference.

OK, that's us for another episode, so train hard, play fair, give it your all and most importantly, enjoy your sport.

Thanks for listening. Take care. See ya.

**Closing Announcer** - Thank you for listening to another edition of The Blind Sport Podcast. The sports show that's dedicated to blind sport. With Mike Lloyd. Visit [theblindsportpodcast.com](http://theblindsportpodcast.com)

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