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**Q** *What has been the best and worst day in your career so far?*

**A** There has been plenty of best days, including passing my board exams, being promoted to Associate Director at KPMG and the pinnacle of my career being promoted to Senior Managing Director at FTI earlier this year. The worst day of my career was in September 2017, when numerous Partners and colleagues were asked to exit my previous firm after factors outside of our control impacted the business.

**Q** *Did the pandemic with the various lockdowns, changes in working habits etc., bring about any major changes for you from a work/career perspective?*

**A** The COVID-19 pandemic has forever altered working habits and priorities. For me, it highlighted new perspectives on the future of the working climate and the incredible adaptability of human nature.

The most prominent change is the hybrid way of working, with certain days in the office and the others working remotely. Increased flexibility, reducing our carbon footprint, time saved from the drudgery of the morning commute, and getting a few minutes to spend with your loved ones has been hugely important, especially during the most difficult days of the pandemic.

**Q** *What are three words you would use to describe yourself? Would you agree with them?*

**A** My colleagues describe me as resilient, having a calm demeanour and a strong work ethic.

I agree with them, as being resilient helped me weather the many storms that passed my way, and I am sure there are many more that I would encounter. A calm demeanour helps to bring a level head to tense situations. A strong work ethic is crucial in today's world more than ever as

it assists in promoting discipline, my firm's brand, exceeding the clients' expectations and developing those working under me.

**Q** *What would you say to another woman thinking of changing fields because the industry is so male-dominated?*

**A** My advice to another woman is to do what you love, and you will never work a day in your life. It sounds clichéd but despite the challenges and obstacles currently faced, if you are passionate and have a drive in this field, follow your heart.

The industry is a long way from gender parity, but the narrative is evolving, and there continues to be progress. Women are heading up private equity firms and are key decision-makers in M&A teams in the Big 4 firms and at Investment Banks.

Fostering diversity in the workplace means being advocated for and recognised. Numerous attributes set women apart at the negotiating table, and this value is being recognised. As females, we tend to exhibit a more inclusive approach and foster deeper, more authentic relationships. In my experience, we tend to approach matters with higher emotional intelligence and are more creative and collaborative.

**Q** *Who is your female role model, and why?*

**A** My late mum and my sister are my role models. My mum was robbed of the opportunity to further her studies and encouraged her daughters to fly. She inspired me to be patient, resilient and hopeful. My sister inspires me to believe in myself and be courageous.

**Q** *Do you have any unusual hobbies?*

**A** Karate. My training has allowed me to set and reach goals in my work and life in general. Self-respect and respect for others have taken a deeper and stronger

meaning in my life, and through training, I have found humility.

**Q** *What book are you reading at the moment?*

**A** "Crossing Boundaries" is an autobiography by my uncle the late Hossain Ayob. The book is about his life, love, pain, and poverty. It describes how he became a provincial soccer player and a legendary fast bowler, but was barred from playing for South Africa because he was classified as "Indian" by the apartheid state. The book starts with an inspirational quote: "If only it can be understood that life is a journey about pain and joy, about hard work and success, about friendship and love, about learning and leading, about playing and growing; if only there was justice and fairness where race did not matter where the doors of learning and culture were open to all, rich and poor and black and white, if you did that life would have meaning and purpose and the journey of life would not be in vain."

**Q** *If you could invite any three women (past or present) to dinner, whom would they be and why?*

**A** The three women I would invite to dinner are Malala Yousafzai, Greta Thunberg, and Professor Thuli Madonsela.

Malala's charisma and bravery are inspirational. Her devotion to fighting for women's rights, education, peace and equality has brought hope and change to the lives of multitudes of young females.

Greta is an extraordinary teenage girl. Her courage and ability to stand her ground at such a young age is commendable. Greta's devotion to saving our planet, that so many take for granted is exemplary.

For me, Professor Thuli Madonsela's unwavering commitment to integrity, her zest and determination for the truth is an embodiment of the principles and values I so treasure. 🇿🇦