



# Q&A

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## What initially drew you to a career in M&A or corporate finance?

I didn't grow up with a clear path to investment banking and corporate finance, but as I studied finance and gained exposure to corporate transactions, I became increasingly interested in M&A. The fast pace, complexity and intensity of dealmaking were compelling. What stood out most was the unique perspective it offers — you gain an insider's view of how businesses grow, change ownership, or reposition themselves during pivotal moments.

Working in the financial sponsor advisory space has deepened this interest by exposing me to a wide range of companies across sectors such as logistics, energy, consumer, healthcare, hospitality, services and more. Many of these companies play an important role in the South African economy, often operating behind the scenes but contributing significantly to growth and job creation. Being involved in their evolution through capital raises, exits or strategic acquisitions is both commercially engaging and economically important.

I was also attracted by the blend of analytical rigour and commercial judgment that the role requires. Being involved in high-stakes transactions with tangible real-world impact is challenging and rewarding, which continues to motivate me.

## Have you faced any gender-based challenges or biases in your career? If so, how did you navigate them?

There has been progress for women in corporate finance, with increased awareness, representation, and more open conversations compared to when I started. However, challenges remain, often in subtle forms like being talked over in meetings, assumptions about my role on deals, or being held to different standards.

One of the biggest challenges has been internal, i.e. struggling with imposter syndrome and sometimes doubting my own contributions despite knowing their value. This kind of self-doubt is difficult to overcome, especially in an industry still dominated by men at senior levels.

While I'm still working through this, I've improved at identifying when my doubts stem from fear rather than reality. I've learnt to speak up, even when it feels uncomfortable, and to trust my judgment more with each experience. I also try to be open about these struggles with other women in the field, so they understand that they're not alone and can feel more confident in their own abilities.

## How have you balanced your personal life with the demands of a career in finance?

Some might say a "personal life" and "corporate finance" rarely co-exist easily, and there have certainly been intense periods where that feels true. Over time, I've learnt that if I don't actively create space for life outside work, the demands of the job can consume all my time.

Exercise has become essential to maintaining balance. Morning runs with friends provide a valuable chance to clear my mind, stay physically active, and connect with people outside of work before the day begins.

I also try to be deliberate about setting boundaries whenever possible. This might mean scheduling time for a walk, dinner with family, or simply an hour to recharge after a demanding transaction. While the nature of the work means there will be times when it takes precedence, I've found that protecting even small amounts of personal time is crucial for sustaining my well-being and effectiveness in this career.

## What keeps you motivated on tough days?

On difficult days, I remind myself of the broader purpose behind the work that I do. Being part of transformative transactions that influence companies and communities means that the impact of what we do goes beyond just numbers.

I'm also fortunate to work with highly capable colleagues and clients who challenge me to improve and develop professionally. Their commitment and resilience provide the motivation when challenges arise.

On a personal level, I keep perspective by recognising that setbacks and obstacles are part of the process. Each challenge presents an opportunity to learn and enhance my skills. Understanding that the work contributes meaningfully to the economy and the people affected by it helps me maintain my focus and determination.

What also keeps me engaged is knowing how much there still is to learn. The M&A landscape is constantly evolving, whether it's shifts in deal structures, sector dynamics, or how private capital is being deployed. Each transaction brings new nuances, and staying curious and open to that complexity is a big part of what makes this work rewarding over the long term. 🐾

