Q&A

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Personal reflections and integration

The phrase, 'work-life balance' can feel mythical in transactional finance. How do you personally define and manage the integration of a demanding career with your personal life?

As an associate, I often find that many of us feel like work-life balance is unattainable. These are the years where the hard work we put in now will yield dividends later in our careers. For me, however, the concept is less about balance and more about integration. There are periods where a transaction requires your full attention and where personal plans inevitably take a back seat. Conversely, there are moments where family, health or community commitments must take priority. I have found that trying to achieve a perfect 50/50 split only creates frustration. Instead, I focus on being intentional with the time I do have.

What keeps me grounded is remembering why I work as hard as I do. My career is important, but so are the people and causes that matter to me. Whether it is spending time with family, mentoring young professionals or supporting community initiatives, those aspects of my life provide perspective and remind me that my identity is broader than the deals I work on.

How has your definition of 'success' changed from when you were an ambitious graduate to who you are today?

As a graduate, success looked very traditional. It was tied to professional milestones, academic achievements, titles and recognition. I believed success was measured by how quickly I could progress and how many goals I could tick off my list. While those achievements remain important, my definition of success has become much broader over time. Today, success is about impact. It is about whether I am creating opportunities for others, whether I am contributing meaningfully to the firm's objectives, and whether I am growing into the kind of professional and person I aspire to be. All in all, success has become less about what I achieve for myself and more about the value I create for others along the way.

Mentorship, sponsorship and 'lifting as you rise'

Who was the first person in the industry to take a genuine bet on you, and how did that sponsorship change the trajectory of your career?

It would be difficult to identify a single person, because my career has been shaped by several remarkable women who invested in me at different stages of my journey. The first was Judge Carol Sibiya (Dludla), who modelled for me at a young age what it looked like to be a successful woman in the legal profession. Long before I entered practice, she showed me that a career in law was both achievable and worthwhile. Later, I was fortunate to work with senior practitioners who saw potential in me and provided opportunities that accelerated my growth. One director, in particular, helped focus the passion I already had for the profession. She challenged me to think critically, take ownership of my work, and develop confidence in my own judgement.

Those investments mattered because sponsorship is often more than advice. It is someone trusting you with responsibility before you think you are ready. It is someone advocating for you in rooms where you are not present.

What is the most rewarding piece of advice you've ever given to a younger colleague that you watched them successfully put into practice?

I firmly believe that networking does not begin with formal industry events or structured business development programmes. In my experience, some of the most valuable professional relationships are built organically through shared experiences, mutual respect, and a genuine interest in supporting one another's growth. Many of the relationships I rely on today were formed during law school, with classmates who have since gone on to pursue careers across law, banking, consulting and other professional services. Over time, those connections have evolved into a trusted network of peers who offer insights from outside my immediate field. Equally important have been formal initiatives, such as the African Women in the Workplace (AWW) Mentorship Programme, which has provided access to some of the legal profession's most accomplished women and created opportunities to learn from their experiences and wisdom.

What I value most about these networks is that they are built on reciprocity, rather than transaction. Ultimately, I have found that building a strong network is less about collecting contacts and more about investing in meaningful relationships over time, because those relationships often become one of the most important professional assets a person can have.

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