



Q&A

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Personal reflections & integration

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

Many years ago, my grandmother gifted me an alarm clock with the inscription "*tempus fugit*". At the time, I was too young to understand what it meant. "*Tempus fugit*" is a Latin phrase that translates to "*time flies*". Time is something that all attorneys are acutely conscious of – whether it is time spent on an instruction, chasing a deadline, or attending a meeting – the legal world is built on the principle of time.

The 'work-life balance' (an elusive goal that I am still chasing!) is similarly centred on time. Juggling a career with young children has forced me to focus on task completion and time management with greater precision. An integrated work and family calendar is essential. I have learnt to ask for help, and to be kinder to myself.

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

I have learnt two important lessons: (1) Success is not (necessarily) linear, and (2) success may look different at different stages of your career.

A senior colleague once told me: your career is a marathon, not a sprint. After 17 years in the legal industry, I finally understand what those words truly mean. Your career is a journey – there will be many chapters. Some years will be better than others. Settle in. Find your stride. There is no need to sprint. If you still want to be in the race in 20 years, you will need to pace yourself.

Transactions are built on numbers, but completed by people. What has your career taught you about the human side of dealmaking?

You spend years as a law student and candidate attorney learning cases, dissecting legislation and honing the technical aspects of big law. This is, of course, a critical foundation for any legal career. But as one progresses, you discover that the softer interpersonal skills – emotional intelligence, teambuilding, and negotiation – are as important as technical legal acumen. These skills are critical for dealmaking, leadership and building a legal practice.

Dealmaking requires relationship building – with clients, the other side and your team. A well-run, cohesive team can be the difference between a successfully completed deal and one that fails. It is important to spend time nurturing relationships.

What is a personal passion or hobby you pursue that has absolutely nothing to do with law, but keeps your perspective sharp?

I am a passionate runner – Park runs, road running, trail running and sprint triathlon – anything to get moving!

When your career in this industry is eventually complete, what is the lasting legacy you want to leave behind in the South African legal sector?

Since 1923 – when the Women Legal Practitioners Act was passed into law, enabling women to be admitted as practitioners in South Africa – there has been significant growth in the number of women entering the profession, and an increase in the diversity of women attorneys. Based on the Law Society of South Africa's 2025/2026 Annual Report, approximately 46% of the total number of registered attorneys are women. I hope to set an example for other aspirant female attorneys, and to contribute to the development of, and the involvement of, more women as legal advisors in corporate transactions. I hope that I have played a role in encouraging and nurturing young legal talent, and in paying forward the mentorship and guidance I benefitted from early in my career.

What still needs to change for the next generation of women to reach senior leadership more easily than your generation did?

The legal landscape is evolving. There has been significant development with regard to more flexible, hybrid and remote career paths available to women in the last decade. There is, however, still a pressing need for transformation, particularly as regards the involvement of more women as leading legal advisors in major corporate transactions.

Networking and support are important in empowering young professionals' career development; most significantly as a tool to aid personal and professional growth. There is, however, more work that needs to be done to establish a cohesive network of women working in law, finance and banking across South Africa. There are pockets, but these need to be unified.

The reasons for the underrepresentation of women at the top levels of law firms are complex and nuanced. Collecting data on the legal practice areas and industry sectors in which women predominantly work, as well as representation in the context of law firm size differences, is important to understand the legal landscape that women occupy. This data is becoming increasingly important, as it will shape approaches to supporting women in the legal profession and ensuring that valuable talent is nurtured and retained. Policies and approaches at each stage of the career lifecycle are critical for women to thrive: from encouraging law as a career choice, to vacation work opportunities, recruitment, ongoing training, mentorship, leadership, and alternative career pathways. 