



Q&A

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What did your path into this field look like – was it intentional or did you discover it along the way?

When I was growing up and studying, I didn't specifically plan to work in M&A. I discovered it along the way and, looking back, I can see how my path naturally led me there, and that it worked out for the best. I was very good at accounting at school, and most people expected me to become an accountant. I chose to study a BCom LLB (Accounting with Law) at university because I enjoyed accounting, but I didn't want to limit my options. I was also interested in analytical thinking, history, law and justice.

During my articles, I did a rotation in banking & finance and really enjoyed the experience of being a transactional lawyer. M&A turned out to be a good fit for me – it offers the kinds of transactional work I like, but also allows me to advise clients and get involved in different types of transactions. The accounting, economics and finance experience I gained during my BCom has also given me a solid foundation for understanding the commercial side of M&A.

What's the hardest lesson you've learnt, and how did it shape you?

I've always been quite hard on myself when I make a mistake, or if something doesn't go as planned. Over time, I've had to learn how to manage self-doubt and stress in those moments, and to avoid spiralling and catastrophising. One of the tough lessons has been learning to separate my sense of self-worth from my work. I've made a conscious effort to ground my self-worth in who I am as a person (outside of work), and to focus on the things that matter to me personally. When something goes wrong at work, I try to deal with it, learn from it, and move on.

What does self-care look like for you, and how do you prevent burnout?

When it comes to self-care, I love a good bath. I also enjoy walking – most weekends you'll find me on a long walk along the Sea Point promenade, listening to music or a podcast. Being outdoors and taking in nature is incredibly grounding.

I have also been meal-prepping for the last six years. Every Sunday, I prepare meals for the week ahead. It's a form of self-care because it takes away the stress during the week of having to cook after a long day, or wondering what to eat when I am already tired.

As for burnout, a key thing I do is to watch out for the early signs. It's important to speak to people – both at work and outside of work – and to take breaks where you can. At work, I've learnt to reach

out and speak to people when it becomes difficult to manage the volume and extent of work, before it's too late.

Have your views on work-life balance changed over time?

Yes. When I started as a candidate attorney and associate, I didn't have much work-life balance, and I didn't think it was important. Whereas now, as a senior associate, I have much better balance, and I see the value in it. In the early years, I was focused on proving myself and showing that I was hardworking and a valuable asset to the team. I threw myself into my work, often staying late most nights, working weekends, and usually being the last to leave the office. I felt that this was what was expected of me. But I missed out on many things outside of the office – there were even a few years in a row where I was late to my own birthday party! I didn't have any hobbies or anything else going on outside of work.


Eventually, that way of living became too much. I reached a point where I felt like a shell of a person outside of work, and I was unhappy. Over the last few years, I've been more intentional about building a life outside of work – things like running, cooking, listening to podcasts, connecting with friends, and getting more sleep. These small but meaningful activities help bring perspective and joy, and a break from the stress.

Of course, there are still times when I work late or on weekends, and the pressure hasn't disappeared. But now, I make a conscious effort to maintain a life outside of work and keep things as balanced as I can.

What kind of leader are you, and how did you develop your leadership style?

I want to be a leader who is approachable, but also respected because of who I am as a person and the quality of my work. I'm still learning and working on this.

In developing my leadership style, I've found it helpful to look at the qualities of my leaders and the people I've worked with over the years. I try to identify the qualities and working styles that I have admired and to cultivate those in myself. At the same time, I am mindful of avoiding qualities, styles and behaviours that I've found challenging or unconstructive.

I also believe that developing as a leader requires stepping into leadership roles, working with others, and fostering talent. 

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