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**Q Where did your journey begin and how did you end up where you are today?**

**A** My journey began many years ago as a candidate attorney in one of the big law firms and I have since been in search of a place that would be as invested in my career and success as I am. That is how I ended up where I am today.

**Q What, if any, hurdles did you have to cross in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated?**

**A** I faced typical hurdles generally faced by women in law or any male-dominated industry: (a) being subjected to traditional sexual stereotypes; (b) inflexible working conditions/structures; and (c) not having access to adequate mentoring and sponsorship.

**Q Did you have a mentor and if so, tell us about that person and include the most valuable thing you learnt from them?**

**A** Yes, I have had lots of mentors throughout my journey and continue to.

The most valuable lesson I learned from one of my mentors was the importance of being a full person. To not define my happiness, success and growth solely by one thing – whether it be motherhood, a career or being a wife. Funny enough this mentor was white, male and in his 60s. This lesson has shaped my life (both professional and personal) and has greatly influenced where I am today and how I conduct myself.

**Q Which deal challenged you the most and why?**

**A** Any deal that I get to run or lead challenges me and grows my abilities as an M&A lawyer.

**Q What qualities would you say are essential for a woman to thrive in the M&A industry?**

**A** Once you have decided, as a woman, on your life goals and if those goals involve having a thriving career, take time to select (yes, select – you are not some prey that has no say in the type of partner you end up with) the right partner that will support those goals and truly be a partner in the pursuit of your career and other personal goals.

The idea that you can excel as a woman in a high pressure, male-dominated environment while maintaining strict gender roles in your relationship with a spouse/partner, is a fallacy.

With that said, there are no special qualities required for a woman to thrive in the M&A industry. Effective communication skills, keen understanding of commercials, keen understanding of the law and developments in the law, good drafting skills, confidence in your abilities and judgment, ability to isolate useful information, problem solving and power of persuasion are gender neutral skills that make one a good M&A lawyer.

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

**A** That is not a good enough reason to change a career. Frankly I would find that sad. The world is generally male-dominated, so if you love what you do – you should not change careers because an industry is male-dominated.

Find ways to thrive even in that environment, and get the support you need. It is possible for women to be confident, self-fulfilled and excellent at what they do in male-dominated industries.

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

**A** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Her work has made me interrogate my

default thinking, which is informed by how I was socialised as a woman growing up.

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

**A** I can travel anywhere to try a new food or drink craze.

**Q What is your go-to power song?**

**A** DJ Khaled “All I do is Win” feat. Ludacris, Rick Ross and T-Pain

**Q What is your favourite quote?**

**A** “A girl should be two things: who and what she wants” – I don’t know who the quote is by, can’t remember where I heard or read it.

**Q What is at the top of your bucket list?**

**A** Live (while I continue to do the work.)

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

**A** 12 Rules for Life by Jordan Peterson

**Q What is your favourite holiday destination?**

**A** Any country that has a rich food culture.

**Q If you could invite any 3 women (past or present) to dinner, who would they be and why?**

**A** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, she confirmed views that I have always had but was unable to articulate. She has helped me have confidence in my dreams and ambitions and not be apologetic while pursuing them.

Makhadzi, so we can dance together to her music all night.

My grandmother, so I can hear one of her nuggets of wisdom one more time. 🙋