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

A After completing my studies, I started my career as an attorney at Jowell Glyn & Marais. I was fortunate to receive exposure to banking and finance, as well as property law. I very quickly developed a passion for property finance. My career in the banking industry has primarily been in the legal sector, providing legal counsel to lenders on various property finance transactions on the continent. This foundation stood me in good stead when I joined Absa and made the transition into a more strategic operational role. I've been able to use my experience and skill set to assist Absa Commercial Property Finance in achieving its growth objectives. I now lead a team of people who are focused on managing risk in a fast-paced and growing property finance business. I am privileged to be involved in transactional work while focusing on the growth and development of people. I am passionate about people and being part of their growth journey is one of the most rewarding parts of my role.

Q *Did you have a mentor at any point in your career? If so, who were they and what did you learn from them?*

A While I have not had an official mentor in my career, I have been fortunate to leverage the experience of many individuals, both in my personal and professional life. I've been exposed to some inspiring leaders, colleagues and friends who have

helped me see my potential as well as my blind spots when I could not. The most influential person has probably been my grandmother – her teachings have ensured that even through the hustle and bustle of corporate life, I've managed to remain authentic and true to who I am and where I came from. I'm able to tackle most obstacles/speed bumps knowing that I will be stronger and wiser in the end. Having an abundance mindset and surrounding myself with people who challenge, inspire and uplift me were key lessons that have become an essential part of my journey.

Q *What are some of the most memorable deals you have worked on?*

A As a legal/risk manager for most of my career, I've been involved in many transactions, so it's difficult to choose just one. The transactions I enjoyed most are the ones that involved many stakeholders – not just on the continent, but internationally. These would often involve months of negotiation with different stakeholders, cultures, and legal regimes, and they required flexibility, focus, and determination to navigate and reach conclusion. I am solutions-driven by nature, so I enjoyed the challenges and nuances of each transaction, overcoming these with continuous learning and collaboration. Those transactions taught me the value of time management, learning to navigate uncertainty, and keeping the end goal in mind when challenges seem insurmountable.

Q *How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your work or career?*

A As a mother to a young daughter, having the ability to work from home (even though it presented its fair share of difficulty) increased my awareness of the example I was setting to my daughter in the way I managed my time and met my work deliverables. On the tough days, that awareness kept me going. I was incredibly blessed to be around her during her foundation phase of learning, which would not have been possible had it not been for the forced lockdown. From a work perspective, not being able to network and collaborate in the office was a challenge. Although we have started to transition back to working at the office, I've carried forward some of the lessons I learned, ensuring that I place importance on keeping a healthy balance between work and home life.

Q *What advice would you give to young women who are looking to enter the corporate finance market?*

A Stay authentic to who you are, and always remember that you have something unique to bring to the table. Make conscious time to build and grow networks in your industry. The benefits are truly worth it. Choose an area that you are truly passionate about, and give it your all. Never underestimate the value of hard work when trying to find a solution to difficult challenges. When you have the chance, pay it forward by lifting another woman. Most industries need more of this. 