



# Q&A

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## 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?**

The first people to take a genuine bet on me were three individuals in 2011. At the time, I was determined to break into corporate finance and, despite holding the right qualifications, I simply could not secure a role. So, I took a chance and applied to a corporate finance house for a role well outside the traditional scope of corporate finance – but it was at least a position within a corporate finance firm. It was a deliberate decision on my part: I needed a foot in the door, and I was confident that, once inside, I could prove I belonged there.

When I joined, my understanding of corporate finance was narrowly defined, thinking it was limited to financial analysis, valuations, M&A, etc. These individuals provided me with the opportunity to experience the corporate finance role I knew, but also steered me to a completely different, but crucial, aspect of corporate finance that I never knew existed – the regulatory side. I discovered a genuine interest in interrogating regulation and applying it in practice, something that caught me off guard, given how little I had enjoyed law at university.

That moment in time reshaped my career entirely. Rather than confining myself to the strict financial discipline of corporate finance which I had set my sights on, I uncovered a specialisation I would never have sought out on my own, yet one far better suited to my strengths. It taught me a lesson I've carried ever since: the opportunity that defines you is not always the one you're pursuing; it is often the door someone else is willing to open on your behalf.

**As a successful leader now, what standard do you set for yourself when it comes to mentoring the next generation of female analysts and associates?**

I try to mentor the way I have been mentored.

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Early in my career, the most valuable help came from people who noticed me before I had the confidence to put my hand up. In this industry, we place so much pressure on ourselves to succeed, but also fear public failure. This tends to result in all the work being done in the background, without the relevant people receiving the proper recognition for their efforts and success. I make it my responsibility to spot capable individuals who are quietly doing excellent work and haven't yet learned to advocate for themselves.

Feedback is key to growth, even if it may be difficult. The kindest thing I can do for someone with real potential is tell them the truth about what's holding them back. For female analysts especially, they often get less direct feedback, not more, for fear of how it will be taken. But vague praise and softened critique leave them under-prepared for rooms that won't be so gentle. The goal is never to make them feel small. It's to make them more capable. Delivered right, hard feedback doesn't discourage people, it tells them you take them seriously enough to invest in their growth, and believe they are strong enough to handle it.

The goal is to develop people and to act as their sponsor. The standard I aim to achieve is for those people I've mentored to become my peer or, better yet, to surpass me.

**Peer-to-peer support is vital. How do you build a strong network of allies among other women working in law, audit and banking to support your transaction pipelines?**

It is all about TRUST and TIME. Building genuine trust and rapport with others, particularly women in the field, takes time. Many women have been burnt before and are understandably sceptical of others in the field until trust is earned. Being confident in your abilities, dependable at any time – not just when there is a deal on the table or when it suits you – and consistent in your approach is essential to building a trusting and lasting relationship in the industry. 🙌

