Q&A

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Personal reflections and integration

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

I do find it difficult to have the perfect work-life balance in practice, as transactional work progresses according to deal cycles where there are periods of intense pressure, compressed timelines and high-stakes execution, and then there are moments where it goes quiet, and the pressure dies down to give you time to rest and re-focus your energy.

I manage integration by being intentional with the time I do have, by protecting routines (no matter how small these are in the bigger scheme of things), communicating clearly with the people in my life and the people that I work with, and recognising that rest is not a reward for finishing everything. It is part of how you remain effective and prevent burn-out.

Something that I have learnt over the years is that in order to excel in a demanding career, one need to be self-aware. In other words, one needs to know when to push, when to pause, and when to ask for support. Not every day will be perfectly balanced, but you will learn to withstand the peaks without losing sight of what matters outside the transactions that you work on.

When the deal closes and the adrenaline drops, how do you intentionally disconnect, recharge, and protect your mental wellbeing?

When a transaction closes and the pressure subsides, there is often an unexpected sense of quiet. In our profession, the instinct is usually to fill that space immediately with the next mandate, the next deadline, or the next item on the to-do list. The reality is that there will always be another deal waiting. Work will always find you.

For that reason, I try to be intentional about creating a short pause after a deal closes. It is an opportunity to decompress after weeks, and sometimes months, of operating under sustained pressure and adrenaline. I slow down where I can, whether that means enjoying a quieter morning, spending quality time with family, catching up on sleep, or spending time outdoors. These small rituals help me reset and regain perspective.

I also use this period for reflection. Every transaction offers lessons, not only in terms of technical execution, but also personal growth. Taking the time to consider what went well, what challenged me, and what I would do differently in future allows me to approach the next deal with greater clarity and confidence.

Ultimately, protecting my mental wellbeing is about recognising that rest is not a reward for hard work. It is an essential part of sustaining performance, resilience and enjoyment in a demanding career.

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

As an ambitious graduate, success was very closely tied to achievement: doing excellent work, doing postgraduate studies and excelling in it, being recognised, proving that I belonged in the room, and building technical competence as quickly as possible. Those things still matter, but my definition of success has now become more enlightening, as it requires me to look beyond myself.

Today, my definition of success is about impact. It's about whether I can help clients make sound decisions in complex moments, whether I can add value to their business, whether I can contribute meaningfully to a transaction team, whether I can be trusted with responsibility, and whether I can bring others along as I grow. It's also about sustainability. A successful career should not require you to lose yourself in the process of building it.

As an ambitious graduate, I saw success as a title or milestone; but today, I see it as a combination of excellence, integrity, growth and contribution. It is the ability to do high-quality work, remain grounded, build genuine relationships, and leave the environments you are part of better than you found them.

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

The activities that keep my perspective sharp are often the ones that encourage me to slow down and be fully present, rather than constantly striving to perform well to 'achieve' something.

Travel is one of my greatest passions. Experiencing different cultures, meeting people from diverse backgrounds, and exploring unfamiliar places reminds me that there is a much bigger world beyond boardrooms, deadlines and transactions. It cultivates curiosity, adaptability and perspective, all of which I find invaluable in my professional life.

Closer to home, I enjoy spending time with family, baking, trying new experiences, and being outdoors in nature. These pursuits provide a sense of balance and help me reconnect with what matters outside of work. They also create the mental space needed for creativity and clear thinking.

In a career that often rewards intensity and constant momentum, I have learnt that maintaining perspective is not about doing more – it is about making time for the experiences that restore energy, inspire curiosity, and bring a sense of calm. Ironically, after experiencing those moments away from work, I feel that I return to work with fresh perspectives, more innovative solutions, and a renewed sense of purpose.

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