



Q&A

Berdene Boyle

Associate Director
Deloitte Africa

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?

To me, work-life balance does not mean achieving a perfect split between work and personal life every single day, as this is not always realistic. I see it more as the ability to maintain a healthy balance over the long term. There are always periods when work requires more from me, particularly when deadlines are tight. During those times, I try to stay focused and give my work the attention it deserves. However, I have also learnt that balance requires a conscious effort to recover that time and energy when things become quieter. In those moments, I make it a priority to spend time on my personal goals, hobbies, and the activities that help me feel grounded. I try to build small personal wins into each day, even during busy periods, because small steps can create meaningful progress over time. For example, I love reading. Even if I cannot finish an entire chapter on a demanding day, reading a few pages still gives me a sense of enjoyment and continuity, and allows me to make progress with books that might otherwise sit untouched on my bookshelf. I believe that being a well-rounded person is not separate from professional success; it supports it. When I am rested, fulfilled and connected to the things that matter outside of work, I am able to show up with more energy, perspective and resilience in my professional life as well.

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

I am naturally drawn to nature and to the sense of peace and stillness that comes with it. After an intense day, especially one filled with deadlines, calls and technical problem-solving, I find that simply sitting outside and watching the birds in the garden helps me to slow down, quieten my mind, and reconnect with myself. When I have the opportunity to take a longer break, particularly after completing a complex project, I love travelling to the bush with my husband. Being away from the noise of the city gives me the space to properly rest and recharge. Protecting my mental wellbeing means being intentional about creating moments of calm, both in small daily ways and through longer

periods of genuine rest. Those moments help me return to work with more clarity and resilience.

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

When I was a graduate, my definition of success was much narrower and far more closely tied to proving myself. At that stage, success looked like producing an Excel spreadsheet with minimal errors or preparing a polished PowerPoint presentation. Like many young professionals, I also associated success with visible achievement, career progression, and the idea of earning well. Ten years later, my view of success has become much more grounded and holistic. I still care deeply about the quality of my work and about making a meaningful contribution in my professional career, but I no longer see achievement in isolation. To me, true success is being able to have a positive impact through the work I do, while still protecting the parts of my life that matter most: my health, my family and my faith. I have learnt that professional milestones are important, but they are not the only measure of a life well lived. Being able to switch off at the end of the day, be present with my loved ones, enjoy a quiet moment, and feel grateful for the smaller things in life has become one of the clearest signs of success for me.

What is a daily ritual, habit or boundary you protect fiercely that keeps you grounded amidst the chaos of deal flows?

One boundary I protect very intentionally is prioritising proper rest. It can be tempting to keep pushing late into the night, especially when there are deliverables to finalise, emails still coming in, or a complex issue that feels as though it needs to be solved immediately. However, I have learnt that rest is not a sign of stepping back; it is one of the foundations of sustainable performance. I am naturally at my sharpest early in the morning, and I do my best work when my mind is fresh, calm and focused. For that reason, I try to recognise the point in the evening when I am no longer adding meaningful value, and when continuing to work would simply lead to slower thinking, avoidable mistakes or unnecessary frustration. When I feel myself reaching that point, I make a conscious effort to log off where possible, get enough sleep, and return to the matter with a clearer perspective the next morning. 🌙

Deloitte.