



Q&A

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Was there a pivotal moment or influence early in your life that shaped your interest in finance?

I was exposed to finance law, by chance, during my articles as a candidate attorney, and I stayed involved because I really enjoyed learning from the people in that team. As I learnt more, I became increasingly attracted to the challenge of the intersection of the law, financial logic and commerce.

What did your path into this field look like—was it intentional, or did you discover it along the way?

In retrospect, studying a BBusSc as my undergraduate degree provided an important foundation. From there, it was a journey of discovery and a bit of luck. I initially learnt a lot from my firm's finance team and, after that, I worked with many creative clients in new and pioneering financial fields (like securitisation and infrastructure) during the growth period of the early 2000s, which provided endless opportunities for growth and development.

Have there been key decisions that significantly impacted your career trajectory?

There have been a few moments that have changed how my career has played out. One of them was being on maternity leave during the 2008 financial crisis. I went on leave as a securitisation lawyer, and came back to a decimated securitisation market. So my practice changed completely after that, but I think it also made me more adaptable and gave me a more diverse practice area. The second thing that changed my perspective was leaving practice for a period. This changed my perception about what clients want from an external lawyer, and gave me more insight into the commercial/business side of finance law.

Have you faced any gender-based challenges or biases in your career? If so, how did you navigate them?

I definitely have, but nothing that couldn't be overcome by being well prepared and having a good sense of humour.

How have you built resilience in a high-pressure, male-dominated environment?

A combination of the emotional support of colleagues who are also friends, and a great running group that keeps me sane has made building resilience easier.

How have you balanced your personal life with the demands of a career in finance?

It hasn't been easy, and I don't think I've always got this right! We all know the theory of managing demands on your time by saying

no, but it's very hard to do in practice when transactions are on the go and running to their own timelines. The key is working in a supportive team where, to the extent possible, you give each other the time and space you need when you need it.

What does self-care look like for you, and how do you prevent burnout?

I try to take some time off during all my children's school holidays, to do something interesting. That creates a forced break from work, is an investment in time with my family and is often a chance to learn something new, which totally distracts me from work.

Have your views on work-life balance changed over time?

My views have definitely changed over the years, as I have learnt more and my personal circumstances and family's needs have changed. First of all though, I had to learn that work-life balance really does matter! Then I had to learn that you have to be flexible in how you implement it. It is very individual, and one solution does not work for all stages of life.

Did you have any mentors or role models? How did they influence your journey?

I had some strong mentors at the beginning of my career, who helped me build the confidence to create opportunities for myself. I think I would have benefited from having a female mentor, especially during my younger years, and I hope that I can fill that gap for some of the younger women I work with. I have worked with some really fabulous younger women, and it's exciting to watch them come into their own and realise their worth.

How has the landscape for women in finance changed since you started?

The landscape for women in finance, particularly in the legal world, has changed significantly since I started. Twenty-five years ago, women were definitely in the minority in this field, whereas now the gender ratios seem to be more evenly balanced. I also feel that women are a lot more supportive of each other than they used to be. Previously, many interactions were competitive, but they are now much more collaborative. Perhaps we have all just mellowed with age?

What advice would you give to your younger self starting out in this field?

In the long run, if you work with talented people whom you like working with, everything else will follow. 🙌