



# Q&A

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

My path into this field wasn't intentional. After completing my audit articles, I had my sights set on a career in corporate finance, but given the market conditions at the time, opportunities were scarce. While considering a financial manager role with a client, I was offered a position in tax. I saw it as a chance to broaden my skill set — something I'd do for a year or two before moving on.

That "year or two" became more than 15 years. Just as I'd start to feel ready for a change, new and exciting opportunities would emerge. I went from handling compliance and basic advisory work to structuring complex leveraged buyouts and setting up private equity funds. It's not the path I planned, but it's exactly where I was meant to be.

## **What was your first deal or transaction like, and what did you take away from it?**

One of my most memorable early deals was a leveraged buyout of a JSE-listed company. It was long, complex, and full of unexpected turns. I'll never forget a night just before the TRP guarantee was due, when a sudden legislative change sent us into crisis mode. Whilst I no longer remember what the change was, I do remember my team and I spending the night around a whiteboard, problem-solving under pressure.

That deal taught me that M&A is rarely straightforward. It demands resilience, agility, and a solution-driven mindset. Most of all, it showed me the power of a strong, trusted team — people who show up and stay in it with you, no matter what.

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

Earlier in my career, during a critical internal briefing, a senior stakeholder asked me to fetch his jug of water from his desk. I was the only woman in the room, and the most senior representative from my team. Despite the importance of the meeting and the fact that several members of his own team were present, any of whom could have fulfilled the request, I complied.

That moment has stayed with me. It was a subtle yet striking reminder of the gender dynamics that can still play out in

professional spaces. I often reflect on that experience when I need to remind myself to use my voice — not just for my own sake, but to set an example and advocate for others as well.

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

To be honest, I don't always get self-care right, especially with the demands and time constraints of daily life. While I know I need to work on things like exercising more and eating healthier, I do make a conscious effort to prioritise my mental well-being by carving out time to switch off.

Small habits make a big difference: I pamper myself when I need a pick-me-up, my phone goes into "Do Not Disturb" mode after a certain hour (with exceptions, of course), and Sundays are my dedicated "switch-off day". Aside from attending church in the morning, the rest of the day is just for me — no work, no social commitments. I'll work late on Friday or through Saturday if I need to, just to protect that time. It's my way of recharging and setting myself up for the week ahead.

## **How do you mentor or support other women entering the field?**

I believe in sharing experiences, whether they're good, bad, personal, or professional. Storytelling not only connects us, it also invites vulnerability, which builds trust and understanding, and reminds us that we are not alone. One of the most meaningful moments of support I've received wasn't advice at all; it was someone simply saying, "Me too." That simple moment of connection meant everything.

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

My mother used to say, "No one is better than you — just different." I wish I had carried that mindset into my professional life earlier. In the business world, it's easy to feel like an imposter, but often what sets others apart is simply different experience.

I'd tell my younger self: don't compare; rather learn. Every challenge you face is shaping your own experience. Come prepared, stay curious, and trust that your time will come. I would also remind myself to trust my instincts more, and not to be afraid to take risks. 