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Q *Where did your financial markets journey begin, and how did you end up where you are today?*

A After initially studying towards a career in actuarial science, I realised that that was not my calling, and pivoted to finance. I joined Absa/Barclays in 2007 as part of the EMEA graduate programme, and after spending six months at Barclays London, I returned to South Africa to join Absa's Debt Capital Markets and Securitisation team. In 2009 I moved to the Corporate Finance and M&A team. I spent the bulk of my career in M&A executing public, private, South Africa and Africa Regional Operations (ARO) transactions across various sectors but mostly in telecommunications and mining. The role grew as Absa's footprint across the continent grew, leading me towards a deep interest in public capital markets. In about 2016 I redirected my career towards equity capital markets.

Q *Did you have a mentor at any point in your career? If so, who were they and what did you learn from them?*

A I have been fortunate to have had many mentors across during my career, with my direct line managers in the first decade being the most impactful. I maintain strong relationships with many of them to

this date. The most valuable lesson I learnt from all of them, in different ways, was the ability to realise one's strengths and weaknesses. That introspection has allowed me the freedom and courage to grow, try different things (sometimes on the edge of panic!) and provide a perspective on how best to engage with others. They taught me how to engage in active and constructive discussions and led by example in their ability to have and hold difficult conversations.

Q *What, if any, hurdles have you had to overcome in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated?*

A To borrow a phrase from Sheryl Sandberg, it was finding (and continuing to find) an authentic way of "leaning in" as a woman in business, and not feeling pressured to be "one of the guys". There have been frustrating situations along the way including getting used to often being the only woman in the room and the related dynamics that sometimes brings with it. However, these situations are less prevalent as the industry matures. I try not to focus on the industry being male dominated, but rather on supporting an environment that enables the success of different personality types, cultural and economic backgrounds. I am of the view that by embracing

the notion that success can look different to what it may have 20 years ago, we will make room for more women to sit at the table.

Q *What are some of the most memorable deals you have worked on?*

A They have been many, but my first transaction has to be the most memorable. It was the acquisition of the Bond Exchange of South Africa by JSE Limited. I was an analyst, barely out of university. Twelve years later, I can hardly remember what the details of the transaction were, but I can remember watching Nicky Newton-King in action as one of the few senior women in corporate South Africa. I saw her execute this significant transformative M&A transaction with poise and presence, and it left an indelible impression on me that being a successful woman in industry was, in fact, attainable.

Q *What advice would you give to young women who are looking to enter to financial markets?*

A Try not to get caught up in the pressures of trying to prove yourself as a woman in corporate finance, or meeting what you think are the expectations of a woman in industry. We all have value to add as unique individuals, so rather focus on that. 🎯