

Q: Why do you think it is important to celebrate International Women's Day/Month?

A: The answer is in the question. It is to “celebrate” women and their achievements. It is to “celebrate” the milestones and the progress made by women and to “celebrate” where we have come from and acknowledge where we still need to go.

It's perhaps akin to having a periodic “progress” meeting, but on a global scale. It creates an agenda for the meeting, it brings the topic to the boardroom table and it generates discussion and no doubt debate. It is that continuing debate that will be the catalyst for change in the future.

Q: What was your journey to get to where you are now?

A: I went through a pretty standard journey professionally – I completed a double law and business degree with honours at university in Sydney, supporting myself as an industrial adviser for a small employment and IR firm during my university studies. After qualifying as a lawyer, I then joined a top tier law firm before making the move to London, but got sideswiped by Guernsey where I joined another top tier law firm and qualified as a lawyer in England and Wales.

After moving to another top tier law firm shortly after having my son, I took a massive career risk and got out of the law altogether. To facilitate this career change, I undertook additional qualifications with the IOD and STEP but ultimately, that risk didn't pay off. I have now returned to the law and head up Bedell Cristin's Pan-Island employment team.

13 years later after moving to Guernsey, my new journey is just beginning as I work to not only develop a Top Tier 1 employment practice in the Channel Islands, but to create a team around me that are motivated, independent and pro-active, safe in the knowledge that they are supported but empowered to recognise and take opportunities to develop themselves, the team and the firm.

Q: What challenges have you faced as a woman in the industry, and how have you overcome them?

A: The greatest challenge for me – has always been - me. I have been my biggest obstacle.

I have a penchant for “reacting” and not responding. I have a tendency to act first, think later. I have a fire inside me that I didn't know how to control. I am like Vegemite (or for you Brits, Marmite) – you either love me or you hate me. In one sense, it's what makes me a great litigator, but it is also my Achilles heel.

I have overcome that challenge by taking responsibility for me, learning from my mistakes and building myself up again. By having those difficult



Carly Parrott

Counsel

Bedell Cristin

Carly is Counsel in the litigation team. She is a highly experienced employment lawyer with a well established reputation in Guernsey as one of the prominent offshore senior employment counsel. She has worked for leading law firms in both Australia and Guernsey, advising local, pan-Island, multi-national and global organisations as well as senior employees and directors.



ThoughtLadies that inspire



Understand the environment in which you are working, learn the rules and embed yourself – then look to be and make the changes that are necessary so that the next woman that enters the game gets to play with a different rulebook.



conversations with myself, learning to understand myself and what drives and underlies my reactions, and then equipping myself with the tools to control (but not tame the fire), to enable to me to respond but not react and to accept that sharing my vulnerability is actually a sign of strength and not weakness. Thank you to Brene Brown for that insight.

Q: What advice would you give to other women in the industry building their careers?

A: This may be controversial, but don't fight the rules on day one – learn the game, understand the rules and then find ways to change them. Work is a game – a game where the rules aren't always fair, they aren't always right and they aren't always transparent. However my best piece of advice to women who are building their careers is understand the environment in which you are working, learn the rules and embed yourself – then look to be and make the changes that are necessary so that the next woman that enters the game gets to play with a different rulebook.

Q: What women have supported or inspired you throughout your career and why?

A: I have been so privileged to have been mentored, supported and inspired by two of the best female lawyers in my 13 years of legal practice in Guernsey.

Firstly by Jessica Roland – who trail blazed through partnership and is now onto the judicial bench. But what was inspiring about Jessica was not what she did, or what she achieved but how she did it. In my early years, I learnt so much from just watching her and as I progressed in my career, fully supported and emboldened Jessica, I flourished as a result of her empowerment of me and having such a beacon to aspire towards.

Secondly by Elaine Gray – how is simply one of the most impressive women, and lawyers I have had the privilege of working with. I still have the card she wrote me when I left the firm and her words say more about her as a leader and a person than they ever did about me. She always had my back and her loyalty and commitment to me showed me what it really meant to be valued and feel part of something special.

“

We need more men to care about this as much as many women do and understand the toll that bias, negative stereotypes and discrimination can take.

”

Q: It's 2022, how can we move forward in the industry to raise awareness against bias and take further action for equality?

A: We need more men to care about this as much as many women do and understand the toll that bias, negative stereotypes and discrimination can take. It used to be common to attend events about gender equality and see perhaps a handful of men. That has definitely changed recently - as we can't do this by talking to ourselves over and over again - but we have a long way to go.

