

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

A: For me, International Women's Day is about gender equality – globally, not just on our own doorstep. This day was first celebrated over 100 years ago and we have come so far since then, particularly in the developed world, but there are still huge gaps in parity. This day / month helps celebrate those achievements which have been made to date, but it also highlights that in many countries (including the UK) inequality still exists and this is where further changes need to be made.

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

A: I studied Economics at university and joined Barclays' Tax Graduate Scheme in 2008, where I focused on tax for Barclays Wealth, spent 6 months on secondment in New York working for Barclays Capital, and completed my ACA qualification. I then went into practice, spending most of the next 5 years at EY providing tax advice to ultra-high net worth individuals and private banks, and completed my CTA qualification. I decided to return to banking in 2018 and completed the CISI International Advice Diploma ahead of joining Credit Suisse as a Wealth Planner in London, before finally moving to Lombard Odier as Head of Wealth Planning UK last September.

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

A: The biggest challenge for me has been feeling like I am doing the best I can at work and the best I can as a parent to my two year old son. There have been days where I've felt guilty for not being at home with him, and there have been other days I've felt guilty saying no to a meeting or event for work. I have been fortunate enough to have supportive managers throughout my career (all of them male) and am under no illusion that I am lucky to have a family, but I have also learned not to be afraid to ask for help; personally or professionally.



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

A: 1. You are in the driving seat and you are responsible for the direction of your own career. Put yourself forward for opportunities or projects you are interested in, and while not all of them may work out the way you planned or hoped, this has the potential to make you realise which areas of work you enjoy and what you are really passionate about.

2. I think it's important to recognise that "success" means different things to different people - working out what it means to you can help you work out what your goals are.

3. Build relationships and look after them. Spend time with senior people and learn from them; and also spend time with your peer group - there may be moments they feel like your competitors, but sharing knowledge and having a support network is really valuable and having people you can go for coffee / a chat with makes the day more fun!

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

A: My mum has always supported me - she taught me not to give up even when things feel difficult and have confidence in yourself. Before every interview, exam, promotion panel I have ever had she has called me to tell me I could do it and that she believed in me, and I am so grateful for that.

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

A: Education, buy-in and action! There are many misconceptions about this topic and what breaking the bias is looking to achieve. Educating both men and women on what the issues are, so that we as an industry can collectively work together to find solutions to improve equality, is key. It is very difficult to get buy-in for an initiative - from men or women - to make a change without them understanding what the problem is.

