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Take charge of your destiny. Don't rely on others to make things happen for you. Connecting with a mentor is great, but ultimately you are in charge of the direction your life takes.

What advice would you give accounting firms on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?

I don't believe retention decisions should be based on gender, and I don't believe a business can operate successfully if it is trying to achieve gender balance at the cost of offering quality services, so I would recommend that firms simply try not to be gender-biased. Offer the same opportunities to everyone on your staff and give assignments and promotions based on skill and performance, not gender. This practice will enable you to retain the most qualified staff. In an ideal setting, the gender of the staff shouldn't play into your decisions because, at the end of the day, what you want to provide to your clients is the best service possible.

Do you think that there is still a glass ceiling in accounting firm senior management and partner levels, or that the profession has moved to a mostly gender neutral state?

I think the answer to that question will vary from one firm to another. And my advice to the woman who might think she is working in an environment where she is prevented from advancing due to her gender is to consider looking for another place to work. You could certainly stick around and try to change the system from within. Or you could get on with your life and find a firm that appreciates you.

How have you managed to balance your professional and personal life obligations, whether that includes family, etc?

I left public accounting to stay home and raise a family, but I worked from home as a

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~~What single piece of technology could you absolutely not live without, and why?~~

My smartphone. It is my lifeline to both my job and my personal life.

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

There are so many – it's difficult to pick only one! Some of the apps I use frequently include Open Table for quick reservations, Weather Bug to check the weather no matter where I'm going, and Gas Buddy to find gas for the car at the lowest price.

What do you like to do when you actually have free time without any obligations to work or family?

I enjoy reading and watching movies, binging on television shows I've missed, road trips, cooking, and connecting with friends and family.

Technology

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