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Sandi Leyva, CPA, CGMA

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What advice would you give to female college students about the opportunities for women in the accounting profession?

The most important thing is to find a firm or opportunity where you can make a difference or begin to achieve your life purpose. You have great numbers and financial skills, so don't take it for granted that others have that – they don't. Your impact will be helping people achieve financial goals in whatever way you connect with them. Connect to your meaning early and you will go a long way.

What advice would you give accounting firms on ways in which they can better retain and advance more qualified female staff?

Let staff know the “why” of everything. Show them the difference they can make with the client and then stand back. Be open-minded.

What is the name of one book that has been a great influence to you?

Counterclockwise by Ellen Langer.

In what ways do you participate in the professional community to change/improve the accounting profession?

I've written articles, books, authored lots of CPE courses. I spend a lot of training time outside the profession, then bring back fresh ideas for CPAs and other accounting professionals to consider. We're super-active in social and doing more videos this year as well as lots of free CPE. Also, through the products and services we sell, we've helped thousands get a handle on marketing and practice management.

In what ways do you participate in your local community to help others?

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years)?

I hope the partnership business model evolves to a more fully functioning business (like our clients have!) from what it is now, which is basically a model that contractors use. The business model change will also help to develop more deeply department functions such as marketing, operations, and technology. I also see specialty areas becoming more important as we cannot keep up with all of it anymore.

How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession?

Through continued writing, speaking, and teaching. My areas of interest are marketing, pricing, and practice management.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped shape the direction or focus of your professional life.

Can I name two? Daniel Goleman and Matthieu Ricard. Daniel wrote Destructive Emotions (worst title ever) where he described how plasticity and meditation can change the brain to become whatever one wants it to be. The case study used was of Matthieu Ricard who is one of the most advanced monks on the planet and has been measured to be the happiest person alive.

[Click here to see the other honorees](#) of the 2015

“Most Powerful Women in Accounting” awards.

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