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Jennifer Warawa – 2017 Most Powerful Women in Accounting Honoree

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skilled, even more diverse set of leaders.

How important is work/life balance and what suggestions do you have for those who are struggling to attain this?

Work/life balance alternates like a pendulum. Today, balance may look like all work, no play for a number of days (or even weeks), but the important part is eventually being able to rest, recover and rejuvenate following those intense periods of career focus. Personally, work/life balance is not something that I may achieve within a one week or one month period, but rather gradually over time. It's important to me that all areas of my life are nurtured and moving forward, and although I don't always achieve this, it's certainly top of mind. I am a goal-setting person so when I am struggling with maintaining a healthy work/life balance, I reset and establish goals or milestones, in my personal life, that will help me to stay on track. For example, I was recently struggling with prioritizing time to exercise regularly, so I entered myself in a 5K run and am now making the necessary time to train for it. Sometimes, all you need is some extra incentive to make sure you carve out time for yourself, your family, and/or your passions— whatever makes up the 'you' outside of your work.

What is the most difficult part about being a woman in the accounting profession?

While we're seeing many improvements in the representation of women in accounting, the industry itself is devoting significant resources to technology— a historically male-majority environment. As technical innovation continues to become an increasingly important aspect of the profession, we have work to do in terms of elevating women to positions of technical leadership and increasing diversity within the accounting technology landscape. I frequently find myself at

business technology conferences where less than 10% of the people in attendance are

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administrative tasks that used to take up valuable hours have been automated by such innovations. Now, accountants can now focus on activities that are more valuable to their clients, such as advisory services. Today's accountants are no longer buried in spreadsheets— number-crunching— they're tapping AI to automate services where we can and using AI-driven insights to consult our clients.

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

While I'm no longer running my own practice, I will continue to stay closely connected to the profession through my position at Sage, a leading accounting technology company. Working with a technology company that prioritizes the innovation of the accounting profession, I will continue to challenge the status quo to learn what stops the profession from evolving. By remaining observant and critical, I will ensure that and Sage continues to deliver the technology and resources accountants need to be ready for the AI-enabled future of the profession.

In addition to working with accountants to influence Sage's next product offerings and helping to increase adoption of emerging technologies within the accounting landscape, I'll continue to mentor women to diversify tomorrow's leadership pool.

Looking back at your career, what would you do differently given the knowledge you have today and how can women who are entering the benefit from that knowledge?

I would have spent less time doubting my ability to succeed because of my experience, sex or even nationality. I would have jumped into opportunities with both feet and full of confidence. I now know that it's not just what you know today

that makes you a stellar leader. It's all about having confidence, and how you

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believe this is one of the greatest professions in the world. Accounting is a profession where you can tell stories of a business based on the numbers (think, financial statements) and when you can do that, it's magical. Having a sincere passion for what you do ultimately shines through and energizes those around you, and my passion for the accounting profession is impossible to miss.

[Learn more about the 2017 Most Powerful Women in Accounting.](#)

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