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Melissa K. Hooley, CPA, CGMA – 2017 Most

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What opportunities do you feel women in accounting have now that they didn't have when you started in the profession?

There is greater awareness as to the need for women leadership in the profession. There is a better understanding that the more diverse leadership is the better we are together. Also with the changes in technology, we have the ability to do our jobs from anywhere, and at any time of the day, which gives us the flexibility often needed at various points in our careers. That was not the case when I started in the profession. I also think that women have a big opportunity to move to leadership positions with the baby boomers retiring.

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

I still haven't mastered this skill completely! I really think it is about work/life integration. What has really helped me is to look at it all together- it is intertwined. My career and personal life are both important to who I am as a person. Each year I set my priorities and annual goals (personal and professional) combined, which has really helped me keep the right things in perspective and with the right amount of attention.

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

Not having enough women role models for the young women in the profession. Without those roles models it is very difficult for them to see themselves in those roles and how to get there. As women leaders, we need to tell our stories, how our paths may have been very different, and how we can be authentic to ourselves in our career paths.

What is the best part about being a women in the accounting profession?

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

By staying involved- not only in various professional organizations within the profession, but by helping the profession change the business model for the future generations. We need to be innovative, challenge the status quo, and be willing to change in order to remain relevant.

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 asked for help more often when I needed it. I had the misconception that I had to do it all- all the time. I would have paced myself more and focused on the more important items and delegated a lot more of the not so important items earlier in my career. I would have not been so serious, and had more fun with my teams. I get that now and I have a lot more fun.

When asked to be involved I have said yes, even when I wasn't sure I was fully qualified, because nobody is ready. Show up and get involved. Trust the opportunity. You may surprise yourself!

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

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