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Sarah Elliott, CPA – 2017 Most Powerful Women in Accounting Honoree

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Education (Degree/school): BBA, Accounting from Texas A&M University; Graduate Certificate, Executive & Professional Coaching from University of Texas at Dallas

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

I'm not sure the types of opportunities that are available now are that different than when I started in the profession back in 2000. I do think the volume of these opportunities is much higher today, and many more women are taking advantage of these opportunities. For example, it is more commonplace today for a woman to create her own career path on her own terms, than it was back then.

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

Finding a way to integrate your career within your life in a way that feels right to you is an essential component of a healthy, fulfilling life. Not only is there not one right solution for work/life balance for all women...there is not even one right solution for one woman!

Redirect some time, space and energy from the never-ending task list to instead reflect upon the things that truly matter in life – who you are, what lights you up, what you really want and what you value most. Do this regularly, because your perspective will evolve. If you are not intentional in creating the life you want, you will live life by default, which limits your possibilities for finding a fulfilling balance in life.

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

As women, we have so many strengths, talents and ideas to contribute to the profession. The profession needs our contributions to overcome its challenges and thrive. The possibilities for what women can create and contribute to the profession are limitless, especially when we choose to authentically connect and collaborate with one another (men and women alike).

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

As a leadership coach, trainer and consultant, my purpose is to inspire positive change in the world. This shapes the future of our profession, one person at a time, one organization at a time. When each of us lives more fully into our potential, we inspire others to do the same, and we collectively create a future for the profession that is ripe with possibility.

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?

What a great question! There are many...how about I provide a bullet point list, in true CPA fashion? J

- I would have cut myself more slack and valued good or great more than perfect. (I am a recovering perfectionist!)
- I would have managed my energy better. I would have carved out more time to renew my energy with the things that matter most to me instead of draining my energy dry by working too many hours. In other words, I would have realized the value of energy > hours.

- I would have spent less energy trying to make everyone else happy and/or

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