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profession, it is inspiring to look to those who have attained those ranks ahead of them. The AICPA and CPA Practice Advisor partner each year to honor ...

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Sarah Elliott, CPA, PCC

2022 Most Powerful Women in Accounting

Co-founder and Principal

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TRAITS OF AWARD WINNERS

1. She has been the driving force to create a culture of excellence, innovation, and

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PERSPECTIVES

What do you feel is the most important issue facing the accounting profession today?

The global pandemic has highlighted challenges that already existed – our deep, human longing for more meaning and connection in our lives. The physical disconnection has highlighted a disconnection that we've felt for many years before the pandemic – a disconnection from not only one another but from our true selves.

The traditional accounting model (and most business models in general) is based on outdated notions of “human productivity,” where our value is measured by the hours we put in, our output and increases to the bottom line. We are not machines, and profit is not purpose. We must find and reconnect with that which makes us human – purpose, meaning, creativity, and connection. We must take better care of ourselves, so we don't sacrifice our own well-being for the sake of another dollar. We must release the pressure, take more risks with each another and let go of trying to get it all right or perfect. We must seek to understand one another as human beings, rather than workhorses or profit centers. Only then can we create a true sense of belonging and purpose in this profession. If we can't, people will leave to find it elsewhere.

What one thing would you recommend accountants do to prepare for the future?

In an environment of ambiguity and ever accelerating change, we must be more human-centric leaders. The authoritarian, ego-based leadership model has long passed its expiration date. It's time to fully embrace a more conscious, evolved form of leadership – to cultivate this in yourself and others. We need leaders who:

- Genuinely care about others and demonstrate compassion and respect for all.

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~~Help others and then power, rather than hold power over others.~~

- Take care of themselves, so they can show up more fully for others.

Each of us can consciously choose to be this kind of leader each and every day, and organizations can consciously choose to invest in creating a coaching culture that cultivates the leaders we need.

What one skill or experience would you recommend that young women getting started in the accounting profession master?

We need bold women to model what it means to be a more conscious, human-centric leader. Never stop learning. Always be open to new perspectives. Be bravely kind – use your voice to speak your truth and be willing to get uncomfortable for the sake of doing what is right.

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Read more about the [2022 Most Powerful Women in Accounting Winners](#).

Accounting

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