



Clarice Wambua

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Q&A



Q *Where did your journey begin and how did you end up where you are today?*

A I began my journey as a pupil (candidate attorney) in one of Kenya's largest corporate law firms. I was however quite interested in delving deeper into the environmental aspects of corporate practice and moved early on into an in-house legal role at a carbon consultancy. At the consultancy, I was introduced to the world of carbon projects as we worked on a large portfolio of projects seeking carbon finance. Since then, I have specialised in environmental law with a focus on climate change, and I now lead the Nairobi office of CDH on environmental law, as well as pro bono and human rights.

Q *What, if any, hurdles did you have to face in an industry that has traditionally been male dominated?*

A The hurdles I have faced have been more related to the dual roles I play and the need to do both well. I have had to make tough decisions as relates work and family balance. I have had seasons in my career where I have focused on work less actively to dedicate more time to starting and raising a young family. Other seasons have called on me to rely on family help for childcare, so I can focus more intensely on work.

Q *Did you have a mentor and if so, tell us about that person and include the most valuable thing you learnt from them?*

A I have learned a lot from renowned environmental law professor and current Director of UNEP's Law Division, Prof. Patricia Kameri-Mbote. I was her research assistant during my undergraduate studies at the University

of Nairobi. The most valuable lesson I have learnt from her is to run my own race, in my own lane, and at my own pace.

Q *What advice would you give to other women thinking of entering the M&A and Financial Markets industry?*

A I would advise women considering entering the industry to go for it. There is no shortage of opportunities for well skilled lawyers and the hard work necessary to build expertise is worth it.

Q *Did the COVID-19 pandemic with the various lockdowns, changes in working habits etc. bring about any major changes for you from a work / career perspective?*

A During the early stages of the COVID-19 lockdowns, I noticed a blurring of my work life and my home life as I was working intensely online and for much longer hours. This had an impact on my well-being, and I am now more deliberate on prioritising rest.

Q *What are three words you would use to describe yourself?*

A Creative, confident, diligent.

Q *What qualities would you say are essential for a woman to thrive in the M&A industry?*

A Sound technical knowledge, commercial awareness, good listening skills, flexibility in approach to transactions, a can-do attitude, and a healthy dose of grit.

Q *What are the biggest changes you have seen in the industry in the course of your career?*

A The biggest change I have seen has been the way sustainability concerns

and ESG in general have become more mainstream. More lawyers are interested in this area of law and more clients are making inquiries and seeking specialist services. When I first started practice, these concerns were more at the periphery, than taking centre stage.

Q *Who is your female role model and why?*

A Wangari Maathai. Social, environmental, and political activist. Founder of the Green Belt Movement. The first African Woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize. She did so much good for the environment and for democracy in Kenya and lived a life of utmost courage.

Q *What is one goal you have set yourself for 2022 and are you on track to reach it?*

A I had set a goal to read at least two books a month. I have some months where I am over-achieving and have read three books. There are some months where I have not completed a single book.

Q *Do you have any unusual hobbies?*

A Collecting quotes. I love words beautifully put together.

Q *What is your favourite quote?*

A "My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."- Maya Angelou.

Q *What is at the top of your bucket list?*

A Travel the world.

Q *What book are you reading at the moment?*

A One Plus One Equals Three - Dave Trott. 

