Q&A

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Personal reflections, ambiguity and leadership

The lifestyle of transactional finance is notoriously non-stop. What is a strict personal boundary, daily ritual or cultural practice you protect fiercely to maintain your mental wellbeing?

I have become quite protective of my small, daily ritual. In a demanding practice, it's easy to believe life will properly begin once the deal closes or the inbox finally quietens down. But there is always another transaction waiting, so I have learnt to weave moments of calm into my days instead.

Before work, it will be taking an extra minute to choose a fragrance or a piece of jewellery. It makes me happy. During the day, when everything feels all-consuming, I listen to music while working – not to escape the work, but to change how I experience it. A small sensory shift that calms my mind.

Before I sleep, I read three statements I keep in my Notes app: (i) I did my best with the day I had; (ii) everything is a win when the goal is to experience; and (iii) tomorrow will be a better day.

It allows me to leave the day where it belongs, quieten my mind and rest well.

How has your definition of a 'successful career' fundamentally shifted from when you were an ambitious graduate to the industry leader you are today?

Being the youngest of four daughters, success initially looked like external validation: bigger deals, quicker progression, and the visible markers that tell others you're doing well.

Today, perhaps because the world is far more unpredictable than I imagined, I define success through autonomy, competence and community.

Autonomy is having the freedom to shape a career that reflects my values and curiosities, rather than feeling confined to a predefined path or constantly measuring my success against other people's expectations. Competence is the quiet confidence that comes from mastering your craft. It is knowing that clients and colleagues trust you because you have consistently earned that trust through preparation and sound judgement. Community is perhaps the one I have come to appreciate most. The best careers are never built alone – they are shaped by mentors who invest in you, colleagues who challenge you, and the opportunity to do the same for others.

Recognition and bigger deals are gratifying, but those three are what make a career meaningful and successful to me.

Outside of the financial press, economic indices and market tickers, what African literature, philosophies or leaders shape how you view human behaviour and risk?

The Dining Table by Gbanabom Hallowell is the piece of African literature that has stayed with me longest; I read it in high school, but only truly appreciated it years later. The poem transforms an ordinary dining table (a place associated with family and nourishment) into a landscape of war, violence and disease – a reminder that the line between stability and instability is far thinner than we imagine – and it certainly shaped how I think about human behaviour and risk.

We often assess risk as though it exists only in probabilities, but people are not static. Circumstances, incentives and politics change people. Markets do not move independently of these forces; they move with them.

Working in M&A has reinforced that lesson. Every M&A transaction is built on assumptions about people, markets and institutions: that markets will remain open, regulators predictable, counterparties cooperative. *The Dining Table* reminds me never to assume permanence. The greatest risks are often the human realities we think will remain unchanged.

What is a personal passion or hobby you pursue, completely outside of finance, that keeps your mind sharp and your perspective grounded?

I discovered Sudoku this year, and it has become my favourite mental reset. What I enjoy is that it rewards patience over speed. Whenever I rush, I more often than not make mistakes. When I slow down, look for patterns and accept that not every answer reveals itself immediately, the puzzle begins to solve itself.

That lesson translates well to transactional practice. The first answer may not always be the right answer, and not every difficult issue requires immediate action. Sometimes the best legal judgement comes from recognising patterns that were invisible at first.

When your career in African capital markets is eventually complete, what is the legacy you hope to leave on the continent's financial ecosystem?

I hope my contribution to African capital markets goes beyond helping transactions close, to helping businesses grow.

Across the continent, many founder-led and family-owned businesses have built remarkable enterprises but struggle to access the capital, partnerships or structures needed to scale beyond their domestic markets. I would like to contribute to an ecosystem where mergers and acquisitions are viewed not simply as exit opportunities, but as tools for growth, regional expansion and long-term sustainability.

If I can help more African businesses scale through well-structured transactions and strategic partnerships, I would consider that a meaningful contribution to the continent's financial ecosystem.