



DIVERSITY PROJECT

'WHAT ADVICE WOULD I GIVE MY YOUNGER SELF?'



Believe you are credible – whatever your age. Just because the other person is old enough to be your mother or father, it doesn't necessarily mean they know more than you.

Worry less about what others might think of your actions and decisions. Take the path that makes sense for you.

KATE JONES



1. Find a good boss (nobody teaches you that!)
2. Network (it's not just about delivering performance)
3. Communicate (ditto)
4. Choose your battles (life too wearing otherwise for all concerned)

LUCY MACDONALD



The advice I wish I'd gotten much earlier in my career is:

Nurture your network! It is a very powerful, and often underutilised, source of help, advice and opportunity. Informal networks are crucial when it comes to career development, and you may find your biggest advocates are people outside your reporting line/firm/industry.

ANNE MARIE FLEURBAAIJ



The advice I would give my younger self (and continually try to give my older self!) is:

1. To create balance in everything that you do. Having a career as a woman is hugely empowering, but it's equally empowering to spend time with your family and to do the other things that make you happy. Ultimately if you have your health and a couple of people you love, then you really do have everything. Sometimes when you're ambitious it's easy to lose sight of that – but you really can have it all.
2. Be true to who you are - knowing that it can take a lifetime and indeed many different jobs to work out who that is and where your real strengths and passions are. That's okay! Your career is a journey not a destination. I love the Einstein quote, "Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life thinking it's stupid."

NADIA MANZOOR



On career and balance:

'Take your future into your own hands: make things happen by trusting your instincts and going for it, even if they say it can't be done. Be bold, ask the questions and get the balance that you need. If you don't speak up for yourself, no one will.'

ANNA STRILLACCI



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Say yes to personal and professional opportunities which are offered to you by those who know you well and whose opinion you trust.

Say yes, even if you feel the experience or requirements of what is expected of you seem challenging or are a stretch.

Our perceptions of our own self and so our capabilities can often be unintentionally self-limiting. So trust in the confidence others have in you, say yes and take it.

YVONNE SMYTH



Challenge the status quo

"I felt terribly guilty after watching 'The Battle of Sexes'. Growing up in the 70s, I remember asking exactly the same question, 'Why are women tennis players paid less than the men?'. The answer was the same as the one given to Billie Jean King, 'Men's games are faster, more interesting to watch'. What I did wrong and Billie didn't was that I accepted the explanation. Sometimes we have to reach deep into our consciousness, and derive from first principles what is right. Blindly accepting the status quo will only prolong the delay of values transformation that reflect the ethos of the society of our times.

Be the change we want to see."

With those FT headline stories of a so called fund raising event, having a voice that challenges unacceptable norms has never been more imminent.

CHRISTINE CHOW



Take time to discern what makes you happy in your life, especially in your relationships with others. Make this the foundation on which to develop your career. As you progress, step-by-step, revisit that question to ensure your values and your plans are aligned.

VICTORIA NYE



Find mentors who understand, encourage and believe in you, and ask for their help when you have to make big decisions.

ALEXANDRA HAGGARD



1. Try to stop thinking about yourself. Try to get the best out of everyone else. Be interested in other people. Listen carefully.
2. Be generous. You may be critical of yourself perhaps but don't let that spill over into being critical of everyone else.
3. From Tristram Shandy: "gravity" - or gravitas - is " a taught trick to gain credit of the world for more sense and knowledge than a man (sic) was worth; a French wit had long ago defined it, -viz. A mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind;" so be yourself.

SARAH BATES



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I would encourage my younger self to stop waiting for everything to feel 'just right' / 'totally prepared' or 'perfect' before starting and / or continuing. I have realised that action is where the power is. A plan is important, but goals and ideas change - sometimes rapidly and sometimes less so - once you start moving forward, so all the planning in the world will only get you so far (and sometimes not very far at all, life often has other plans!) Looking back, my own career only started to take shape and feel exciting when I forced myself to put aside constant worry about preparation (which sometimes manifested itself as procrastination) and simply went for it. The world is not full of people who all know exactly where they are heading, or exactly what is right. Most successful people you encounter will feel out of their comfort zone a lot of the time, and that's okay, in fact I'd say it's absolutely essential. The opportunities that come when you have the courage to get out there and share your voice / ideas / opinion and views are abundant.

CAROLINE KEETCH



Be comfortable saying no to something that is not right for you. Conversely have the confidence to say yes to something that may not be within your comfort zone.

PAULA ROBINSON



Find people who will challenge and support you and do the same for them. Be true to yourself and continue to learn and develop your knowledge and skills. You will learn far quicker when you embrace new challenges so, when life is tough, be brave and remember that you are resilient and you can access support.

NATALIE BENITEZ-CASTELLANO



"Don't think that being strategic is negative. Have a goal, figure out how to get there and go for it.

Being strategic is not the same as being calculating or manipulative - quite the opposite. If you can clearly state what, why and how, people will respect you for it. Unfortunately it took me a while to figure that out.

Looking back I've also been too hesitant in situations, thinking I'm overstepping my mark, that it wasn't my place yet. And then you see guys doing exactly what you had in mind (but didn't dare) and succeeding. Well, not anymore ;)"

ISABELL MOESSLER



Have conviction in your ability to achieve success, have guts to seek career choices outside of your comfort zone, have belief in who you truly are, have awareness of your monetary and self-worth, have confidence to call out bad behaviour with poise and coolness, have time to help others and most of all, be kind to yourself on the journey ahead. Conviction, guts, belief, awareness, confidence, coolness and kindness....

ANITA MCBAIN



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We all make different choices for different reasons. But I've often heard female professionals invoke very short term drivers when justifying their choice of stepping off the career ladder, partly or completely. Often this "choice" revolves around their (male) partner earning multiples of their own salary, or the fact that after childcare is paid for "it's hardly worth continuing to work" (I once heard a woman with a 6 figure salary putting forward these arguments).

I would advise any young woman pondering these difficult questions to take a holistic view of her career and household. Firstly there is no reason for childcare costs to be imputed by default to a mother's earnings rather than both parents'. Secondly you're not just getting a salary - but probably also decent pension contributions, healthcare and other assorted benefits. Most importantly, your career provides you with financial independence and (hopefully) a sense of self fulfilment, both of which are likely to be a net positive for your relationship with your partner and children in the long run.

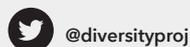
NATHALIE CASALI-DEACON



My top tip would be 'pay attention to your external network'. I think it is easy for women (and many men) to focus so much on the day job that they forget about the value of having an external network partly to ensure you have an external personal brand (not sure I like that word but it sums up what I am trying to say) which might well be useful through your career and helps build confidence but also helps your internal value to your organisation. So finding opportunities to attend conferences, networking events, catching up for coffee with people, etc is all valuable for staying connected with what is going on in the wider world. I think I 'disappeared' at times in my career and I don't think that helped me or my organisation.

My other tip would be to 'seek direct and specific feedback'. There were times in my career when I was told that I just needed to carry on doing what I was doing and I would progress. I didn't progress and I think it was because my line managers at the time were worried about giving me the direct and specific feedback that I needed to hear in case I got upset. Asking the question 'what three things should I do more of, continue doing, do less of' might have helped me get more useful developmental feedback.

JANE WELSH



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