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What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?

Alexandra McCormack: My advice to the next generation of female leaders is: don't be afraid to change your direction or your definition of success. After undergrad, I worked in clothing production for a global design house in New York City - a fast-paced, creative industry that trained me to move quickly, strengthened my self-belief and taught me how to interact with people in high-pressure, high-expectation environments. It was a meaningful chapter of my life, but I knew it wasn't the final one. Making the decision to step away and go back to law school was intimidating. It meant starting over in many ways, being surrounded by people on different timelines, and trusting that the skills I'd already built would translate. In my current role at Ruskin Moscou Faltischek P.C., I lean heavily on the skills that I acquired during that chapter. Changing careers or roles to meet where you are in life is not a failure; it's often a sign of growth.

Women and men tend to lead differently. What are some valuable traits can we learn from each gender?

Nicole Osborne: In my experience, women and men often bring different, but complementary, strengths to leadership. Women leaders frequently excel at strategic collaboration, clear communication, and strong emotional intelligence. Those skills allow them to build trust, hold teams accountable, and create environments where people feel empowered to contribute ideas and solve problems. Traditional male leadership often emphasizes decisiveness, risk tolerance, and assertive advocacy for ideas. The most effective leaders draw from both approaches. Being decisive and confident while also fostering collaboration and awareness leads to better outcomes for teams and organizations. At the end of the day, strong leadership isn't about gender, it's about developing a balanced set of skills and knowing when to use them.

What leadership traits have served you well? And on the flip side, what have you learned that tends to hold women leaders back?

Jacquelyn Loftin: An important leadership lesson for me has been balancing thoughtfulness with responsiveness. While it's critical to be available and responsive to your clients and your team, experience has taught me that effective leadership often requires stepping back, assessing the situation, so when I do respond, it's with confidence and clear surefooted direction. Another critical element is building a trusted network of strong women leaders—a "women's club" of sorts - who you can turn to for perspective, candid feedback, and support. Those relationships often become an essential sounding board when navigating complex leadership decisions. I think one leadership trait that can sometimes hold women back is over-assertiveness. Unfortunately, it can be perceived as a turnoff in some environments. Not to misunderstand, it's important to be strong and assertive - but that strength can be conveyed without overpowering the room. The key is finding the balance - being clear and decisive while still creating space for others' ideas.

Over the past two years, what as a woman have you learned regarding work/life balance?

Rachel Morgenstern: I think work/life balance is probably difficult for all women and, at least for me, the goal posts are shifting rapidly. In the past two years I became a mom and the way I balance my work and home life changed in every respect. Before, the tension was largely between my need for selfcare and time with my husband, on the one hand, and work requirements and my own professional ambition, on the other. Now, there is a small human in the mix, and priorities have changed. Selfcare matters less at times, and more at others. An increased need for income leads to increased work when being home after work matters more than ever. So, I now find myself striving for an entirely new level of work/life balance. For comfort and advice, I look to the women I work with who have done this for years. It helps.