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Jennifer Lee Wilson

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others. Do things for other people's reasons – not your own – generosity is the most attractive and impactful quality you can have.

What steps would you offer to employers to be more effective in retaining and advancing women?

Commit to career customization – managing career pathways and learning opportunities for your people (women and men) on a one-size-fits-one basis. Find out what they love and give them more of it. Find out what they really don't like and find ways to reduce or eliminate those things. Make sure they each have a strong advocate in the practice that is responsible for staying close to them and bringing their opportunities and challenges back to leadership to address. Promote and empower women so women have great role models to aspire to and admire.

Why did you choose to work in – and stay in – an accounting related field?

Accounting made sense to me and it was such a critical success factor in any business. CPAs were nice, smart people who needed help in developing the leadership and management skills needed to drive and grow their firms. The profession seemed like a great place to build our business – and it has been.

What book(s), blog(s), or podcast(s) do you recommend that have guided you on your journey?

Too many to name, but here are a few favorites: Anything written by David Maister or Jim Rohn on leading and managing in professional service, Grit: the Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth, The Power of Vulnerability Ted Talk by Brene Brown, anything by Malcolm Gladwell, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick M. Lencioni

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What advice would you share with young women CPAs striving to achieve similar success in this profession?

Find what you love, that makes a difference and people will value/pay for. Do that. Then, be visible. Speak, teach, write, mentor, network, stream live – share your ideas, resources, and tools generously. What you give out to the universe will come back to you – give the good stuff!

Describe one person who has been an important mentor and sponsor to you and how that person helped shape the direction or focus of your professional life.

I had a female partner at BDO who acted as my sponsor, advocate, coach, and friend – before I worked at BDO, during my time there and then after I left to start this business. Val invested in me, she saw opportunities for me and pushed me to take them. When I traveled to her town, she insisted I stay with her family and spent time with me. All the while, she never felt competitive or threatened by me, no “girl politics” – just generous mentorship and advocacy – and before that, I had never experienced a positive female role model and mentor like her in my professional career. It gave me hope that I’d find more – and also a goal to be that same person for other women.

Please share a personal rule or principle that you follow.

Be Unstoppable! No matter what your inner doubts or negative inner dialogue says, be stronger, louder, and more committed. Do what you say you’re committed to and let nothing derail you. #unstoppable

Read more about the [2020-2021 Most Powerful Women in Accounting Winners](#).

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