COLLAS CRILL

60 seconds with Karen Stachura

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What would you be doing if you weren't in this profession?

What I would like to be doing and what I may have ended up doing may not be the same thing!
After I graduated I was not sure law was for me so I didn't go down the usual path of going straight into my Diploma in Legal Practice (a mandatory postgraduate requirement for those hoping to become a Scottish solicitor). However I soon realised that I was either overqualified or underexperienced, and found myself frustrated in the work I was able to obtain: hotel receptionist, 'coffee person' (aka working in a cybercafé), pharmaceutical administrator (don't ask) and bar tender.

I returned to the law a few years later, older and a little wiser. The break helped me appreciate some of my strengths and weaknesses and that I knew I wanted to do something which challenged me.

When I was much younger I wanted to be an actress. When I was older, I wanted to be a writer. Being a litigator requires a bit of the former and lots of the latter!

Now, given my love of plants (as my garden and house attest), I would probably do something horticultural.

What is one of your greatest work-related achievements?

Being admitted as a solicitor advocate in Scotland, which grants me extended rights of audience in the higher Scottish civil courts, the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The closest I have come (so far) to appearing in the latter courts is having my photo taken outside the Supreme Court Buildings...

What personality trait do you most attribute to your success?

I have come to realise that I have imposter syndrome and am constantly trying to prove myself. But in turn, that makes me try and be the best that I can be and give my clients the best service that I can. My self-doubt makes me check and double-check things to ensure that whatever advice I am giving is as correct and thorough as it can be.

You've been granted a ticket to another country of your choice. Where are you going and why?

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There are too many choices! Buenos Aires for everything; Japan in spring for the blossom; or Botswana for the wildlife and skies (and because I have heard so much about it when my parents lived there before I was born.)

What do you see as the most significant trend in your practice in a year's time?

Gen-AI. Isn't it going to be everyone's?!

Do you have a New Year's Resolution, and if so, how do you plan to keep it?

I have resolutions all the time, not just at New Year. Keeping quiet and just getting on with it is my general plan (and avoids everyone knowing if I have broken them!). At the end of the day, my resolutions are generally aimed at benefitting me and those around me, and keeping that in mind is a key driver.

Dead or alive, which famous person would you most like to have dinner with, and why?

Can I have a dinner party?! Again, there are too many to choose from.

If the person didn't have to be famous – my grandad, so I could hear his stories and ask him all the things I now wished I had when he was alive.

But if they do have to be famous – a choice between Prince (for the music), Brad Pitt (for his, erm, chat) and Kevin Bridges (for his caustic Scottish wit – with no 'Hoose Rice' on the dinner menu).

What's the strangest, most exciting thing you have done in your career?

A client of mine in Scotland once took me for a flight in his Cessna 150 airplane – the claim was a dispute about another Cessna 150 airplane, not the one we were in, I hasten to add! He flew me across the Forth and out to lunch as a thank you after trial.

What motivates you most about your work?

The variety and the challenges. Finding solutions and helping clients with unwelcome problems. And being part of a fantastic team.

What does the perfect weekend look like?

Spending quality time with family with no real agenda. A morning walk with the dog, coffee and baguette (from Vienna Bakeries in Jersey– it is sublime), trip to a beach and a game of Finska and a lazy dinner outside watching the sun go down.

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What's the most important quote you've heard that you have adopted to your personal or professional life?

My golden rule in life is to always treat others as I would wish to be treated. A quote I read in Bob Geldof's autobiography that has always stayed with me is:

'Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.'

It reminds me that I shouldn't stop myself from doing the smallest things, because it may ultimately make a difference. If everybody does a little, it adds up to a lot.

What is the one thing you could not live without?

My family.

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