

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?

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?!

Regulatory | Real estate | Private client and trusts | Insolvency and restructuring | Dispute resolution | Corporate | Banking and finance

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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.

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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