

## Women's History Month: Shared Experiences Help Smooth Intersection of Professional, Personal Demands

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I was promoted to partner the same year I became a mother. I was seven months pregnant when my then-firm notified me that I would be in its next partner class. Two months later, I was indeed promoted and the following month I welcomed my first son. It was also 2021, an incredibly busy year for my area of practice, healthcare transactions, and the busiest year of my career to date.

The entire experience was incredible and transformative. During this time, I discovered that it was essential to have strong relationships with people who would support me through my life changes and challenges, and help me celebrate victories and sweet moments. I needed to have these relationships with colleagues at my firm as well as friends who are experiencing or have experienced the life occurrences that an attorney and a mother to young children face.

Any associate in a law firm knows how important it is to find a good mentor—someone who will help guide you through the stages of your legal career and the challenges along the way. The importance of this relationship is stressed from the beginning of a legal career when most firms pair up new lawyers with experienced associates to help navigate the law firm environment.

I was lucky to have strong mentors from the beginning of my career. Some of these mentors were relationships I developed organically; others were assigned through a formal mentorship program. Some of my mentors were much more senior in the firm, and others were a few years ahead of me. Each one served as a guide, offering wisdom, emotional support, and practical advice, enabling me to propel my career.

The year I was promoted was intense and, as expected, I was under pressure to perform well. In the midst of these pressures, I relied heavily on mentors to guide me through the challenges of advancing in my career and becoming a parent. I recall bonding with another junior female partner who had coincidentally welcomed her first child during her first year of partnership as well.

While I had worked with this attorney for a few years, we were not particularly close until we connected over the shared experience of being promoted while expecting. She became a supportive figure in my life not only through

the partnership process but also once my baby arrived with respect to first-time mom challenges.

I was also lucky to have another female partner in my office who was a few weeks ahead of me in what was also her first pregnancy. We were in different practice groups but found each other as someone to share experiences and seek advice on navigating pregnancy while busy with work. Once our babies arrived, she continued to be extremely helpful with respect to what to expect with a new baby, as her child was born a few weeks before mine. She shared her experiences with me, and I felt less alone going through the challenges of being a first-time mom and new partner. She was always available to me and provided guidance on a variety of topics, from baby milestones, sleep training, hiring a nanny, and work travel.

These two women provided emotional support and practical advice during a pivotal point in my career and life. They offered guidance on so many issues, from preparation for my partnership interview to strategies on returning to work after maternity leave.

Fast forward to present day, I now have two boys. My oldest is 3, my youngest is almost 1, and I recently moved my practice to a new firm. As a busy law firm partner with two young kids, I find mentorship indispensable for guidance, support, and the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and wisdom. My circle of mentors has expanded to include clients who trust me with their legal issues. It is a great feeling to know that these individuals value my legal advice, as well as the well-being of a fellow attorney and mother.

Further, as a partner, I strongly desire to model effective leadership for the younger associates in my field, especially expecting parents or those learning to navigate law firm life with young children. I make it a priority to offer mentorship to these younger attorneys, sharing my experiences, struggles, and strategies. Being a mentor allows me to not only give back but also reinforce the importance of support and solidarity among working parents in the legal profession. My relationship with a mentee is rewarding. By sharing my experiences, I build trust with my colleagues and gain new insights into the team members of my practice.

Balancing the demands of motherhood with being a law firm partner is not easy. However, mentorship has been the key to navigating these two worlds, providing me with emotional support, practical guidance, and a sense of solidarity that helped propel me in my career and home life.

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