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### Lessons I learnt from my mentor

*"You can't know what you don't know"* – Jonathan Raymond

When I began my legal career, I was under no illusions that I didn't know much about the legal practice, let alone M&A practice. Notwithstanding this, I was still a diligent cum laude graduate and that, I was sure, had to count for something. However, when I quickly realised that I actually did not know much about my dream career, I was shaken, confused and worried. I had a lot to learn and, as such, identifying mentors in the M&A practice became a top priority. Fortunately, having started my legal career at ENS, I was surrounded by some of the best legal practitioners in the corporate legal field, particularly female practitioners who I was able to look up to, and who became the mentors I needed to foster my learning, development and growth as a legal practitioner.

While I could provide a long list of women who have, in different ways, been my mentors and cultivated my growth as an M&A legal practitioner, here I wish to briefly discuss two of the most important lessons I have learnt from a mentor who has and continues to play a vital role in my development at this stage of my career, Tracy van Wyk.

Tracy is an executive in ENS' corporate commercial department who specialises in M&A, private equity and venture capital transactions. I have learnt the following (and many more) mentoring lessons from Tracy:

#### > **Passion for practice:**

This may be the most important lesson I have learnt from Tracy. When you genuinely love the work you do, it becomes your passion, and it becomes something you are great at. Tracy is a brilliant M&A lawyer, and I have come to understand that her passion for her work drives her dedication and commitment to produce great results. Furthermore, her passion for legal practice allows her to create space for us as the junior practitioners to express our ideas and contributions while learning and developing into competent practitioners ourselves.

#### > **Learning from experience:**

One of the most important aspects of mentorship for a junior is having an experienced mentor to guide you along your path. I, like many junior lawyers, have encountered countless challenges, missteps and disappointments in my young career, and working with someone who has been through it all and having them as a mentor by my side is invaluable. Learning from Tracy has built my confidence in various aspects of my career; from contract drafting and negotiating, to client management.

As I continue to learn from this amazing woman, while carefully taking notes, I wish to stress to young women in this field, the importance of identifying other women from whom we can learn, and whom we can go to for guidance. And finally, I hope this is a gift I will never forget to pass down when the opportunity comes along. 🙌