

Natasha Fletcher

Counsel | Real Estate



Q What led you to pursue a career in Real Estate?

A I fell into Real Estate, quite by accident. I passed Matric with exemption but was not sure what I wanted to study. Law had always been on the horizon. I enrolled at university to do a Bachelor of Arts degree with a view to changing course once I was certain, but just before I was due to start the semester, I decided I didn't want to go to university without being completely certain of what I wanted to study. "Money doesn't grow on trees".

My Dad was adamant that I would not go out into the world with just a Matric and so I enrolled at a secretarial college for a year's course to learn to type, do shorthand, bookkeeping and other secretarial functions. Some subjects included legal documents and aspects of conveyancing. After the year at college, I was employed at a law firm in the real estate department as a junior secretary. My passion for conveyancing was ignited.

After a couple of years in the real estate department, and helping out in the litigation department, I was sure that I wanted to study law. My Dad informed me that he had already paid for my tertiary education and if I wanted to study further, I had to pay for such studies myself.

I duly enrolled at Unisa to do my LLB and continued working as a secretary in the real estate department. It was hard going and, if anything, taught me perseverance and the value of time.

After graduating, I continued to work as a secretary in the real estate department until I

started my articles of clerkship. Even though I had been exposed to other aspects of law, I still gravitated towards conveyancing.

I wrote and passed the four Board Exams, the Notaries Exams and the Conveyancing Exam while serving articles. One of my proudest moments was the day I was admitted as an attorney, notary and conveyancer.

Q When things go wrong, what advice would you give about moving on?

A Take a breath, drink a good cup of tea and take stock. Look at what went wrong, and possibly why. Assess whether there had been a way to avoid things going wrong – sometimes there was no other option at the time. Be honest in your assessment of any role you may or may not have played in things going wrong. Be proactive in finding the best possible solution. In time, discuss with peers and/or seniors what they would have done differently. Learn from it. Don't keep going back to all the wrongs and the what ifs, or you will never move forward. Strive to do better.

Q What piece of advice would you give a young woman working on her first deal | transaction?

A Trust in your abilities and your instincts. Take it step by step. Ask questions for clarity where you are unsure, and more importantly, ask for guidance or assistance when you need it. Don't be too hard on yourself (others may be) when things don't go according to plan; learn from it, grow. Be patient and kind to yourself. Put in the time and effort, you may not see the reward on your first transaction but, down the line, you will.

Q Do you have a role model | someone you greatly admire and if so, who are they and why?

A My late maternal grandmother and grandfather. My grandmother worked hard all her life, but remained a loving, humble, non-judgmental, God-loving person. She did not have an easy life, but always looked to the positive rather than the negative. My grandfather was blinded in an accident when he was 21, but that did not stop him from working, nor did it stop him from servicing family and friends' cars. He was generous to a fault. These, for me, are core values of a worthy person and I continuously strive to be the person that would make my grandmother and grandfather proud.

Q What do you do to unwind | get away from the stress of work?

A My favourite way to unwind is a road trip, even if just for the day. An early morning start, breakfast on the road (bought or packed), out of the city and into the country. Within an hour or two on the road, I can usually feel the tension leave my neck and shoulders.

FUN FACTS

Current book on your nightstand: *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *The Wild Rose* by Jennifer Donnelly.

Item on your bucket list: A Trans-Siberian railway journey.

Preferred holiday destination: South Africa or Europe.

Favourite colour: Shades of pink. 