

Sally Penni:

Hello and welcome to Talking Law, the podcast where you can hear barristers, judges, solicitors, managing partners and more, talk about their careers in the law.

I'm Sally Penni, MBE, I'm a barrister at Kenworthy's Chambers in Manchester, the Joint Vice Chair of Association of Women Barristers and founder of Women in the Law UK.

This episode is supported by CBRE, the leading global provider of commercial real estate services and investments. Find out more at [cbre.com](https://www.cbre.com)

Before you meet today's guest, a reminder that tickets for the Women in the Law UK Annual Dinner and Conference in Manchester this November, 2022 are on sale now. Please visit [womeninthelawuk.com](https://www.womeninthelawuk.com) for details.

I'd also love you to watch my recent Ted Talk. Please head to [Ted.com](https://www.ted.com) from July 8 and search for Sally Penni.

Today I'm Talking Law with [Banke Odunaiké](#), Executive Director and Head of EMEA Legal at CBRE.

[Banke](#) has also been recognised as one of the UK's 21 'Women Who Will' for 'Driving Innovation in Diversity & Inclusion' according to the Obelisk Report in partnership with the Next 100 Years Project.

"I asked Banke to give me a bit of background about CBRE, what the organisation does and her role within it."

Banke A. Odunaiké:

I head up CBRE's EMEA legal team for the CBRE's advisory business. I am based in London and I look after our operations across 27 countries with the support of a team of 57 phenomenal lawyers. I am a wife. I am a very proud mum of two. And I recently, well, it's not recent cuz he's now 17 months old. But I became a dog owner during lockdown. Got a jackapoo who's a total rascal I tell you, but he is such a fantastic addition to our family. I can't believe we went so long without, without having a dog.

So I'll tell you a bit about CBRE. Yeah. And CBRE is the leading global provider of commercial real estate services and investments. So you'll find us in over a hundred countries providing a multifarious range of real estate services, right from valuations through to brokerage and ESG consulting. But we're not just about the brick and mortar, you know, for anyone who's looking from the outside, into the organization, Sally, I can, you know, confidently say that right at the heart of our organization is our corporate responsibility, right? And the rationale for that or, or, or, or the way that we ensure that that stays front and center of our operations is we've got our, what we call the RISE values, which is basically sort of written into the DNA of how we operate us as an organization.

And RISE stands for respect, integrity, service, and excellence. And so if you take respect, for instance, respect is, is not just respecting yourself. It's respecting your colleagues, respecting your clients, respecting the community, respecting the world in which we're living, giving back to the, to the world.

And then there's integrity. You know, I mean, if you spoke to my kids, they tell you, mom always says, <laugh>, you know, you've got to do the right thing, even when no one's watching. Cause that's the way I define integrity to them. And I that's, that's pretty much at the epicenter of our operations as a business.

And then there's service. You know, it's all about being the servant leader. You're, you are a leader and you've got to, you know, take stock of what it is that you know, the, the, the people around you, the community around your needs and your employees, your workforce, what is it that they need and really putting your all into doing the best that you can in providing the service that you have obviously been, been retained to provide.

And then that leads on to excellence and excellence being - as I just said, now what's the point of doing a job if you're not going to do it well. So it's at the heart of our day to day operations is, is ensuring that we really are, you know, front runners and that we are constantly looking at innovative ways to do better. We're constantly looking at how we can train up our, our workforce to, to be the best that they can be. So that in a nutshell is, is me and is a bit about CBRE.

Sally Penni:

Well, it's really fascinating because, you know, as I'm interviewing you here, sitting, seeing your, you know, the executive <laugh> head of legal, the executive director, head of legal, legal at CBRE you know, hugely successful. But I wonder if we can talk about your career journey. Yeah. And a little bit of how you got to where you are really. Because I notice in my research that you started life at Gosschalks which is firm in Hull. And a friend of mine, Nicky Patterson would, would say it's 'Gosschalks' in kinda Yorkshire accent. So I'm not sure I'm saying it correctly, but how did life start there? So for instance, you know, how did you get your training contract? Was it easy? How, how did you start in Gosschalks in Hull?

Banke A. Odunaike:

<Laugh>, it's been, it's been quite a journey, Sally, I've got to tell you, I don't feel like I've quite got to my destination yet. In fact, I feel like I'm still very much at, at the beginning of my, of my journey. But securing the training contract was not easy. Okay. Now why I think it's not, it's generally not easy for anyone because I just feel like I got a plethora of reject letters. And when I was applying for my training contract – of course you start applying when you're in your second year of university. I had thought, well, I wanna apply to city firms because of course, you know, you read, you hear you all about the, sort of the Rolls Royce training that you get in the city, et cetera, comparative to within the region. But I also didn't want to place all my eggs in one basket.

So I was looking at the city. Yes. My focus was predominantly on the city, but I was also looking regionally. For me it was an element of, I couldn't quite see, you know, when you hear about the glass ceiling and why you are getting the rejects. I couldn't quite see why, you know, for me it was a brick wall. It was just, I was, you know, I had good grades. I had a good CV. I had done all the training that was required for interviewing etca, but I just, wasn't getting past that you know, initial application stage and the one time that I got an inkling as to why I was obviously up against such an uphill struggle. Yeah. Was at a, a time when I was, you know, applying to a city firm with one of my friends who is an American white guy.

Yeah. And he and I both required a work permit. At the time, despite the fact that I had lived in the UK many years, studied in the UK at the time that my training contract would would've started, I would've required a work permit. So he was in the same boat, so were my Australian friends at university. Anyway we both applied and typically a student, you know, what you do, you sort of review each other's forms, making sure you put their best foot forward and everything's looking ship shape for, for the application. And of course we submitted and he got a letter inviting him for an interview. I waited a couple of weeks

later and I got a letter that was actually one of the most detailed reject letters I had received. And it basically said you know, really great application, great CV, very impressive.

However, we cannot progress your application because you require a work permit. And we would have to prove that there are no UK or EEA students who were suitable for the role. And I thought, 'okay, well, that's fair enough, but hang on a second', you know, I mean, you would've thought that this firm would've actually just stopped to think, well, let's just look at where we are getting the applications from. Yes. The same university - white guy, he's American. And he gets invited for interview. And actually he went on to get a training contract and they did get him a, a work permit. Now, you know, the thing is, in that instance when I got my letter, of course I was distraught. Yeah. and you know, we were sort of thinking, well, do you, do you write to the firm or do you ring them up and say, this is unfair.

I know someone who has managed to secure an interview despite requiring a work permit like myself, but you just don't do that. I mean, this is my pal I mean, you know, the thing is if he slipped through the net on detected, I was like, you go and run <laugh> yes. You will run. You do the best you can and go and go and be successful. Right?

So there was no, there was no challenging it at that stage. It was more a, a reality for me, Sally, that 'okay, this is there's, there's an element of unfairness here'. And that was the only time I tend not to play the race card. Yeah. But that was the one time I thought, 'okay, this is a little blatant now'. Yes. but you know, Hey, I cried, I wiped my tears and I marched straight to WHSmith to get some more embossed paper to print out my CV, you know, you dust yourself off and you just keep going.

Yeah. and that's what I did and what I did as well at that stage was I just re-strategized and I thought, look, okay, there's been a lot of focus now on the city - perhaps not. Perhaps let me look at the regional law firms. But at the same time, I didn't want to apply to just any odd outfit that called itself a law firm, because I knew the quality of training that I wanted. Yes. And I didn't want my CV scattered about, and, you know, through that, you know, your brand gets diminished. So I focused again on, you know, what, what are the top caliber law firms? And of course Gosschalks - I was obviously went to university in Hull - and Gosschalks is an outstanding, outstanding till this day law firm in, in hu. And I had applied for their vacation scheme.

I got selected for that. When you have that kind of opportunity, you, you make the, most of it, you leave a lasting and you hope that you leave a lasting - a good impression with the people that you meet. And of course, then I went on to apply for the training contract. And I got my letter, I got my letter offering me a training contract, eventually. I mean, I was, it was shock. I mean, I got that letter. I opened the letter.

Actually I've gotta tell you this before I tell you about opening the letter from Gosschalks. So I got so many reject letters that a member of my family, one of my relatives actually would hand me my post in the morning and go, 'here are your reject letters'.

Cause it actually became a joke. Right. God, I know we're laughing now, but we're, we're laughing now. But honestly at the time it was like, 'oh my gosh. All right. Okay. Let me open the, let me just see that they actually spell my name, right'? Yes. They was working me. So I got my letter from Gosschalks. I was so thrilled. But also very fearful. I, I thought I rang up and, and I said, you know, can I speak to the training principal? Cause you know, I was thinking, 'oh my gosh, have they made a mistake'? Yes. Imposter syndrome? I know, yes, exactly. Is this for real? Is this for real? But at the same time, you know, you don't want to be speaking to the training principal and, and you know, sounding doubtful that you've been successful. Right.

So you have to find the right balance, but he detected it. And he said to me, he said, you've gotta be super proud of yourself. We've had over 300 applicants. We only interview 10-odd. And we only offer a

training contract to three every year. Wow. So you've got to be super proud of yourself. Go and enjoy, go and spend time with your family, go and celebrate with your family. You've done well. And I just - the weight that lifted off my shoulders. Yes. And I was so happy, Sally. I actually slept with my letter under my pillow. That that's how that's crap. I fell asleep with it in my hands, woke up in the middle of the night. And I was like, OK, I'm just gonna this under my pillow and just wake up and hope it's still there and it's still real.

And I've got my training contract. But yeah, I had a great training at Gosschalks. It was very, very detailed. I had two seats in, in employment law. My second seat in employment law was a mix of employment and corporate. And that's where I got an insight to pensions because I'd done some, I was supporting the M&A, the corporate team and then obviously embroiled in some M&A activity where they're talking about section 75 debt. I'd been to some conferences where they touched on and, and, you know, I learned a little bit, got an insight to the world of pensions and I found it fascinating, the geek that I am. And so I, at that point in time was thinking, okay, I, I really do wanna go in trial.

I wanna go and see if I can be a pensions lawyer. I haven't got the training as a pensions lawyer because it's so niche. Yeah. And I think there was a lot of focus on it being within the cities. So anyway fast forward to qualifying - Gosschalks offered me a role in commercial property, but even then I thought, I don't want, I'm not sure I want to be a commercial property lawyer, just I, right now it's pensions. That's, what's really interesting me.

And so I, you know, got in touch with a recruitment agent and I said, 'is it possible that without having any kind of training in the world of pensions, that I would be considered for an NQ role' And the agent obviously thought I was a complete nutter because, you know, it's, it's a very niche, niche area of law you're coming from Hull and you wanna be a pensions lawyer, are you kidding me? But anyway, I said, yes. I said, 'I do'. I said, you know, 'can you just explore what's out there'? And I got interviewed by a handful of firms and of the two that had offered me a place, I went with Shoe Smiths. Yeah. I ended up with Shoe Smiths in Milton Keynes again, really, really phenomenal team that I worked with there. But then within a year I was headhunted by Addleshaws. Aha. Yeah,

Sally Penni:

There you go. There's your, there's your magic circle? So, oh, onwards an upwards. I

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Absolutely

Sally Penni:

No rejection there and no imposter syndrome.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

That's right. Wow. That's right. So I got, I got headhunted by shores and, you know, ended up being a member of their foundation team, a foundation pensions team in London. Yeah. Again, another really, you know, excellent experience because actually when I joined the team, I joined the team of, you know, they're all female partners. Right? Very, very powerful, influential, inspirational women. So tomorrow there was a lot, I learned from each of the partners at Addleshaws that, that I hold at to heart. And and yeah the career progressed from there. I was there shy of five years before I made the

move in-house at wow, Tim Ursher. So that was, that was a very big leap. Yes, Sally, it was you know, when you, when you're considering the, well, should I, should I do this?

I always saw myself as a general council, to be honest, did you? I, yes. I always, and I think it might be because of my, you know, I come from a very my background, my family, very entrepreneurial, my father set up his own company that eventually became listed and he was always very entrepreneurial mindset. And I always thought, you know, I'll probably end up being his lawyer <laugh>, you know, working for his company. I mean, that never happened, but it was just, you know, I always saw myself ending up as a, as a, as a GC working closer with a business. Yes. And so when the opportunity came for me to, to obviously, you know, step into, into in-house environment I was little sort of, I'll say a little skeptical, but I knew that my, my true passion was to get closer to, to, to the business world. And when, you know, it was just a matter of taking that leap of faith. And I have to tell you, I haven't looked back since. It's just been a phenomenal, phenomenal ride, phenomenal journey great time at Mercer as well. And now with CBRE.

Sally Penni:

Yeah, well, you know, it's a really interesting journey because, you know of course there's our, well, your branch of the profession of our profession - solicitors and private solicitors are losing a lot of excellent counsel. I use the word 'losing' loosely to you know, businesses having general council and in-house council, you know, it's very competitive now. And law firms tell me that, you know, we're losing.

So I just wondered what is your average day entail really? What's the average day for you, cuz it just sounds really like glamorous and sexy. Yeah.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Yes. Yes. Well, you know, there are some glamorous days and then there are days where it's just, I feel like I've been dragged through the mud. But you know, the, the way I describe it is it's, it's the equivalent of being a GP, right. But for an organization. So you are there to offer preventative care, you're there to offer diagnosis, you're there to offer, you know, whether it's it's training and education. And then you are, you are there of course, to treat the ailments and, and of course to avoid a, a recurrence. So my role is multifarious. The stuff that causes my desk is so varied. There there's stuff that, you know, yes requires technical ability, technical knowledge, good knowledge of the law and there's others that's just general commercial, you know, common sense.

That you've got to, you've got to apply to, to the challenge. But what makes my role particularly exciting is the fact that, you know, I deal with multiple jurisdictions. I can get through my day and I've spoken to about 10 different countries. Right. I know. I mean, it's just, it, that, that for me is, is really what keeps me going. It's that opportunity to be able to connect on that cross border basis. You know, sometimes the conversations are very lighthearted. Sometimes they're actually more detailed and I'm having to, you know, either work with our local council to deal with the matters or actually for the countries where we don't have local council, you know, working with the business to appoint local council, to deal with the different issues. But, you know, with every matter you learn something new, you learn something, you get an insight to the culture, right? Yeah. Not just the business culture, but the societal expectations. And so it's very exciting, I suppose that's the glam of the role <laugh> but I, well, it tell you there's, there's always good and bad days, right?

Sally Penni:

Oh yeah, totally, totally. And interestingly, you know, you still have to use council here in England. Yes. And all in, in all those countries, you are still using law firms or city law firms, which I find quite interesting because actually, you know, you're a client and they have to keep looking at their service levels, which is a really exciting part of it. You know, you don't use them all the time of course. But of course you, you still use them, which I find fascinating.

Let, let me just move on a bit and talk about the D word. You and I are two black women, different branches of a profession. There aren't many of us, you know there are six QCs, as we know now from the stats. And I could probably count in my hands and toes the number of black, less male let's alone, female heads.

So I wondered what are you doing at CBRE I mean, do you care about diversity? Is diversity a passion of yours. I know it is, but what are you doing at CBRE about it?

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Yeah. Well, you know, it's an absolute passion of mine. Not just because I am a black woman with African origins. It is because I suppose for me, it's my, my drive to enter the law was always centered on equity and fairness and, and, and just, and justice. And so when I look at you know, the, the sufferings that a certain demographic endures purely because they look a certain way, they sound a certain way. They come from a certain background. Yeah. You know, really, it really riles me that, you know, anyone would have to, you know, be shortchanged in life because of, of, of who they just naturally are. Yeah. And so at CBRE, D&I I really very much is one of the key driving factors certainly our legal operation, but also as a global organization.

And I'll, I'll share a few things that we do within. But my, my immediate team, so within EMEA, and I'll focus first on, on the UK team. So one of the things that we've done is to revamp our internship program because, I got together with, with, with a team of our lead lawyers in the UK, and we said, look, how are we gonna be more diverse in our selection of those who intern with us, because we wanna do away with nepotism. You know, sometimes you get individuals who come in for the work experience and they don't really bother, you know, and, and it's just, you know, they're just there because their uncle knows someone and you, and they don't really make that much of an effort. And, and of course, unfortunately what that means is that internship – that time that my team have invested in, in trying to, you know, get them the experience yes.

Becomes wasted it's futile. And because of, I think a number of people in my team know how challenging it is to, to, to get even an internship, but particularly with an internship with a, with a global organization like ours, there are people out there who will bite your hand off for the opportunity. Yeah. So we said, right, we're gonna scrap all of that. We're going to try the blind CV route. And so actually this year, unfortunately, sadly due to, to COVID, we weren't able to launch it sooner, but so this year really excited that we've now come up together with support from our talent acquisition team, with a selection process whereby we don't get to see your CV. What we do is we send out, we advertise the internship to, you know a handful of, of, of universities.

We get a whole load of applicants and then those applicants all get a standard set of questions. Right? Everyone gets the same questions. And then what we have is to have - I suppose, a grading grading process where, you know, members of our legal team will review the responses that are submitted and, and allocate a grade. Right? Based on some set questions, right? Yes. And how we feel that the person has responded in response to that. But particularly the focus is around, 'can this be a mutually beneficial

time that we are both spending you coming into the organization and us obviously investing time in, in giving you the experience? And so, you know, completely anonymized at this stage obviously those who then become successful who are the highest scores are then interviewed and from the, from the people that we interviewed, we select two individuals who come to intern with us.

And it's only at that stage that we even bother with, or that we intend to even perhaps at that stage, then ask for the CV, so you can see what universities they're coming from, but we, we just wanted to make it an even playing field. Right. And so that's one of the key initiatives that we've taken up within certainly the UK legal team and depending on how that pans out, you know, the idea is to look into ways in which we can roll it out across the EMEA region. And another thing that we we we've done in the UK and, and this I've done in partnership with my colleagues in - so CBRE's got three operations, you've got the advisory, you've got DWS and you've got investment management. Yeah. And so a couple of years back, I set up our UK legal D&I task force.

And the objective of that was, you know, there's a lot of strength in numbers, right. So if we all get together, I mean, we're all CBRE anyway. Yeah. But if we all come together and you are all obviously passionate about changing the D&I landscape within the legal industry, so let's all powerhouse all working together towards this goal. Mm. And so we were looking or exploring, you know, what can we do to really draw emphasis to our passion towards D&I, and also the expectations that we have of our vendors. And that led us to, and I've done some work with inter law diversity. I sit on the Apollo leadership Institute on the board there with the Daniel Winterfeld.

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, he's, he's just really is phenomenal. And so you know, he, he'd spoken to me about the model diversity survey, and I just thought, well, 'absolute, no brainer'. I mean, this is a survey that's rolled out again, that element of uniformity, everyone's getting the same sort of questions and we're collecting data. And the reason you're collecting that data is because the intention intent is to utilize that data, to have informed conversations. Absolutely. About D&I, yeah, because we've been talking about changing the landscape for a long, long time, Sally and, and everyone, I mean, I don't know, one single law firm out there that would say they, they're not passionate about D&I, well, okay, great. Let's see how that translates to not just the intake, the graduate level, but actually right through your organization to partner, to, to equity partner etc.

And so that was one of the, what, you know, the model diversity survey was the, you know, the, the, the one area that as, as a, as a cohort, we thought really passionate, we felt really passionate about. And in fact, our colleagues in the us had also already signed up to it. And they, they had a, obviously their own suite of firms who had also, you know signed up and were obviously sharing their data. Yeah. And I think this helps to get away from, you know, Sally, the you know, that piece of you get all this beautiful brochures from law firms that tell you all about the D&I initiatives that they're, you know, engaged with and how they're making a difference, etc. But, you know, you read through all these very beautiful things, and then you get to a point where you're like, 'okay, but so what, how, how does that really translate to, you know, the numbers to retention' etc ?

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Yeah. And of course, you know, we've, we've got to ensure that we are being clear about what our expectations are. So when I speak to, to, to, you know, our vendors, I say, look, I wanna see a diverse team working on this project. And I didn't just want it to be from inception. Yeah. I want to see that right through to fruition. It's a diverse team that's supporting us. That's a message that, you know, is, is it resonates across right across our legal operations, Larry Midler, who he, who is our general counsel, who sits at the helm is very, very passionate about D&I, and it's not, you know, it's, he's not all of just

about the talk. Yes. He means business. Right. And you can see it, you can see it within his organization. You can see it within the team, the, the very diverse range of individuals who are leaders

within his org. And then as a business, you know, we, we have certainly the UK business has been doing very much. I'm gonna focus on the UK. Cause of course I'm based in the UK. Oh, totally. There are lot of initiatives that are rolled out globally. But in the UK we've partnered with them Career Ready. I dunno if you know about them, but they basically are, you know, they, they, they're an operation that support young individuals with career placements. And basically it's, you know, offering things like mentoring, master classes, workshops, and I believe that we are gonna have, you know, I think we already had our first intake of placements from Career Ready. And within our organization itself, you know, we've got six diversity networks we've got an ability network, we've got the reach network, which is race ethnicity, and we've got the faith network, women's network, family network, we've got the proud network. And these are groups and subgroups within our organization that really stare ahead and, and drive that message. There's so many different pillars of diversity, equity and inclusion. Absolutely. You know, as an operation, wanna make sure that we are covering every grounds that we possibly can.

One other thing that I just really just share really quickly that we're doing within the legal team is to, to create, you know, the safe space to have conversations around D&I, so we've, we, and this is launched in the us, we've got the Diversity Dialogues and basically we, we we set up a zoom call. We have a subject matter and, you know, we maybe kick off with a little clip or, you know, it might be a little snip of a, you know, of a video or a statement to prompt conversation. And that's been very engaging, you know, it's, it's interesting to hear, you know, people's thoughts. Of course you've got then the diversity of thought but always it's, you know, it's not, it's not a, a must attend. It's, it's a platform for those who, are happy to come and engage in those conversations. And we found it really, really fruitful really that we're actually looking to roll it out across EMEA as well.

Sally Penni:

Which is fantastic. I mean, at the heart of a lot of these 'cause my other passion is allies. You seem, you, you mentioned several people who are driving this at the helm of it in addition to, but we can't drive anything, can we, without allies. And it sounds like, you know, I, I don't like this term and I don't use it, you know, the 'pale stale male'. I don't use it. I prefer to use a term wham, which isn't my phrase, but I've stolen it from Brie Hall Stevens, which is a white heterosexual able-bodied male <laugh>. And that's much better than isolating people. We all know why people use that phrasing. And I dunno where it originated from, but I want the wham to be my ally. Yeah. I want the men to say, let's have diverse teams. Let's have diverse workforces, not just the men, everybody else with a protected characteristic. So it's wonderful to know that actually you've got great allies also who are there driving this, but it leads me to ask you this: what's the difference between the US and the UK on diversity, particularly in GCs? Is it just the volume 'cause they seem to be way ahead of us in what they do.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Yeah. I mean, know Sally it's a difficult question. And, and when I've, you know, when I've had conversations around it, you know, some of the feedback that I've had is, 'well, you know, it's the lack of critical mass', you know? Yes. In the US, they've got more black GCs or more diverse GCs. They're, they're very visible. But I, I don't know. See, the thing is, what I struggle with is Sally, like you, you know, you mentioned at the start of this, this call, you know, whether people are willing to engage with diversity, equity and inclusion matters being a diverse person themselves. And I know if the problem

that we have is that perhaps there's more of those individuals who are quite senior in organizations, but there's something that just makes them reluctant to fly the flag in the same way that you and I are more than happy to be front runners and to fly the flag and to say, 'look, you know, if this helps, if, if somebody out there needs to see a role model and can see that, you know, it's actually possible for you to be from a certain demographic, but still be successful if you remain, if you are resilient, you really are passionate about your aspirations and your goals.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

I suppose, you know, when I've thought about it, I've wondered, you know, even for those who might not want to engage and who just want to sit quietly or just fade into the background, then I ask the question, 'well, why, what is it that makes you so uncomfortable to not want to be visible and to be vocal about increasing representation, representation that looks like you'. Right. Within organizations. And, you know, I have to be honest, you know, the mind boggles. I just, yeah. I think, I think there's been enough of a movement now. I think there is more of a movement now, Sally, that we might get more people just coming out of that shell and, and, and, and doing more to be visible. But I, I, I really, I really am stumped on, on that question I do though that that something more needs to be done.

There's more needs to be done to encourage those of us. Cause I'm sure Sally, I mean, you've interviewed a ton of people. Yeah. and I mean, these are all individuals who are willing to be visible, hence being on your, on your podcast. But I suppose the question is, you know, 'how do we reach out to those who we know are there? Yeah. But aren't just, aren't being visible'. What is it that we can, I suppose it's maybe a question for the organizations themselves. I mean, if you've got someone who and honesty, you know, should, should be flying the flag, you know, ask yourself 'why, what is it that makes them feel uncomfortable that, you know, makes them unwilling to be that visible and that present'. But also at the same time, we've gotta just respect individuals.

Everyone is entitled to not, you know, you know, no, just because you are black doesn't mean you have to engage. Right. Just because you are a woman doesn't mean you have to engage.

Sally Penni:

Absolutely.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

It's, it's you know, everyone is entitled to, to, to their own views and to their own opinions. And, and I suppose, that's one thing that we've got to respect, you know, I mentioned respect earlier, so we've got to respect that too.

Sally Penni:

Absolutely. I mean, I suppose my only point is look, Mackenzie has published so many reports on, you know, more diverse organizations being more profitable mm-hmm <affirmative>, if anything, that I'm always very keen when we talk about diversity, never mind the moral argument, you know, I would've thought organizations want to make more money! So I'm always just very interested and, and very keen, but I fully respect and that there is a bit of a pressure and there is a bit of a labeling, you know, if you're talking about a gender pay gap or, you know, you're talking about LGBTQ plus issues that, you know, you get labeled a bit and, and maybe that can make people feel as though 'I don't actually want to speak about the issue', but yeah. I think we owe it to our children. Don't we to be positive role models.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Absolutely.

Sally Penni:

Wherever we can.

Well, Banke, everyone, I'm sure. Apart from me kind of desperate to work a CBRE now we're here. <Laugh> yeah. I'm like, 'yeah. Can you get me a job somewhere too'. So we all wanna work there, but what I want to ask you is about what you do for your wellbeing. You know, you've got a big job, you've got two children. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>, you don't drink tea or coffee. So how you are getting through the day. I do not know <laugh> but I'm, I'm wondering what you do. You know, we are in a job with long hours burnout is high. Let's be truthful about it. And I really care about our wellbeing, how we can all be better. So I just wonder what, what do you do or what would you like to do for your own wellbeing?

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Well, well, Sally, you know, I know that you love gardening. Well, let tell you this - gardening is not for me.

Sally Penni:

<Laugh>

Banke A. Odunaiké:

It is not for me. I tried my hand at gardening during lockdown, and I've gotta share this experience with you. So, you know, we planted some tulip bulbs and I thought, okay, I can't wait for, you know, nature to take its course. And nature did take its course, but in a very different way. So we got a deer who came round to our garden and dug up my garden - eat up a good number of bulbs and then came back the next day with his friends and they obliterated my garden. Right. So I'm, I'm sitting there, I'm thinking, 'oh my gosh, well, no, I'm not gonna give up. I'm not gonna give up. Okay, no bulbs, I'm gonna go out to the garden center. I'm gonna pick up some dahlias, some highdrangers'. And I forget what the name of the plant was, but it was a cone shape, very pretty looking plant <laugh>. And I planted them. I was out in the garden with my kids and I was thinking, yes, wellbeing. This is good. You know, garden needs a bit, got myself, some plant food, it sprinkled. And anyway, a couple of days later, I look out the window and I'm looking at plants that look like a skeletal version of what I purchased. And I'm thinking, what is going on here? I step outside and its slugs, okay?

I thought 'this not for me', Gardening is an overrated experience. So I take my hat off to anyone. Who's got the patience for it, but I, I failed. I failed woefully. I mean, I've got potted plants. They they'll do their inside. You know, that, that, that works. That's about it for me. But in terms of wellbeing, Sally I have always been very passionate about history and literature and the arts. So when I do have the time I would go to theater. I love the theater. And I love music. So musical theater even better. But, but also if I don't get that chance and of course, you know, we've had lockdown, it's only just now that the, the theaters are reopening. Yes. I would sit and watch a period drama.

The likes of the crown, you know, Turn, Medici, those sort shows, I, I would, I would sit down if I, if I got a bit of downtime, I'd sit down and, and, and I'd watch that. And apart from that, it's you know, I've got a, a bit of shoe-aholic, Sally <laugh>, so you know, to, to my husband's dismay

Sally Penni:

<Laugh> yes. Oh, well, we, all need something. I, I I'm with you, you sound like my sister.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

It's the shoes. It's the shoes. I, I do like, you know, when, when I, I feel like I've deserved my to treat myself to a pair of shoes, I do love to, you know, to treat myself. Yeah. It's a nice therapy.

Sally Penni:

<Laugh> I feel like we need to get, you know, some Jimmy Choo's in-house council law, you know,

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Absolutely

Sally Penni:

Launch it or something, so we can get some treats of what's what's coming up, but, you know, you mentioned literature and I wondered - we have a book club at Women in the Law, so we're almost always looking for, for books, but I wondered if you have a favorite book and why that you'd like to share. And if you haven't, I wanna ask you about a, a favorite legal character, maybe, perhaps it is, it is a costume drama character.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Yeah. Well, you know, the thing is, I would say I used to be an avid reader. Yeah. But of course, as things have got busier, not just with work with the kids, you know, I've always found it's a little challenging to find that time to just, you know, zone in, as I used to have zoning on a book. So I, I feel like I, I cheat sometimes when I, when I do the audio books, but it works right. Oh yeah. Yeah. But it's difficult. It's difficult for me to pick one that I would say is a favorite. I mean, you know, I suppose maybe it's cliché, but I would say that I absolutely loved Michelle Obama's *Becoming*, you know, that was great.

And right now actually gone to my desk, it's called *The Culture Map* by Erin Mayer. Ah, and this sort of, you know, gives you an insight to, you know the different cultures and, you know, just, you know, what to keep in mind when managing transactions and across border bases and dealing with all these different cultures. But I have to tell you that maybe if I think back, the one book that really just, it was so gripping that every time I think of the book, I just shudder. It was the *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, I hope I've said his name. Right. And it's just, you know, it was, you know, when you think about the two female characters in that book and yeah. And think about the times that we're in right now, you know, with, with the war I mean obviously in Ukraine, but obviously situation in Afghanistan but all just the resilience of those two women and the fact that they, they got together, they eventually helped each, each other out. And it was that there was so much power in their standing United to support each other through the adversity that they were unfortunately enduring. Yes. Because of their status as women. And it was just - it was one of those books that it was such a roller coaster.

Banke A. Odunaike:

Oh my goodness. And you know, towards the end of it - I don't want to give out any spoilers, but it was the, do you remember the, the bit in the book about the Pinnocchio where she was supposed to have been taken to watch pin her father was supposed to take her to watch Pinnocchio and then, and then he ended up putting, you know, a recording of it in the box, but obviously sadly she had died, but anyway, look, it's, it's the whilst it's fictional, it's so easy for you to to, to imagine the reality, right? Yeah. That given what's going on in the world, what's going on in Afghanistan, what's going on in, in, in, in Ukraine and, and, and other places where, you know, there's just so much that's happening that really isn't necessary.

Sally Penni:

Yeah. Yeah, no, I know it, it is quite a, it's a long time since I read that book, I think it's worthy of a re-read.

A lighter question, which was the one I was asking you about a legal character. Are you an Ally McBeal or Jessica Fletcher? I mean, there are loads of legal characters. I dunno why I often give that as an example, example of the Rumpole of the Bailey, but have you got a favorite fictional legal character?

Banke A. Odunaike:

Well, you knows, I know you interviewed Martin Shaw.

Sally Penni:

Oh,

Banke A. Odunaike:

I, I loved him as judge John deed. He was brilliant. He was so good. He was amazing. But I, I'm gonna tell you, Sally, it's difficult to give you one <laugh> I will have to give you the entire law firm of cage, I think. Was it Cage and Fish - Ally McBeal?

Sally Penni:

Oh, I can't remember. I can't remember that sort of thing.

Banke A. Odunaike:

I think it was Cage and Fish, but the, the reason I've gone for Ali, my bill is because, you know, sometimes you just need a good laugh. Yeah. and that firm was just a firm full of absolute characters. And I remember just watching episode, religiously watching episode after episode and just laughing my head off, but also just being fascinated about, you know, even more so about the law and, and, and you know, the powerful women with the, within the show. So yeah, I, it, it would have to be Cage and Fish.

Sally Penni:

Oh, well, I need to, I need to wash those again actually. Or <laugh>, or hope or hope to meet some of the Ali McBeal when I, when I get to state in, in September. Yes, it'll be really cool.

A more serious question if I may. What advice would you give to people entering the law now, whether it's applications or skills that they require because, you know, getting into profession is just as tough as progressing in it often, and I'm concerned actually that the side effects of COVID is that there's going to be less opportunities, quite frankly. So the competitions maybe going to be stiffer and certainly stiffer for those who are coming from diverse backgrounds, whether it's underrepresented groups or you know, socially different groups or, or, or whatever it may be. But that aside, you know, what advice would you have for perhaps young people entering the profession?

Banke A. Odunaike:

Well, you know, I, I would say I suppose this is something they most likely they would've heard anyways to work hard, but I would say it's not just working hard at the academic technical, you know, area of law, but it's also working hard at the human centered skills. Okay. So, you know, from my perspective, and certainly from my experience you know, to be a successful lawyer, to have a good balance of both that sort of emotional intelligence and technical ability I think there's always been so much focus on just the academic side of the academia. But you know, I, I do feel certainly within the in-house environment that lawyers have got to be able to adopt, even more so now, the human centered being able to empathize, being able to think laterally and being able to connect with key stakeholders.

So, you know, don't, don't belittle that as part of your training the other piece of advice I'd give is you, of course, you've got to just be authentic, right. Be yourself. And, and I suppose I'd also say don't pigeonhole yourself and don't allow yourself to be pigeonholed, be fluid. Okay. So I've just shared with you my journey. I started out - you know, I was offered a role in commercial property. I wanted to do pensions. I did pensions, and now I'm doing, you know, corporate commercial law and enjoying it. Right? So have an open mind, have an open mind as to a as to where the law might take you, because there's just so many so many limits to the law. You just never know where you know you, you might be home for now, but there might be another home that's even better and even more comfortable for you.

So, so also just be, be versatile. I, I would say and be resilient, don't give up. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I, was not ready to give up on the law. I was so passionate wanted to do it. And another thing that I didn't wait for was to, I didn't wait to see a role model. I wanted to be that role model. Right? So just that element of 'be'! Bbe what you want to see. Okay. And it's, it's, it's having that confidence and that trust in yourself that you will land on your feet. Right. So be happy to, to be out, to be the first right? Be happy to be the first of course, when you, when you eventually get there, make sure you take time to pay it forward. Okay. And, and support others who, who might be just at the start of that journey.

And I'll wrap it up by saying, just act with integrity. Okay. Because you just don't want to find yourself in a situation where you know, dirt is uncovered or, you know, you've worked so hard and it's all dismissed because you've done something really silly and just, you know just, just not aligned with the standards to which we, we really all should uphold ourselves. So always act with integrity.

Sally Penni:

Yes. You know, that is fantastic advice.

Well given that that's entering the profession then Banke, what about, you know, progress in law? You know, the attrition rates are still not brilliant. I mentioned before about people going to be GCs, actually

that's a very successful career path, but still there are still that many women leaders, whether it's in business or indeed in the law, you know, whether it's judges the numbers are getting better and the JSE are doing brilliant work to increase that. But even as managing partners in the private sector, I just wonder have you got any advice about how to progress, you know, in the law? A bit of advice perhaps for women who have been in the job for a good while and wondering, oh, how do I progress? Whether they're in the private sector or, in a business sector as general council or inhouse council?

Banke A. Odunaike:

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that was certainly a lot of what I've already said. I would say applies here as well. You know, the resilience element, you know, the sort of obviously being an all-rounder. Okay. So adopting and really investing time in building your interpersonal skills as well as your technical capabilities, but you know, the, I think we've got to a stage now where I feel, you know, women are, you know, always told you, go and do this, go and do that. And then you can be more successful but I actually - my view is we need to flip things on their head and actually ask the organizations that women are working within. What are you doing to make this environment, make this organization more palatable for women than women's growth and success? And so to that, I'd be saying to the women who are in those organizations who are thinking, 'oh gosh, what else do I need to do' is just, just take a step back and apply a forensic analysis to what it is your organization needs to be doing better to promote and support women and then be vocal about it.

Right. You know, don't wait for somebody else to fix the situation for you. If you are sit sitting there wondering, you know, 'how can I progress' and feeling that there are obstacles to your being able to progress, you know, just take a step back and think about 'what ways can I surmount these obstacles and, and how can I vocalize the issues to my organization? How can I be that person who brings the change to the organization'? I think it's more, we need more of that than the, you know, women, you've gotta go and do this. You've gotta do that. You've gotta, you know, think about work life balance. Honestly, reality is work/life balance is different for everyone. Okay. Everyone's got their own definition of balance. Okay. And, and, and, and just with, everyone's got their own definition of wellbeing, right?

What does it mean? What makes you feel comfortable, etc? So I, you know, I certainly would say you know, don't, don't hesitate to look out and speak up right. Where you feel that there might be flaws within your own organization. But also I think what we need is to have women really supporting women, right? Because women who are in leadership positions I think it really is incumbent in there to look out for and to help promote women who are you know, more junior or further down the ranks because we just know how challenging it is for them to get a seat at the table. So if you've got a seat at the table - I certainly think that you've got to it. It really is become a duty that you create that seat at the table that you advocate for women who are performing, because of course, it's got to be meritorious.

You're not just gonna throw any woman into, into a boardroom, but it's, it's being able to advocate for those who, you know, have and show potential to, to succeed at that table.

And actually I'll add - don't wait for a title to be a leader. Yes. Okay. Because everyone, everyone of us has got leadership qualities. Everyone has got leadership skills. I've heard people say things like, oh my goodness, that's above, by pay grade. And immediately I think, well, you are never going to get to that pay grade. If you're thinking like that, you know, you've got to have that mindset of already wearing that badge or already holding that title that you aspire to, to receive and actually just leading by example. So yeah, that pretty much is in a nutshell is, is, is what I would advise women progressing in the law and just don't give up. Yes, yes. We still got a lot of challenges. Yes. You know, there's the glass ceiling, we

see it in so many different places, but also we've seen that glass ceiling smashed. Yeah. So you just keep at it.

Sally Penni:

Absolutely. Do you know, I love that, that I'm not busy scribbling scribbling down, so, and I've got a scratchy fountain pen. I, especially like this 'don't wait for a title to be a leader' because, you know, the bar council held an inaugural leadership kind of mentoring course last year. And when I, I was asked to be one of the mentors and I, and I did take it up eventually, but I was like, 'oh, but I'm not a leader'. And the reason was that everybody else was a silk, a QC who were mentoring and the woman who set it up, which was Bree horse Stevenson, the Amanda Pinto, who was the bar, the chair of the bar counsel at the Thai was saying, 'well, you are a leader'. Yes. And I thought, 'crikey'!

And so I love that. Don't wait for a title to be a leader amongst all that. Brilliant, brilliant advice. Now Banke, just as we're getting close to the end, I want to ask you this. I know that you wanted to be a judge when

Banke A. Odunaiké:

You do your ...

Sally Penni:

Yeah, I do. I do my homework. Yeah. Yeah. I'm good with research preparation. I always say that when I teach advocacy <laugh> preparation, preparation preparation. So I know that that was one of the passions that you you had. And and I'm a big advocate in getting people to think about applying to the judiciary. And I applaud everything that as I say, the JAC have been doing to make that happen. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> and so I wondered if really the question is what's next is still being a judge on the cast because

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Interesting. <Laugh> speaking me doing the research.

Sally Penni:

Yeah, of course I have. Well you know yeah, what's next?

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Well, well being a judge, I I'd share, obviously this is obviously from childhood. In fact, I got a nickname, the shortest judge, and you might hear some of my friends calling me SJ. I love that because, because I had you know, I was always sort of, you know, rooting for justice <laugh> so that's, that's how I got the nickname. I'm not, I, I, I don't know that I'm still, you know targeting, you know, ultimately being a judge, I think in terms of what next, as I said, I feel like I'm, I'm still at the start of my journey. So it's doing more of what I'm doing now and doing it better. I, you know, I, I am looking at ways in which I can be even more visible and, you know, really drive forward D&I initiatives. You never know. I, I might end up in a global role. You never know. I might end up with a book. I have to come and get some tips from you, Sally. You've written so many!

Sally Penni:

I'm there. I'm there. Just do it. I'll read it. I'll read it. You've given so much great advice. I wanna see that book coming out.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

<Laugh> so you just, you know, you gotta watch this space, you gotta watch this space.

Sally Penni:

Well interestingly then, you know, you say watch this space, but what, what would you like to see in the GC space? What would be exciting to see here in England for us to be doing, because I, I think it's a really growing sector. And do you think we can have a mass of more diverse people?

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Sally, I think we, we, we already touched on it and it's, it's just seen more of that diverse representation within the GC space and actually more collaboration, you know, I wanna see more law firms, you know, get over the fear of criticism and just be more collaborative, right? In sharing data, in working with their clients to really change the dynamics for, for our industry. So it's more, it's more diversity, it's more allies, it's more allies. I can't advocate for allies enough. I mean, certainly in my career journey, I had many allies. I still have them now. And they really are the ones who speak for you in the rooms that you don't get that presence too. So it's, it's, it's asking and, and, and, you know, waving that flag for, for more allies who are, who are committed really, really committed to driving forward D&I in our industry. So that's how I'd like to see things change, you know, for my kids, you know, when, when they're old enough to look into the legal world, but they don't see it as being too much in favor of one, certain demographic for that things are a little more evened out. I know that that is, you know, very, very wishful, but it's a wish and I still, you know, would do everything I can, however, little the ripple, it's still a ripple. And it's, it's, it's working towards that, that ultimate goal.

Sally Penni:

Absolutely. Well, you mentioned your kids and I know that there was an incident, a school.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Oh, yes.

Sally Penni:

Yeah. With your daughter. Okay. Can you just share that with me? Because I love the way you dealt with this. Yeah. And, and, you know, the rainbow and we all have these incidents. Certainly I have had, I'm sure many people else have had it in one shape or another, you know, working moms. Can you just share that? What happened? Absolutely. And, and that brilliant way that you used the rainbow to deal with it.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

So just to set the scene I live in a village. I, I, you know, it's there's not very many minority ethnics in the village, particularly at the time when we first started living in the village. Yes. And so this was a few years back, say six, seven years back. My daughter was five. She was attending school. She was one of two minority ethnics in the school. And she said, she came home after school one day. And she was telling me about her day. And she said she was in a playground. And this one girl was talking about her birthday party. And she turned around to my daughter and she said, 'well, you are not invited to my birthday party because no brown people are allowed'. And of course my daughter, when she said that to me, I mean, my immediate reaction was 'what?! Did she really say that?'

Cause of course, you know, speaking to a five year old I'm thinking, did she really say that? Come on. She was like, 'yes, Mum'. She said 'I'm not allowed to a party because new brown people are allowed'. I said, are you sure? She said that. She says, 'yes'. She said, yeah. And she looked at me. I would never forget the, sort of the look on her face because you know, my family's very diverse. I never thought to have a conversation with her about yeah. Grace and about the color of her skin. And and, and I had to stop myself, Sally. I've used this phrase before I use again. I had to stop myself from turning into the Hulk. Yeah. Because I thought she's watching me. And you know, when you get that moment, when kids are just studying you. Right. Yeah. And she was watching me and she was watching for my reaction.

I dunno where this came from, but I just turned down. I said, well, I said Fara, I said, 'why is a rainbow so beautiful?' And she immediately perks up and she's like, 'oh, because it's got lots and lots of colors in it'. And I was like, exactly. I said, a rainbow is beautiful because it's got lots and lots of colors in it. I said, can you imagine if the rainbow was just one color? And she was like, 'oh, it'll be so boring'. I was like, 'exactly'. I said, the rainbow, I said, it would be so boring. You would stop and stare at it. You would wow at it. And I said, I said, the world I said is, is a very beautiful place because you know, there's so many different people of different colors, different color eyes, different color, head, different color skin in it.

And unfortunately not everyone can see the beauty of the world because of the mix and the different colors in the world. And of course, she's like instantly, she's perked up. And she's like, you know, cause of course we're talking about something colorful. She brightens up and she's like straight onto planning her own birthday party. And she was like, 'Mommy, we're gonna invite all of the colors of the world to the, to my birthday party. And, and mommy, you know, we must invite the ninja turtles because you know, they're green'. I was like, 'of course we're gonna invite the ninja turtles to your birthday party. No problem at all'.

Now obviously I had that conversation with her and I taught her about the diversity of the world. And then, you know, separately went to the school and I was like, 'Hey this has happened. Okay. I'm not gonna give you a name, but you need to do something about this'. And I was very impressed by the school's response actually, because you know, instantly, well almost instantly, she was coming back home. She was talking about, 'oh, we had this diversity day, we did this and it's about respect and it's this and that'. And I thought, 'good'. I mean, I ended up actually on the diversity committee of the school, which was, you know, I was like, I wanna make sure you guys are doing the yeah,

Sally Penni:

Exactly

Banke A. Odunaike:

Force. I'm willing to share. But then I've gotta share this Sally that I also learned from her because a couple of weeks later I took her to ToysRUS when ToysRUS still had shops. And you know, we, we had a star tart at home where she would get a staff at, you know, she's made her,

Sally Penni:

Yeah. I

Banke A. Odunaike:

Remember if she's been good, we' go to the shops and we'll buy her a present. And so we're at ToysRUs. And she turns around to me and she says, she'd like to get this gala birthday present. And I was like, 'no, what are you doing? Buying her a present'. And she says, she's like, 'no, mommy, I wanna buy her a present'. I say, 'no, no, no, no, no', not buying her present. She's horrible to you. So you're not buying her a present. And she was just like, no, I wanna buy her a present. I said, 'why do you wanna buy her a present'? Cause in my head, I'm thinking, is this child trying to bribe her way into the party? Because if she's I fail, I have failed as a parent. Anyway, she insists and she's like, 'I wanna buy her present mommy'.

And I said, why do you wanna buy her present? She goes, 'because it's kind'. And I said, okay, well, who am I just stand in the way of kindness? Go ahead, go, go, go, go and pick a present for her. And she marches over to the Barbie doll aisle as she often did. And she picks out a black Barbie. Okay. And I'm like, why, why have you picked this toy? And she said, she said, 'because I want her to know that it's okay to play with someone who looks like me'.

And in that instant, I thought, well, Hey, you know what? I've just learned from her that you never stop trying to Edify to, to, to enlighten and show, just help people understand that to see and to embrace diversity and the positivities that come with with diversities, I actually learned from her at that stage because of course, you know, as humans and as we grew up, we've come a little hardened and yes, you forget about, you know, I mean the innocence of the child, she was just wanting to buy a present for her.

And she'd obviously gone past not being invited. She'd forgiven her. I mean, that present probably ended up in the bin. Right?

Sally Penni:

It doesn't matter.

Banke A. Odunaike:

Exactly, it doesn't matter. It was, it was a lesson for me and, and will always stay with me that, you know, whatever the obstacle, you just, you don't stop.

Sally Penni:

Yeah. I mean, wow. That's really just to take a moment to reflect on that – it's so powerful and you know, you going on that committee, even we can have diversity, but it, it needs to be inclusive. And that's what inclusion and equity is. Isn't it? So, yeah. I, I really love that.

I suppose a final question, if I may, Banke is this that you seem really confident to me. Even with your million and one rejection letters, you went to your fancy law firm and maybe, you know, sometimes confidence comes in different ways, right. Doesn't it or appears in different ways, but just before we start this podcast, you were like, 'oh my God, my imposter syndrome is going through the roof here'. And I'm thinking you are talking to, you know, barely five foot short black woman here.

Who's had a long in here. Yeah. See there. We're I'm not sure what imposter syndrome is there, but I, I, I wondered, you know, because I often say everyone's suffer is very imposter syndrome, men, anybody of different sizes and shape, whatever, whatever, whatever. And it's just that we, women, maybe we talk about it a little bit more, but I just wanted to ask you, you know, do you get imposter syndrome and how do you cope with it? Because I get imposter syndrome all the time!

Yeah. Yeah. And it's how we deal with it because occasionally it can act as a catalyst, can't it? Yes. And maybe that's why I've think, oh, you are confident all the time. <Laugh> of course nobody can be confident all the time. It's ridiculous. And maybe there are some people and if you are one of those, people's confident all the time. Good for you! Share it with the rest of us. But how do you deal with your imposter syndrome when it comes?

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Well, you, you know, it, it just is. It's always there, but I notice it's there when I'm doing something challenging. Yeah. And something new. Yeah. And so that's where I get the comfort to tell my imposter - I knew before the, we started the call, I'd said my imposter syndrome is on stage. It's dancing with Mira going, what the hell are you doing? <Laugh> but you know, it's it's and of course, you know, I think I shared with you Sally, when I, when I, when I got the invite to be on your podcast, I was like, 'you've gotta be kidding. She's emailed the wrong person. Right. This is Sally Penni'. We are talking about here. But it's

Sally Penni:

No error, No error. I see your work. I see what you're doing. And that's what I said to you. Nope, you're the right person.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

<Laugh> but it's, it's, it's basically you know, getting to a point where you realize that the reason you have the nerves and the anxiety is because you're doing something new, you're doing something that is challenging and stretching and just taking comfort in the fact that right. Okay. Yes. There's two ways this could go: you could succeed at it or you could fail, but if you fail, you can always pick yourself up and fix it and learn and just take the lessons. You know, the success is all about how you overcome failure, right? So it's, it's taking stock and getting to that point where I'm like, 'okay, I hear you, I see you doing your dance, but it's okay. This is something new. This is something challenging. And we'll be okay. We'll be okay.

Sally Penni:

Yeah. Wow. Well, you know, Banke, you, I started this podcast because I wanted to showcase leaders in law. I wanted to hear voices and role models, certainly that I didn't see nor hear. And I wanted to share that with the thousands who listen to this podcast.

And you've certainly done that. It's been wonderful hearing your journey, what you are doing at CBRE and I can't wait to hear and see what the future holds in respect of your career. Thank you so much, Banke.

Banke A. Odunaiké:

Thank you, Sally. It's been a pleasure.

Sally Penni:

A big thank you to Banke Odunaiké. for Talking Law with me, Sally Penni MBE.

And thanks again to CBRE for supporting this episode. Do visit CBRE.com to find out more about the work that they do across the world.

If you would like to support Talking Law, then please get in touch. You can find me on twitter @sallypenni1 or search for Sally Penni on LinkedIn or Instagram.

Do make sure you catch up with previous episodes of Talking Law where you can hear my interviews with guests such as experienced litigator Harold Brako and QC Cherie Blair.

Before I go, just a reminder to get your tickets for the Women In The Law UK annual dinner and watch my Ted Talk at Ted.com

Thanks to our production team, Sam Walker and Michael Blades at What Goes On Media.
I'm Sally Penni MBE, Bye for now.

ENDS