Achieving work-life balance is a constant challenge for women in the workforce. In this new six-part series in Think, some of Singapore's most outstanding women corporate honchos talk about success, leadership and juggling career and family. We kick off with Lee Suet Fern, senior director of Stamford Law Corporation.

Everything apart from family just ‘a hobby’

For Mrs. Lee Suet Fern, senior director of Stamford Law Corporation, her first job is being a wife and mother. She was given the Mondial Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in the legal sector by Asian Legal Business in 2007.

Q&A

1. Do you find yourself having to be more assertive because you’re a woman?
   a. “I don’t really consider that I am more assertive. That is generally assumed of a woman trying to be at the top, but I really don’t want to be perceived that way. That’s not something I do with gender, that’s something I do with who I am and being true to yourself.”

2. What are some of the challenges you’ve faced in your career?
   a. “I don’t think they’re necessarily different from anyone else making a breakthrough in her or his career out there. Anyone who gets anywhere generally is faced with the same challenges. It’s never a straight road. Some tough challenges make you what you are.”
   b. “Political challenges within your own organisation, challenges from people who want you to step up or want you to drop, they’re the sorts of things that aren’t unique to you.”

3. How do you feel about having to make conscious career decisions as a woman?
   a. “I don’t need to be considered any differently.”
   b. “I hope not. I’ve been happy and I think that’s the best thing. You’ve got to be true to yourself and you’ve got to be true to where you’re going and where you’re aimed.”

4. What about success, leadership and work-life balance? Anything you were wonder what they’re doing?
   a. “I’m not aware of what they’re doing.”

5. Sources of strength?
   a. “I don’t think it’s difficult to achieve a lot if you don’t have the support of your partner and it works either way.”
   b. “I don’t think there’s anything that I’ve done with out his encouragement and support all the way.”

6. Life’s current challenges?
   a. “I think it’s difficult to achieve a lot if you don’t have the support of your partner and it works either way.”
   b. “I don’t think there’s anything that I’ve done with out his encouragement and support all the way.”

7. Your approach to work?
   a. “I’ve always been an optimist. I think I could have been better at it if I had been more adventurous.”
   b. “I think I could have been better at it if I had been more adventurous.”

8. Challenges?
   a. “I’m not really looking for a workplace that is totally different. It’s almost like being in the same place, and it’s the kind of thing that I’m good at whatever life throws up.”