

10 Things

I Wish I Had Known Before Starting My Career

1. Develop a thick skin. “I had a tendency to take things personally, and in our business you just cannot do that. My need to have people like me made me believe they were upset with me personally if something wasn’t the way they thought it should be. After many years, I know now that it’s not personal—it’s just business.”

2. Use meditation techniques. “Our jobs are stressful and if you do not know how to take a few minutes to block it all out and get your perspective right, you won’t make it through the day. Remember, just breathe.”

3. Saying “no” is OK. “I am a people-pleaser and it always was hard for me to say no when I was asked to do something for someone else. As I have learned, it is important that I meet all of my deadlines and say ‘no’ to others when I simply don’t have time.”

4. Have a Mad Hatter’s philosophy. “You have to be able to switch hats (or roles) in midstream. Many times in the apartment industry you have to act as a counselor, mediator, therapist, teacher, accountant or housekeeper, and you need to be able to transition between these roles smoothly without missing a beat.”

5. Always prioritize. “After many years, I finally have learned how to prioritize and meet deadlines. Previously, I would race to get one project done so I could start another one, but I would not be able to give either one my best. Now, I make sure I have all of the tools and complete projects according to priority and deadlines.”

6. Don’t be right all the time. “I’ve learned that it is OK to be wrong sometimes. In fact, being able to admit when you are wrong may open doors for you with your peers. No one likes to be around someone that thinks they know it all, all the time.”

7. Work in moderation. “There is always more work to be done. You don’t have to finish it all in one day. As a self-described workaholic with a type-A personality and some characteristics towards obsessive-compulsiveness, I used to feel I couldn’t leave each day until everything was done. But unless a deadline is looming, it can wait until tomorrow. A little moderation goes a long way.”

8. Don’t eat at your desk. “Before you know it, your lunch time will be nonexistent, you will start to have bad eating habits because you will inhale your food (which is horrible for your digestive system and your weight), you will become complacent and this habit will become routine. Get up and leave your desk, if only for a few minutes, to regroup, walk around and take a breather. Your body and mind will be thankful that you did this.”

9. Be the example, not the exception. “Others observe how we act, how we look, how we react, what we say and everything we do. I adhere to the philosophy that one never gets a second chance to make a first impression—so make the first one count.”

10. Maintain balance. “The most important thing I have learned is that I need to make sure my priorities are straight. As I have grown older and my children have grown up, I look at all of the things, events and memories I missed because I wasn’t mentally there. I advise people I work with to make sure they evaluate their priorities and make family No. 1. I am thankful to my wonderful husband, Al (who still puts up with me working late and never cooking) and my children Jason and Jessica (who make every day worth being the best I can be).” ■



Name: Sherry Silva, CAPS, CAM, NALP, ARM
Title: Property Manager
Company: Breckinridge Square

If you would like to be considered for a future *End Points* column, please contact Kerry Sullivan at 703/797-0678 or kerry@naahq.org.