

## LIFE IS NOT A SPRINT, IT IS A MARATHON.

I would like to tell you a little about my path: My professors here at UA Little Rock were diligent in providing me with the skills and knowledge to build a successful business career.

I obtained my accounting degree from UA Little Rock in 1994 and passed the CPA exam. As a member of Beta Alpha Psi, the national honorary accounting fraternity, I gained insights and an internship with a large regional accounting firm, BKD.

After graduation, I went to work for them full-time as an auditor here in Little Rock. Life then took me to Wichita Falls, Texas, where at age 26, I became the youngest ever CFO of an EW Scripps newspaper, The Times Record News.

My career continued from the luxury retail brand, Neiman Marcus to managing some of the world's largest law firms as COO: Godwin Gruber, Baker & McKenzie, and Mayer Brown. Then seven and a half years ago, I was recruited to be the CEO of Cobra Legal Solutions.

I am frequently asked what motivates me. We are all motivated by something: Money, fame, prestige, success, social responsibility? What drives you?

I am deeply and personally motivated to do the right thing and to be a great global citizen. In my freshman English class, we learned how to "Write arguments." A particular lesson has stuck in my head for over 25 years.

The scenario was that there is a small town called Umlaf, an amazing place, Utopia even! However, it had one flaw, for the society to live this perfect, Utopian life, a child had to be chained in the basement of an old building for life. We had to choose what we would do and write our argument. Save the child or live in Utopia while she suffered. I will always save the child.

My company, Cobra Legal Solutions is a **99% diverse** organization with **80% women** employees world-wide. One board member, CEO, COO and senior most attorney are all **women**. I am frequently asked what is different about Cobra. With these statistics, *EVERYTHING!*

Cobra provides technology and legal solutions to some of the world's largest brands in the technology, retail, finance and insurance industries.

My advice to each of you:

*Be Authentic.* Author and speaker, Bene Brown put it best when she said, "Authenticity is not something we have or don't have. It's a practice. A conscious choice of how we want to live. It's about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let your true selves be seen."

*My Motto: Live Ultimately!* Every day, do something to propel yourself towards being the person

you want to be. As Simone Biles put it after winning gold at the Olympics: *I'm not the next Usain Bolt or Michael Phelps, I am the first Simone Biles!* Be the *first* YOU! Be the *best* YOU possible!

*Advice for Career Success:*

**Listen** to others. *Really* listen. Ideas matter even if they are not ones you agree with. Everyone wants to be heard.

**Create** a "Personal Board of Directors." - But don't forget to appoint *yourself* as Chairwoman.

**Commit.** Work hard, stay focused and never give up on your goals. Commit to your goals and you will achieve them.

***Life is not a sprint, it is a marathon.*** And that's something I know a little bit about...

*The starting line* - Today you are at the starting line of your marathon - commencement. Pumped, excited and full of anticipation for what is to come. You've trained and worked hard to get to this moment.

*The first few miles* - The first few miles are your first job. "Boy I'm good; I'm right on pace for a great career. I got this!"

*Mile 18* - Your career continues, and you hit mile 18 - "the difficult boss." You now begin saying to yourself, "What was I thinking? Why am I doing this? Did I make a bad career choice? Why am I torturing myself?"

*Mile 24 - The Wall! The first major setback* - You are fired or receive a poor performance evaluation... If you are running the marathon, everything from the waist down hurts at this point.

*The finish line* - This is the defining moment! You pick yourself up and somehow move past all the obstacles to success! You dig down deep and find that hidden energy you didn't believe you had and you sprint across the finish line while your fans cheer! You are on top of the world! You can do anything!

Your success will be defined by how you deal with the obstacles in life and how you overcome them.

I leave you with an excerpt from the Livestrong manifesto -

*Unity is Strength! Knowledge is Power! Attitude is Everything!*

Sincerely,



**The Boss (aka: Candice Corby)**