



Education: LLM, New York University; LLB, and B.Com (Ec.), University of Sydney, Australia

Company Name: Holwell Shuster & Goldberg LLP

Industry: Legal

Company Headquarters Location: New York, NY

Number of Employees: 102

Words you live by: "Yes, and..."

Personal Philosophy: Take a chance and see what happens.

What book are you reading? *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver

What was your first job? English/economics tutor (High School)

Favorite charity: New York Cares, Planned Parenthood

From another country, another culture? You still belong

People always tell me they think it's brave, or admirable, that I live so far away from my family (over 9,000 miles, to be exact). Or that I'm courageous for living in New York City alone, bold for working as a lawyer in a foreign jurisdiction, gutsy for giving it a go in such a cutthroat market.

Me? I've never really thought about it in that way. What I think about, even in the midst of my most difficult moments—when the paragraph spacing in my brief is all wrong, I've missed another typo, or can't find the words to build an argument—is that every part of this experience is an incredible, miraculous opportunity.

You see, I'm not just an expat foreign lawyer in the United States, or a first-generation Australian, born and raised. My parents were born in Fiji as the fourth generation of descendants from indentured laborers, who were shipped from their homes in India in the 1800s. They endured abject, impoverished conditions, and were set to work on cane fields in foreign lands throughout the British Empire. To me, those people were brave. To them, I am unthinkable.

Growing up, there was no template for how to be a Fijian Indian Australian lawyer from Western Sydney. In school, I'd never met a lawyer, and I didn't know anyone who had gone to law school. But I knew what I liked—a good old argument and a platform on which to share my (rather loud) voice. Getting into law school was the first step in a long process of learning what it means to belong in the legal profession. I am here today because of the people I met along the way—friends, mentors, well-wishers—who showed me what my career could look like. It was through my friends that I learned I might be good enough to apply for a litigation role, or that I should do a LLM, masters degree in law, and that I could get into NYU, too.

Today, when I think about what it means to be a leader, I think about what I needed when I was striving to get here: someone to tell me I have just as much of a right to be here as anyone else. And that's the opportunity here—that's what I strive to be for future generations of women, and people of color like me. Be it through an encouraging conversation, or advice on your next career move. In all my interactions and through all my work, I hope I show that your unique voice and perspective make this profession better—more vibrant, more nuanced—and that you belong here, too.