

TF: FOR SENIOR LEADERS IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHETHER TO STEP AWAY FROM EXECUTIVE WORK INTO EITHER NON-EXECUTIVE OR CONSULTANCY/PROJECT-BASED/ ADVISORY WORK, SOME PEOPLE ENJOY A MIX OF BOTH. WHAT LED YOU TO CHOOSING A PORTFOLIO CAREER?

EM: I had recently come out of a difficult role and I could feel that my energy to do another CEX role had diminished slightly but my desire and passion for public service had not. I spoke with people in my network for advice and guidance about what to do next which led me to pursue a portfolio career and I've found doing several things that I felt passionately about allowed for a different type of contribution to the sectors I feel so strongly about.

TF: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH SIMILAR HARDSHIPS WITH WORK?

EM: Anyone working at senior level will have faced challenges at some point in their career. You must have a strong core and belief system; I would ask myself what do I believe in? What is my duty? How can I always demonstrate that I will act with integrity and fulfil my duties? That's what I've always drawn upon. My core has been tested throughout my career, both in non-executive and executive work and it's something you must never take for granted - you have to work at it constantly to challenge and test yourself. Ask yourself honestly, am I ready for a particular role or assignment? And don't be afraid to take soundings or advice from your network, from people you respect but also from those who might not necessarily think you're the best thing since sliced bread!

TF: ANY ADVICE YOU'D GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

EM: Don't get despondent. Lots of people approach me who think I've led a charmed career, and whilst I have been blessed and privileged in many ways, the reality is that I have had my challenges. I've been despondent at times about what to do next with my career and I remember advice my mother used to give me and I now give to my daughter - things will always work out for the best, you just don't realise it in that moment.

I would also say stop apologising for the things I've not done before and focus on the things I've learned. As people we tend to focus on our deficits rather than the assets we bring.