



## Equality Talks Podcast - Transcript

### Episode 9: Tales from the trenches and gender equality with Somoud Al Masri

Equality Talks. Brought to you by Work 180. Where we discuss how to finally put an end to workplace discrimination. Let's talk about what it really takes to succeed, what people are doing to drive equality and what can still be done.

Somoud Al Masri is the Women's Network Global co-chair at Jacobs Engineering Company, and she sits on the inclusion and diversity council working with senior leaders across Jacobs' 50,000 employee global business to drive greater agenda balance within the business. Her background is a civil engineer combined with 15 years experience in sales management has given Somoud unique insight into gender imbalance and made her passionate about driving more inclusion in the industry.

Samantha Sutherland:

Somoud was born and raised in Syria, moved to Dubai in 2007, and recently moved with her young family to Melbourne to take up the sales operations manager role at Jacobs with a very impressive CV of inclusion initiatives and professional success. I'm so excited to be talking today Somoud welcome and thank you for coming on a Quality Talks with me.

Somoud Al Masri:

Oh, thank you, Sam. It's my pleasure. And I'm honoured to be with you.

Samantha Sutherland:

So, I'm really excited to talk to you because you have, like I said, in the introduction, you have a really impressive CV, both across the gender and inclusion and diversity space, as well as your professional CV. And so I was hoping we could start with the Women's Network that you are the global co-chair of at Jacobs. And can you talk a bit about that and your role within that and what the Women's Network does then?

Somoud Al Masri:

Sure. We have seven, eight, I think, eight employees networks at Jacobs to kind of represent all diversity or lenses. So Jacob's Women's Network is one of them and we've been very fortunate to have the focus from the business at the last two, three years. Our vision is working together to foster an inclusive environment where gender diversity and equality drive profitable growth. And it's a 5,000 people or employee membership right now kind of. We go or we are spread around the world I sit on the leadership of the network I co-chaired with another lady from the US.

Somoud Al Masri:

The network, the aim of it, or the mission of it is to accelerate the cultural shift within Jacobs, by emboldening women and promoting gender equality. We have a set of values but the value which is really resonate with me is that the network supports advancements based on merit. We are not asking for promotions and hiring because just for the gender, we are asking for an equal opportunity or equal opportunities in general. So that's a quick view of the Woman Network.

Samantha Sutherland:

So can I ask him about that value that you mentioned that advancements based on merit, because merit is a bit of a hot topic at the moment in terms of whether such thing as a meritocracy actually exists and you would know about unconscious bias and the way that that shows up.

Samantha Sutherland:

And so how do you think we balance gender equity within a meritocracy? Or do you think if there can be a meritocracy do you think unconscious bias affects that? Or what are your thoughts on that?

Somoud Al Masri:

Well, look, I think definitely it affects our decisions making. So recently we actually at Jacob's run a cautious inclusion training, where everyone in our company, more than 50,000 people, face-to-face sessions for two hours to talk about our unconscious biases. Because everyone I have them, you all have them, everyone has them, about how to actually identify them and mitigate them. And I was a trainer on sessions here in Melbourne and the stories we hear about, and regardless if they are in Jacobs or outside in our industry or in our communities, they are astonishing.

Somoud Al Masri:

We still can see them everywhere and in my opinion, if we are not intentional about our actions unfortunately kind of the system is going to exclude us as in women, minorities and any other diversity lenses within our male dominated industry.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. One of the things that's interesting about unconscious bias is so you just mentioned no, unless we're intentional, then we will likely fall prey to our biases. And one of the interesting things that I've read around research around unconscious bias is that in fact, we know we all have unconscious bias and you can't avoid that, but the act of being intentional affects it. And so if, for example, you're doing an interview and you have a checklist around the things you're looking for, which is like what government do for all their interview panels. And you have panel interviews where you have a number of different people who all have to come to agreement. Just having the kind of framework around checking on your unconscious bias affects the outcome. And it almost doesn't even matter what the checklist says or what you're looking at but just having the checklist helps you combat it, which I find really fascinating.

Somoud Al Masri:

This is really interesting. We actually have a personal experience where it initiated an initiative in Jacobs. Basically I was talking to one of our discipline leads and kind of his team is not that diverse. And we were talking about how can we bring more diversity into his team? And then he mentioned to me that he's actually having an interview with a female I think she was a consultant.

Somoud Al Masri:

And a few hours he invited me to that interview and I have nothing really to talk or to ask her technically. But what really sparked the conversation in the interview is talking about our culture. So I represented to her what we do as a company, what we do as the Jacobs Women's Network, what's our vision, mission, values. How do we do our initiatives and active activities.

Somoud Al Masri:

And the other gentlemen in the room asked her all technical questions. And at the end of the interview, she was very honest with us that she had other interviews lined up with other really big companies. So I asked her what would bring you to Jacobs? And she said, "Honestly all companies kind of offer the same benefits, work hours, experience, blah, blah, blah, but what you told me about and regards to the environment and the culture in the company really stood out."

Somoud Al Masri:

And from that conversation, we started a new initiative which we started as a pilot in the Middle East at that time to ensure there is always a woman on the table if we are interviewing someone who's coming to manage people in our company. To check the unconscious biases we have as an interview panel and to represent the culture to the people who are coming to hopefully work with us.

Somoud Al Masri:

And it was an amazing pilot the outcome of it is amazing. And this year it's been endorsed by the global leadership. So we are actually taking it to globally. And again, we are focusing on gender right now but the aim is to open it more and to make sure we modify it as the regions needed.

Samantha Sutherland:

That's such an interesting story I have a few things I want to ask you about here. But one is that you've said, you've got really amazing results from doing this. What are some of those results? What are you seeing because of it?

Somoud Al Masri:

So we hired 50% women

Samantha Sutherland:

That's amazing. Wow. And without even having a target, I assume.

Somoud Al Masri:

No.

Samantha Sutherland:

Just by changing the interview panel.

Somoud Al Masri:

Exactly.

Samantha Sutherland:

Oh, wow.

Somoud Al Masri:

And focus on the leaders position. There's a grade setup in our company. So, it's a specific a grade and above where we are trying to target. So we kind of focused on an area. We know we don't have a lot of female in that area.

Samantha Sutherland:

Wow. How amazing. And it's immediately changing, but also by that much, we immediately go to 50% female hire is really amazing.

Somoud Al Masri:

Yes. I agree with you.

Samantha Sutherland:

So I wanted to ask you about some of your own personal experience, because you're a civil engineer and you've worked in sales and Jacobs is a global engineering company, which is traditionally a male dominated industry. And you've spent a lot of time living in the Middle East and I'm wondering what some of your experiences have been like and how they've shaped your passion in the area of inclusion and diversity.

Somoud Al Masri:

So, I started as a civil engineer and I started my work kind of around 2007 in Dubai. The industry has changed a lot in the last 10 years or so, so we all can see that. And specifically on focusing on the gender diversity I struggled, I can't deny it. I struggled at the beginning of my career specifically, to be honest and you might notice that. English is not my first language and I've learned engineering in Arabic.

Somoud Al Masri:

I could solve problems, I could design, I'm a highway engineer, so I could design highways, but it's so difficult for me to explain to people what I'm doing. So I worked really hard on myself to ensure I can communicate with the words basically. So, that's really a big effort I put on myself.

Somoud Al Masri:

I've been speaking my mind all of my life kind of, I use my voice to ensure other voices are heard. And this is what really made the difference and accelerating my work within the Woman Network and to be a co-chair globally. I know my strengths and my weaknesses, I acknowledge them and I work on them or get help from people to help me around maybe shaping a better letter or a better document or... I know where I need to develop myself. But I don't let these things put me down and as usual people put barriers to themselves, so I always try to push my barriers and get out of my comfort zone.

Somoud Al Masri:

I had one instance in my career where I resigned once actually obviously not from Jacob's spot. I figured out that the gentleman who was next sitting next to me doing exactly the same job basically, and double of my salary and when I asked the why, my manager at the time said, well, he's a man and he is or he

has a lifestyle signalling that I come from a third world country. I don't really deserve it. So I simply resigned because I just couldn't take it and just moved out because this is not, what's right.

Samantha Sutherland:

Did you just resign on the spot?

Somoud Al Masri:

I'll be honest with you. No. Not on the spot. It took me a while to analyse and to understand my... Even just the reaction, how can I respond to this? Because at that time I was still junior. I wasn't very involved in even the Women Network or such initiatives, but it took me time to realize that no, that's not right, and I should just stop it. I think it was the next day.

Samantha Sutherland:

Oh, well, it's a pretty quick still. Because it's so shocking, isn't it? That kind of response to something like that. And you, you don't expect people to say that kind of thing anymore, and for it to just be so blatant, it's a bit disarming. Because you're like, "Hmm." But what, I mean, and it would take a while to process it. So, one of my favourite speakers is Brene Brown and writers you obviously would have, she has one of the most top 10 listened to Ted Talks of all time on the Power of Vulnerability.

Samantha Sutherland:

I saw her speak and she said for five years, she was either the opening or closing keynote speaker at every event that she spoke at. And she found out that she was still being paid on average, less than half her male counterparts. And she said, "I now charging amounts that I think is borderline unethical because I just can't deal with the resentment." And I actually loved that, first that she found out about it. And then that she was like, "Well, no, I'm not accepting less." You can then choose to do whatever, if she finds that amount unethical. She could donate it all to charity, or whatever, but the resentment of being undervalued purely just by virtue of being a woman is really hard to cope with when you're faced with that.

Somoud Al Masri:

I totally agree. It puts you down, it makes you really think about your value and how can I, and it's just, you lose it. It's basically the company would lose your reliability, would lose any motivation, any interest you have at work.

Somoud Al Masri:

Just to mention that the incident or this thing happened, it was really, I think around 2010, something like the sort. It's an oldest story and I think when the whole of that culture shift we see in the industry and even within our company, these things are not tolerated we don't take it.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. You're right. There has been a big shift in the last decade around all of this stuff, but I still think we're not done. And the very fact, like your example of the interview panels is much more recent than 10 years in getting these amazing results. And so whilst yes, things have changed and maybe someone wouldn't have the guts to say that exact thing to your face anymore. I still think where this is very much a journey that we're still on. It's not finished.

Somoud Al Masri:

Well, Yes. I totally agree. We still have long way to go. We usually say our target is to get rid of the Woman Network because we don't really need it in our company. And we stop saying she's a women leader, well, she's a leader and that's it. When we start distinguishing people by gender, I think we will be in a much better place.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yes. And so that actually leads me to another question that I want to talk about, which is parenting and working. And I think that one of the reasons that we still do distinguish people by gender at work is because at home, we still very much distinguished by gender. And if you look at the statistics in Australia, I mean, they're constantly updated, but a huge portion of the domestic load is still carried by women. And so because of that load being carried by women when the workplace gets affected by that, because women have this huge mental load and more often rushing off to pick kids up from school or after care and sought out dinner and homework and all that kind of stuff.

Samantha Sutherland:

And so you have a young family yourself, and I'm interested to know how you feel about that in your own life. So both the domestic load, how you fit that in with work and knowing what you know, is it as a specialist in inclusion and diversity, how you see things playing out in your own life. And if you think your knowledge affects what happens your life.

Somoud Al Masri:

Look, yes, I have a daughter she's almost nine years old. My husband is an engineer as well, and he works for Jacobs as well. And both of us are really into our careers development and do more and all of this. But we have a really open communication always. We understand if I have a call or if I have something I need to focus on he will take care of things and we will switch.

Somoud Al Masri:

What really I think helped me is the support I got from my husband. If we don't talk and make sure we communicate and we put our expectations out I think it would be much harder for me. All the stress coming from my normal job, and then the Woman Network thing and usually because I'm here in Australia and my leadership basically going, or they are all over the globe so the calls are going to be at night or early morning and it will affect my whole schedule.

Somoud Al Masri:

But the support from our partners is very important. This is what really played a big part in my success I think. The other thing I want to say lately we had a lot of engaging men initiatives in our company. What really came out of it is that, we as women kind of put the barriers for our partners or for men. It's like if my husband is doing something, I'm always giving him hard time as in, this is not really perfect, this is not how you should do it, or no leave it to me I will do it.

Somoud Al Masri:

Well, no, let them do it. It's okay. They will learn. They will do it second time, third time, it will get to the way you wanted to be. But this is the main thing we heard from the men and in these sessions, it's like,

"You don't allow us to do these things. You, you need to back up a little bit." And I personally started doing that.

Samantha Sutherland:

That's interesting. So when you were talking to men about why they didn't do more, they said, because their partners very often wouldn't let them do it and participate.

Somoud Al Masri:

Yes. That was a really interesting point. It's like, "No, leave the laundry, I will do it." Why? Just let it go, let them do it. The first time maybe he wouldn't get it right or maybe just to spend some time and tell him how to do it, but it's, sometimes we are our own enemies and we stop others from helping us.

Samantha Sutherland:

It's interesting too, though, because I think so I personally have a very high threshold for mess and for things being done improperly. And so I find it much easier to just say you do it. I'm not doing it if it's not done right I don't really care. But I also know that I'm a bit of an outlier in terms of how much mess I can cope with. And so there is also an element of like, if your partner of either probably in my relationship, it was the other way round where he would have liked it if I did more than I did and did it more his way than my way.

Samantha Sutherland:

But I think there is an element of like, if you're the partner who likes things to be cleaner or neater or done to a certain standard, it's hard if the solution is that you have to drop your standards all the time. And so I think there's an element of it where I just think it's great is what I'm saying.

Samantha Sutherland:

I think for sure we need to let go and let our partners do support us and do stuff around the house and not even support us, but just own it themselves. And I think it's hard if this level of standard that you both have is quite different because then one person always feels like things are, they feel uncomfortable in their own house, for example.

Somoud Al Masri:

Well, look, any partnership is about compromise so at the end we all need to go through our expectations on what you want and what your partner wants. But it's okay let it go and just focus on the important stuff basically, I think that's what really worked for me.

Somoud Al Masri:

And I think that is a really interesting element where when you use the flip the script and this is kind of not about our household and how to do things, but more on our relationship with the male colleagues and it's been interesting when you talk to them. And specifically, we've heard a lot about, "Oh, this is a Women Network I'm not welcomed." And I'm like, "No, it's exactly the opposite it's open for men and women and our vision starts with together as women and men."

Somoud Al Masri:

But when you flip the script and show the other how do you feel about receiving a comment, or how did you feel in this meeting, or how do you feel about calling it a maternity leave as in this is just for females, but there's a lot of things. I started learning recently on how to make that the men basically feel the same kind of.

Samantha Sutherland:

So can you explain a little bit more what you mean by flip the script?

Somoud Al Masri:

So, there was one incident which really like opened up the whole subject in my head, but I was basically talking to a male colleague. We were talking about the maternity leave as we call it in the Middle East, because basically it's only for women which is disappointing, but that's the labour law there.

Somoud Al Masri:

But anyway so I was talking to him and I was like, "Well, we are pushing for, maybe we get sometime for the men as well when their partners are delivering a baby new baby for the feminist. So you need time as well." And he was like, "Yeah, well, that would be perfect if I get a week, maybe I can spend it with my family, supporting my wife and the new baby and all of this."

Somoud Al Masri:

And there was like, "No." I was just tricking him basically. And I said, "No, you are going to get the same amount we get." And he was like, "What do you mean?" I said, "Look, if we got let's say, I don't know 20 weeks, you get 20 weeks." And he panicked he was like, "What do you mean 20 weeks no, I can't leave my work, I can't leave my, no, my team, my projects, no it won't work with me."

Somoud Al Masri:

I was like, "You see it now, you see what we go through. And this is just the work elements you are worried about. You're not worried about changes in your body and the new baby to take care of and all the things come with delivering a baby or a new baby." So it's just astonishing when you let the other person go even just imaginary through your experience.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. Interesting. That's so interesting. And even the kind of panic response to that, he was like, "Oh my gosh, but what about this? And what about that?" And the ability because of his response to hopefully build more empathy in terms of how he might consider what it's like as a woman going off on extended maternity leave to look after children while worrying about your career and all the other things, as you said, that happened at that same time.

Somoud Al Masri:

Exactly yes. It was, I think, an eye opening for me. And then I started really using the same methodology a lot.

Samantha Sutherland:

So I wanted to ask you, because you have a lot of exposure to the Male Champions of Change and the Women's Network and the inclusion diversity forum, what's been your most inspirational moment around gender quality in the past year and why?

Somoud Al Masri:

So, this year our company went through, start advertising for our new brand. So we launched our new brand, which is a, challenging today reinventing tomorrow. And our CEO with the leadership went to the New York Exchange to basically ring the bell event. It was amazing when I played that record from 2018 where we carried the same kind of activity in New York. So the same platform, the same stage, exactly.

Somoud Al Masri:

And the video from 2020 our leadership now. In 2018, we had one woman on the stage and 2020, we had more women on the stage than men. And I know it's not just me who felt the same there's a lot of people in our company who felt the big change when you see it, it kind of struck you. And it's funny I think the CEO of the New York Exchange thanked our CEO for arranging to bring more women to the event. And our CEO was like, "What do you mean by arranging for more women? This is my leadership." So the shift in our leadership within just like two years, it's been inspiring it's been an amazing journey.

Samantha Sutherland:

That really is phenomenal and also such an interesting phrasing so the head of the stock exchange, saying thank you for arranging it, as opposed to it just being a normal thing that would happen. And so Jacob's obviously has a really unique commitment from the CEO and from senior leadership. And so talk to me a little bit about that. And also actually you might not know the answer to this, but do you know why the CEO is so committed to it?

Somoud Al Masri:

Look, it's, and our company basically we say our biggest challenge is to create profitable growth as any other business. But to create this profitable growth, we need to differentiate ourselves and to differentiate ourself we need to be innovative. To be innovative you need to be diverse, but diversity cannot be activated unless you are inclusive. So, this is why we lead by inclusion and diversity.

Somoud Al Masri:

I suppose instead of diversity and inclusion as usually the term is used. We as the Jacobs Women's Network are sponsored by our CEO, Steve Demetrio, and our chief officer for communication and strategy, Marietta Hannigan. There is a personal commitment from our CEO and our leadership to the gender agenda basically in our company. And this is because I think in my personal opinion, this is where we can really shift the culture or make the biggest shift cultural shift because if you think about the other diversity lenses, if you want, so the LGBT the African American employees, the Latino employees, there is a lot of other lenses, but women is a global issue let's say.

Somoud Al Masri:

It's not a regional one, it's not small, it's, it's big enough, I think, to attract the focus. So one of the great things when we started actually working with our CEO and at that time his title was the chairman. And we just said to him, "Can we stop saying chairman, and we just say chair person, or, just chair." And you can't imagine it took, I think two days to change his title everywhere.

Somoud Al Masri:

And this is not an easy job, but he was immediately on board. He was like, "Oh yeah, why not?" It's, it's actually, "Thank you for bringing it up." He keeps really close relationship to us. So, we've never cancelled a meeting with him. We meet on a bi-monthly basis with him and Marietta as well. And it's not how sometime leaders might be on a call or a meeting with you where they're not fully focused.

Somoud Al Masri:

No, he's fully focused himself, Marietta's well, they push back on us when things are not as per their expectations and we do the same. So, the relationship, the accountability and the open door kind of policy where you feel free to speak up your mind, bring issues. It's been an amazing journey and it's been an amazing commitment.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. I actually, I really love what you said, especially about the fact that he's really focused and present when you're talking to him, because I actually think within leadership that's pretty rare. And of course there are a lot of demands on people's time and energy and expectation and stuff, but that ability to really focus on the people that you're sitting there with is a bit of a superpower now for leadership I think.

Somoud Al Masri:

I totally agree with you and look it's been inspiring because the things we come up with and we push on each other and we challenge each other. It's been an amazing relationship and what's really interesting I think in our approach to the whole inclusion and diversity is the tone has been set from the top and there is an amazing commitment from our CEO on the whole leadership.

Somoud Al Masri:

But there is an amazing commitment from the downer as well from the bottom, from the employees networks. You can see it's coming from up and down where we are squeezing the middle layer, kind of when we are trying to bring it either by setting up KPIs or incentives or something like this, or bringing it from down where we work with our colleagues on engagement and attraction and retention. It's been really amazing... In my opinion the approach is really working well.

Samantha Sutherland:

Amazing. So I want to talk a bit more about some of your personal story, and I'm wondering about how you came to be the co-chair of the Women's Network and also be part of the inclusion of diversity council and how those opportunities came up and how you found them.

Somoud Al Masri:

When I joined the Women Network, so I come from a legacy company, which was acquired by Jacob. So I that was on that legacy company time. But I was in an office which wasn't really my office I was doing some work in another office. And I saw a pregnant lady who was really kind of struggling even to work and to go to the elevator. And I saw the company drivers. So I was like, "Everything is okay." And he responded immediately to me, the driver and said, "No she is struggling, and I need actually someone to go with me to the hospital."

Somoud Al Masri:

So I was like, "Oh, okay. wait a minute. I'll just bring my bag." I went with them to the hospital and I was talking to her on our way and I figured out the lady is kind of not able to walk, but she doesn't want to start her maternity leave. Sorry, yet, because she wants to spend the time with her baby it's a limited time in the Middle East, very limited it's 45 days.

Somoud Al Masri:

So, I asked her, "Did you talk to your manager that you talk to people, to HR, did you talk to people? Did you tell them your issue?" And she said to me, "I spoke." I went back to the office after making sure she's okay and her husband was with her in the hospital and I started going around and asking, like, "Did you know about this?" Talk to her manager and I didn't get an answer. Everyone was like going around and around and no one really figured out what to do for the lady.

Somoud Al Masri:

On my way home, I got a call from my manager at the time saying, "Stop making problems." And I was like, "What do you mean by making problems?" And he said, "Why you are chasing people today to know what happened and how can we deal with this situation? This is not your job."

Somoud Al Masri:

And this is where it struck me, it's not my job, it's not my issue, but I have to do something about it. Fortunately enough at that time there was a vacancy on the steering committee for the Women Network. I immediately applied because I recognized I need the authority, or I need the power to bring up issues. And I was chosen to be on the steering committee after I think a year and so we've been acquired by Jacobs, but that the journey in Jacobs has been just astonishing.

Somoud Al Masri:

So I've been chosen to continue with the Jacobs Women's Network leadership team as a steering committee member. And I was responsible for the talent management subcommittee. But then it's funny, we lost our co-chair because we basically sold one of our line of businesses, which was oil and gas at that time.

Somoud Al Masri:

Suddenly we have an open position for leading the network. And I've never even thought that I will have this opportunity, but actually my team, the steering committee, they recommended me and they really pushed me to apply. And I still remember that moment I was like, "Are you serious? Like seriously me, what? Each one of you is a star." But they saw something, I think I didn't see at that time, but basically I applied my application was endorsed by Steven and Marietta, our CEO, and our chief of communication, our sponsors.

Somoud Al Masri:

And yeah, since then, which is almost two years, one and a half year now I am the global co-chair. We have a succession plan so by end of this year, I should fade out and someone from my team from the steering committee will take over. For the inclusion and diversity council, which we now call together beyond council. The council is combined of leaders and the business leadership or executive leadership

actually chaired by our CEO, Steve Demetrio and it has a representation from all networks. So I represent the woman network on it.

Somoud Al Masri:

And women carry each other, and if we don't really push for each other, I don't think we will get anywhere, but this is an opportunity for me to thank my co-chair Jennifer Richmond, because, she's an SVB. And I was like, "Well, you can be our voice on the council." And she said, "No, look, I'm on a lot of these leadership meetings it's a seat for you." So I really appreciated the opportunity. And since then I am representing the women network on the council.

Samantha Sutherland:

So you can't see my face while we're talking, obviously, but there's been a couple of times when you've told stories about things that have happened on my face the equivalent of, "Oh my God." Like that and-

Somoud Al Masri:

I know.

Samantha Sutherland:

The story about this guy telling you to stop doing this and stop annoying people and putting your nose in where it's not meant to be and stuff. One of the things I think about that is that those very actions are the type of actions that get us seen and can help create opportunities. So then you decided to go and join the Women's Network. And then the other thing is the point that you made is by joining it, you actually put yourself in a position to be able to do something about it in a more formal capacity, which I really liked that approach to, there's things that are happening that are frustrating, and you're doing your best with what you've got, but then you can also improve your chances of knowing something by finding formal opportunities to contribute, which I really like.

Somoud Al Masri:

Yep. I totally agree with you on, and it's been an amazing journey since I kind of got the power. We've been empowered basically, let me put it this way. We've been empowered, we've been given the, not the authority, given the opportunity to bring our voice higher and making sure, such silly things is not happening in our company.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. Now I feel like I could keep talking to you all day. This has been so fascinating, but I like to finish with a question and with such an interesting background, I think you might have an interesting answer to this question. And that is if you could go back in time, say 10 years and talk to a younger you, 2010 conversation and everything that's come since then what would you say to your younger self about the possibilities that are about to unfold? What you've seen, what you've learned, how much your life has changed, what would you say to a younger you.

Somoud Al Masri:

Look, to be honest, I have never ever dreamed about what I'm doing right now. Being on a broadcast or the centre, I've been on a panel with amazing, Stars Ladies, with the Male Champion of Change, working with the CEO or working with the leadership, being someone who's really well known in our company,

for what I'm doing, this has been an amazing journey. And if I look at myself in 2010, who I'm someone that never thought you will be anywhere.

Somoud Al Masri:

I think what I would tell myself is that believe in yourself and this is an advice I get from one of my best friends when the first time I was going to Dallas where our headquarter is, and to be on a meeting with our CEO and the rest of the steering committee. Um, and I was like, "Oh my goodness, I don't know how to deal with this. I have no idea like the CEO and all of these amazing people." And she was like, "You know what Somoud they chose you because it's you, don't change yourself stay authentic, stay who you are and just keep pushing, just keep doing what you are doing because basically what you are doing is working." So that's what I think I would tell myself at that time, because I wasn't that confident if you want.

Speaker 1:

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