

Connectforce & IWD

What do you think it means to be a woman in 2021?

Giorgia: I think that being a woman in 2021 is extremely empowering. Women in history have paved the way for the lives we are able to lead today. Of course, there is always work to be done and improvements to be made, but we are on the right track to secure the freedom and equality of the woman in future generations! We can finally be whoever we want to be!

Claudia: Being a woman of today means many things to many people. A CEO, a sister, a police officer, mother, a prime minister, a daughter, a hairdresser, a wife, a performer, a trans woman or whatever you choose. Gender should not define what you can be or achieve. However for so many women across the global this is not the case. International Women Day will continue to have necessity until the day that a woman can be all of those things and more because they can, and not because of their gender.



What would you tell your 10 year old self? / What will you tell your daughter that you wished you were told yourself?

Elle: I would tell myself not to worry so much! And I'd also stress that singing louder than everyone else in school assembly isn't necessarily an achievement.

Rhian: If I was looking back now, I'd tell 10 year old me not to compare myself to others, and just go for it. As a Mum to a 6 year old girl, it's something I tackle on a daily basis. I tell her to pay less attention to what people think and to believe in herself. I've lost count of the number of times I've had to explain that girls and boys can like the same things! I also make a point of saying the same to my son, so that he knows we are equal. He's exposed to strong willed females at home, so hopefully will grow up to respect women and the roles they play in society. We're not all made the same, and can't all be good at everything. It's about recognising differences, playing to our strengths and making the most of our talents. But fundamentally, girls today need to have the confidence to 'just have a go', even if others around them aren't.

Why do we need more women in leadership?

Vikki: To have more women in leadership roles is to continue to break down the structural and cultural barriers we have accepted in the past. Modern ideologies of what transformative leadership is; align with the empathetic, inclusive and more open qualities women generally share. Simply - having female leaders continues to alter the expectations about who can lead and the qualities a successful leader should possess.

Claudia: It's become increasingly more commonplace to see someone who looks like you or I lead people, meetings or countries. The world now recognises that when women, minorities and people of colour are not only given a seat at the table, but given the chance to lead, incredible things can happen that instigate those sorts of systemic shifts.



Share a women's empowerment moment that inspired you.

Giorgia: For me, it has to be powerhouse activist, Greta Thunberg. At the age of just 16 she became the face of the global climate change movement. Never backing down, she made her voice heard over some powerful (orange) world leaders...yes, I am talking of Mr. Trump. Her passion for climate change is making big changes in society and there is no sign of her slowing down just yet! A true inspiration to us all!

Rhian: One memory which sticks in my mind professionally, is when I made the move to become self-employed. I'd always wanted to make the break, but after a long time in the safety net of a decent job, I wasn't sure how to go about it, or if I could make it work.

I met a contractor in my last employed role however, and after a brief chat, was inspired to try. She made it sound so easy, and had the balance that I wanted. So I stopped putting it off and just went for it. 8 years later, I'm so grateful for that chat and how she persuaded me to believe in myself! On a personal level, I've felt most empowered by women since I've had children. I've met some incredibly supportive and empathetic women throughout antenatal appointments, birth, and today as a mum of two. They've given me the confidence to trust in both my body and natural instinct when I've had any concerns.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

Vikki: Days such as international Women's Day are incredibly important, not only because they can be inspirational but more crucially instrumental in achieving change. They are a rallying cry to focus on current issues - to work together on solutions for change and development. International Women's Day is another focus for us to look back and move forward to becoming a more inclusive and diverse society.

Elle: It means having the space to celebrate your definition of femininity and what it means to identify as a woman! We're powerful, resilient and unique - today is a wonderful opportunity to shout about that!

