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When a Client Relationship Turns into a Lasting Friendship

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Over the past 18 months we have all learned how much relationships mean to us in every aspect of our lives. It has become abundantly clear how much we need relationships to feel supported, confident, and connected, and work is certainly no exception.

Whitney: For more than five years, we have had the pleasure of working together in one capacity or another and building that relationship. You could say we have "grown up" together in our careers. We first crossed paths when Aubrey was a Talent Acquisition Specialist for Thomas & Betts/ABB, continued our working relationship when Aubrey became an HR Generalist for Pinnacle Agriculture Holdings, LLC, and really cemented that relationship when Aubrey rose to the level of Director of Human Resources for Cornerstone Systems, all while I was navigating the transition to Shareholder at Baker Donelson. Throughout that time, we've worked on policies, trained management and employees, worked through various difficult leave scenarios, and all the typical tasks thrown at human resources professionals and employment lawyers each day.

Having now survived a global pandemic, and all the unique and sometimes extreme challenges it posed for those trying to manage and advise the ever-changing workforce, including the isolation and seemingly never-ending remote work issues, we can really say that we have almost done it all in terms of our professional relationship. But we have no plans on stopping here.

Aubrey: We are both strong believers in supporting women and celebrating each other's achievements and we expect to be doing so for years to come. Perhaps even more importantly, somewhere along the way life happened and we were lucky enough to become friends. Since we usually talk at least weekly, our discussions typically start and end on a personal note, with business tucked neatly in the middle. "I often joke due to the frequency of times I speak with Whitney, there are only three people in my life whose phone numbers I know by memory -my husband, my mother, and Whitney Dowdy!"

Whitney: "When you see yourself as a true partner to your clients, developing that personal relationship is sometimes just a natural result. You see your clients as more than a business opportunity and look forward to sharing in their successes and easing their trials; that's the relationship I've built with Aubrey."

Aubrey: "There really is something special about knowing you have a trusted advisor, confidant, and friend that both counsels and encourages you throughout your career. I am not sure what I value most, the friendship we have formed, or the countless hours of professional guidance Whitney's given me along the way. Whether we are talking about employment law or the milestones our children are going through, you can be certain there is never a dull moment in our conversation(s)!"

So, as you might expect, in addition to lots of important work over the years, we have also shared many personal experiences. Most notably, almost three years ago we had our first children at the same time. "One of my most favorite memories is of the two of us, pregnant bellies in tow, waddling to lunch together just weeks

before our due dates in infamous Memphis heat. I remember thinking "I bet people are having a field day looking at the two of us right now!"

Perhaps to the chagrin of the senior leadership at Cornerstone, we were out on maternity leave at the same time after welcoming our boys. Thankfully, we both are supported by wonderful teams and everyone survived our synchronized maternity leaves without issue.

Whitney: After navigating those first few months with our boys, we both returned to work excited to pick up where we left off and face a whole new set of challenges as working mothers. Since that time, we have shared stories, advice, laughs, and even hardships that new mothers face, all while navigating the tests and opportunities of our professional lives. While some days may seem overwhelming, it certainly makes work more enjoyable when you get to experience it with people you consider friends.