



MEET THE TECHBLAZERS | SAILAJA

TRANSCRIPT

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Hi, I'm Sailaja. I come from the small coastal town, Visakhapatnam. That was where I was born in, did all my education. It's a very very beautiful town. I cherish my childhood memories of living in a joint family. Three generations under a single roof.

My parents taught me—and to this day I remember—is one is you have to be independent and, you know, stand for yourself, and you have to carve out your own identity. I did not really have a lot of clarity on my career when I joined engineering. I just knew that I was interested in math and logic.

After working in two other companies for about 6 years, I joined Accenture in 2003. And Accenture was just setting up its operations in India. And I was probably among the first 50 to 100 to join our Bangalore office.

Over the years, I've seen it grow to now become a 100,000 people strong organization. We've really created not only a diverse workforce, but a culture where people can be themselves. And they can really come up and, you know, perform in a very very inclusive culture where everybody is sensitized that irrespective of your gender, your

religion, your sex, your ethnicity. You know you can just be yourself. And your skills will be appreciated rather than the other things, right.

I have also witnessed rapid changes in the IT industry. In 2011, we were just setting up our Salesforce practice in Accenture. And then one of my supervisors at that time just called me up and said, "Would you like to be in this practice and kind of lead the practice?" And I was again like the Oracle has been my place for the last 10 to 15 years. Does it really make sense for me to change? But then I immediately got the answer that this is a great opportunity to learn a new technology. So, it's very important to step out of your comfort zone. Have the courage to learn something new, to pick up something new.

I have never been afraid of change or new challenges. In fact, I like taking risks. And that's one of my advice to many women. Take risks and be willing to adapt and change with an open mind. You can take help and succeed at Accenture.

We have the ecosystem to ensure that you have the new means to succeed in the new role. We have trainings on every single new skill, be it AI, or be it AR/VR, robotics. And you know technologies like Salesforce.com, Workday, which are heavily growing in the market, and are very niche.

I personally think that there is no ideal work life balance. Everyone must define their own balance. To me, it is important to have the flexibility when I need it. And that is really my work-life balance. My family and I like outdoor activities. Swimming and playing badminton is something we do regularly. We also plan our family vacations every year. And it's great to spend that time away from work with my family and friends.

My advice to young women leaders, or for that matter anyone, is always keep learning. There is just no other way to be relevant. It may not be only about work. It could be a new perspective, hobby, or anything that interesting you. You just have to be more holistic.