

Education: JD, Columbia University, School of Law; BS, Lahore University of Management Sciences

Company Name: Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP

Industry: Legal

Company CEO: Neil Oxford and Robb Patryk

Company Headquarters Location: New York

Number of Employees: 172 attorneys

Words you live by: Always try to see the glass as half full, not half empty

Personal Philosophy: Believe in myself; show up for others

What book are you reading? *A Thousand Ships* by Natalie Haynes

What was your first job? Computer science instructor at my old school

Favorite charity: Doctors without Borders

Interests: Reading, running, walks with friends

Family: Parents and older siblings who have always spoiled me; a niece who inspires me; a network of friends who are like family to me.



It can be hard, but raising your hand for the challenging jobs is the way to build confidence and get ahead

Years ago, I was a young associate sitting in the examiner's seat to begin the deposition of a very senior executive in a multimillion-dollar case. The opposing counsel, sitting across from me, leaned over and told me that the place next to the court reporter is for the examiner and I should move one place over to assist the examiner. I looked up from my nerdy-nose-in-the-binder pose and responded politely that I'll be taking the deposition. The opposing counsel leaned back in his chair, dramatically threw back his arms and in a condescending tone told his client, "Oh, this is going to be such a tough day. Looks like she's going to grill you!"

I'm not good with retorts, so I did not tax my brain to come up with one. Instead, I focused on what I knew and opposing counsel did not – I knew my case, I knew the documents better than anyone else around the table, and I knew what I needed from the deposition. So, I started asking my questions. About an hour into the deposition, opposing counsel was no longer rocking his chair and his client was no longer smirking. A very senior lawyer – our co-counsel in the case – leaned over and told me to "keep doing what you're doing

because you're making him sweat" – I'm not sure whether he meant the witness or opposing counsel, but I was OK with either.

That lesson in being able to put aside negativity and stay grounded and confident in myself was a difficult but important one to learn. A few months before this deposition, a similar experience had rattled me. The witness, to avoid answering my questions, kept responding that he could not understand "that accent" although a very kind court reporter later told me that she had understood me. The vitriol surprised and stung me. However, the next time the opportunity to take another deposition came up, I knew I had only one option – to raise my hand.

"[T]hat accent," by the way, is a beautiful and proudly Pakistani one. Born and bred in Pakistan, I made the decision to come to the US for law school and made a life and career for myself in New York. I don't look, speak or often dress like people's image of the traditional New York lawyer; but over time, I've realized that, as for most of us, the things that set me apart also are some of the things that give me the courage to keep raising my hand.