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JOIN I-NAPA IN CELEBRATING
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



What has been your experience with discrimination as a woman in your professional roles?



Fortunately, I have never had that experience! Men have been my mentors and provided me with professional opportunities. As a matter of fact, it was my career mentor while I was with the Foreign Agricultural Service in Washington, D.C. who told me to sit at the table and lean in despite most of those people outranking me. He was male and continues to be one of the most influential people in my life.



Why do you think that is? How did you male bosses get to be so supportive?

I believe that most of that could be attributed to the fact that all of my male bosses had a larger world view than just their program or their city, county, or even state. The first male supervisor I worked for worked in international trade but was also LGBT and I think because of that, he never really took my gender into consideration when it came to balancing that against competency. My other male supervisors were all either U.S. diplomats or work in international business so they were constantly exposed to other ways of thinking as well. I have found that when you work hard and your work product is of great quality, you can earn your supervisors' trust, regardless of what gender they are, and that is more important than what gender you are.



In your current position, what makes for a really good day at work?

When I am busy. I hate downtime! A good day is when I am productive, moving something along, and using my full brainpower.



What has been the most significant experience or challenge in your career that changed you professionally?

I came of age during the three years I worked in Seattle, between DC and Orange County where I am now. For part of those years I had a high visibility position working on a political initiative for King County that essentially consisted of building a new economic development program to support local food businesses and healthy eating. It was challenging because I was the utmost subject matter expert at the organization, and it was the first time I had full decision-making authority. That's when I became comfortable making decisions and being accountable for them. Up to that point, I was the one making recommendations. Now, I take on accountability and decision-making all the time with helping my departments make decisions and I find that I am comfortable owning those decisions and the consequences that come with them.



How did you get that level of comfort with that new skill?

I realized that it's my job. If I am going to support my departments, then some of that support comes in the form of making decisions regardless of whether it's a tough or easy one. I also remind myself that all of this is just part of "the journey", my goal is to get to "the end," so if that means someone has to make a decision to get there and I have the ability to do that, then I will.

