

"Be a human being, not a human doing," says Hilary Dudley

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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Hilary Dudley is the managing director of Citadel Fiduciary. What she finds most satisfying about her job is knowing that she helps clients address their problems and allay their fears and thus make a positive impact on their and their families' lives.



Hilary Dudley, managing director, Citadel Fiduciary

"I really enjoy interacting with diverse people, talking to them and learning about a wide range of businesses, industries, interests, hobbies, opinions and so on. I also obtain much fulfilment from empowering members of my team and collaborating with them to help them achieve their full potential and to best service our clients," she says.

Tell us a little about yourself

I'm a laatlammietjie. Born in Zimbabwe to South African parents who returned here when I was five. I grew up in rural northern KZN and did a post matric at a private boy's school in Johannesburg. To say that this was poles apart from my previous schooling and life experience is a serious understatement! With older parents, I consciously chose to remain in KZN to be able to spend more time with them, rather than spreading my wings.

I studied law and opted to qualify as an attorney and work in Durban, where I have lived for nearly 20 years. I love the culture and way of life in this city which allows me the scope to have my two canine fur kids, as well as (betraying my rural roots) a horse.

Describe a typical work day

My day generally consists of meetings, calls, emails and drafting documents. I have a dual role in my organisation with both technical, client-facing duties as well as operational responsibilities including leading the fiduciary team. This means that I will typically have a combination of meetings and administration relating to both aspects. In addition to consulting on and implementing estate planning solutions for clients, I am appointed as the professional trustee on client trusts and thus spend time assisting co-trustees to consider and make decisions regarding various commercial transactions, as well as attending to the resultant paperwork to ensure that the trust governance is in order.

Some days can definitely be more emotionally challenging than others, for example when a client is bereaved or going through a life-changing event. There is a fine balance between being sufficiently empathetic and maintaining objectivity in order to provide rational counsel and advice to best help resolve their problem. It sometimes feels as if I would have benefitted from studying psychology as well as law.

▣ ***What are the trends in your industry?***

As the saying goes, the world is a global village and the fiduciary industry is affected by this trend. People are generally more nomadic now and either live, work or have other interests in different parts of the world. This requires more complex estate planning to cater for different jurisdictions and scenarios. The different tax and inheritance laws in other countries need to be considered when advising clients. Although we may not be qualified to provide advice regarding other jurisdictions, we need to refer clients to appropriate advisors offshore and to manage the process holistically from a solution perspective.

▣ ***What are the challenges?***

Our challenges largely centre around keeping up with the constant changes in the law, the increasing (and necessary) compliance requirements and the evolving globalisation of the industry. Right now, working remotely has presented both a challenge and an opportunity, as we can fit in more virtual meetings but this adds greater pressure as clients and colleagues expect that you will nearly always be available.

Another challenge I have experienced working in a service industry is that people sometimes do not appreciate the value that they receive and are more reluctant to pay for services than they are for goods. At the end of the day we are selling time, of which there is a finite supply, and skills, of which there is a scarcity.

There is also a view that robo-advisors may replace human beings in the financial services industry and possibly even in law. In my view, although this may be true at a certain level of advice or service, there will always be a need for human advisors, particularly given the very personal type of issues with which we deal and the need for bespoke solutions.

▣ ***What advice would you give to young women wanting to enter your industry?***

- Work hard, but don't allow it to go unnoticed – ensure that you do get the recognition that you deserve.
- Back yourself – don't allow self-criticism to sap your confidence.
- At the outset, accept that no task is below you and do the drudge tasks with grace – they are your starting rungs to bigger and better things.
- Treat everyone you meet with consideration and respect, regardless of their role in the organisation or industry.
- Be supportive of others and collegial, but don't hesitate to sometimes prioritise what's best for you.
- Set boundaries and learn when to say no or you will become ineffective and overwhelmed.
- Be true to yourself and unfailingly conduct yourself in a manner which sits comfortably with your beliefs or personality.

- You must grow and fiercely protect your personal brand as it's your professional capital and you take it with you wherever you go.
- Choose to be a person who uplifts others and brings them along with you.

▣ **What do you do to relax?**

During the week I do yoga and on weekends I ride, garden and read. The beach is normally a favourite spot for a swim and walking the dogs. I also enjoy movies and the arts so love to attend film festivals, plays and arts festivals. I cannot wait to be able to get back to supporting arts and cultural events again.

I am currently trying to up my fitness levels to get ready for the Camino. A group of friends and I had booked to walk a part of the Portuguese route from Biaona to Santiago de Compostela over eight days in June/July this year. We have postponed the trip until next year when we hope it will still go ahead.

▣ **What would you say to your younger self?**

Life is short. Don't waste your time and energy worrying about things that are out of your control. Choose to be where your feet are and be a human being, not a human doing.

“ *Drink the good whiskey and make sure that you use your good crockery.* ”

Although it interrupts your busy work day, always take that phone call from your mother, because after she has died you will long for nothing more than to be able to speak to her again. Nothing lasts forever.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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