Kristen Johns is an attorney with Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis LLP's intellectual property practice group.

What impact has Nashville's growth had on you and/or your company? Nashville's growth has had a remarkably positive impact on my practice in advising technology-focused clients and in growing our work in connection with TokenizeTN. Bolstered by newcomers with inspiring energy and diverse experiences and backgrounds, our community will continue to thrive.

What is the best book you've read recently? The best book I've read recently was "The Hiding Place" [by Corrie Ten Boom]. Everyone should read it.

What is the worst advice you were ever given, and what did it teach you? I was probably given the worst advice in high school and if I followed it, I quickly learned the negative consequences of following bad advice.

What is the most common mistake women make in business, and how would you overcome it? At a high level, women underestimate themselves - which is not necessarily a mistake, but a perspective and internal dialogue that can be revised to be more inspired, motivated and empowered. ... At a granular level, I found myself apologizing at the beginning of emails for things I didn't need to apologize for (e.g., "Sorry for the delay "). I also have learned to not use the word "just" in any emails. It's usually a powerless, unnecessary word in writing.

What is your biggest pet peeve in the workplace? The use of "reply all" when it is unnecessary.

Surprising thing women still deal with in the workplace: I think I have reached an age where very little surprises me. I think conferences bring the most surprises because men still dominate speaking and keynote roles, which therefore, affects the tone and attendance of those events. Happily, LaunchTN's 36|86 conference takes an alternative approach and TokenizeTN is honored to be partnering on blockchain-related panels at this year's event. I was very impressed by their lineup in 2018, in which half of the speakers were women and/or minorities. Being able to see yourself reflected in the programming can be both inspiring and motivating to act on key takeaways.

First job: I have learned valuable lessons from every job, but probably have learned the most life lessons working in restaurants throughout college and law school. I think every person should have a job working with the public so we can all be more compassionate and kinder to each other.
Must-have college course for business leaders: Every person should take philosophy, and if fortunate enough, have a professor similar to John Lachs, PhD, centennial professor of philosophy at Vanderbilt. In his book, "The Relevance of Philosophy to Life," he wrote, "Philosophy at its best irresistibly breaks the bounds of thought, seeps out of books to love, embrace and modify the world. Such unity cannot be found in the words of philosophers but only by comparing their books with what they do. Plato had it because he left for Syracuse and Mill attained it by running for Parliament. ... We can all come near it by acting on what we believe, by making our books the authors of our deeds."

Hardest lesson learned: My first salaried job was selling steel at Bethlehem Steel and my career has taken numerous twists and turns that led me to Waller. I have never settled in a job where I was not fulfilled and challenged. Knowing when it is time to move on can present its own unique challenges, and having patience during those transitions can be extremely hard. A satisfying career is dependent on knowing and abiding by the Serenity Prayer. [God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.]

Go-to song: "Can't Stop the Feeling" - Justin Timberlake.

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