



**Tamara Oppenheimer QC**

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“I started my professional life as a solicitor in a City Firm. Although I had always been interested in a legal career, I was put off the Bar as it seemed incompatible with family life: too all-consuming and too risky. How wrong I was. After three-and-a-half years at the firm I made the move to Fountain Court and have never once regretted it.

A career at the Bar gives me immense intellectual satisfaction, variety of work, exposure to people of real ability and expertise, yet with an unrivalled control over my time.

There is a misguided perception that the Bar, and the Commercial Bar in particular, is not a great career for a woman. First of all, the Bar is a true meritocracy, and if you are a quality candidate you will thrive whatever your gender, ethnicity or background. Secondly, having experienced both sides of the profession I know that the Bar permits a far better life balance than practice at a top tier law firm (and indeed many other jobs). That is due to the flexibility and independence that comes with being self-employed. I have three children and when I am not in Court, I organise my life to do school drop-off, get to concerts and sporting events and spend extra time with them during school holidays. With the exception of the occasional conference call or meeting, I control the times at which I work.

Despite this juggling (and three periods of maternity leave), I have never once felt that my career has suffered in any way.

I have to say that there isn't another job that I would rather do.”