

# Leading Bravely

PHOTOGRAPHY G. DANIEL VON LOPEZ

**ADRIANA LÓPEZ-ORTIZ IS A CORPORATE/BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS LAWYER AND ACTS AS OUTSIDE GENERAL COUNSEL TO PRIVATELY HELD BUSINESSES OF ALL SIZES AND STRUCTURES HERE IN THE COMMUNITY OF AUSTIN.** We caught up with her and asked her a few questions of what it's like being a woman and a leader in our community.

## 1. WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?

Contrary to what popular culture would have us believe about lawyers, there are some of us who work outside the courthouse, behind the scenes, as part of the business's team. My particular focus is supporting businesses in the creative industries.

## 2. HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORK AND LIFE RESPONSIBILITIES?

By setting clear expectations and boundaries—with my work team, my clients, my family and even myself—which is easier said than done, and something I have to work at every day. It can really be a challenge, but I have been fortunate to have found a spot at a law firm that operates on a distributed model—meaning that there is no centralized brick-and-mortar office, and our attorneys work from whatever location we want to work from and set our own schedules. This gives me the freedom to use my time in ways I wouldn't be able to do in a traditional office setting.

## 3. AS A FEMALE LEADER, WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER IN YOUR CAREER?

Self-doubt. For whatever reason, it seems this is something that affects women in particular. It's taken some hard work and, quite simply, the passage of time to overcome my own imposter syndrome. It still comes up from time to time, but it isn't a show-stopper for me anymore. Second runner-up is time, or lack thereof—there simply isn't enough time in the day

to do it all, and the extra responsibility (and, therefore, time) that comes with being a leader is often why some women choose not to take on leadership roles, since doing so would mean other parts of their lives suffer.

## 4. WHO INSPIRED YOU AND WHY?

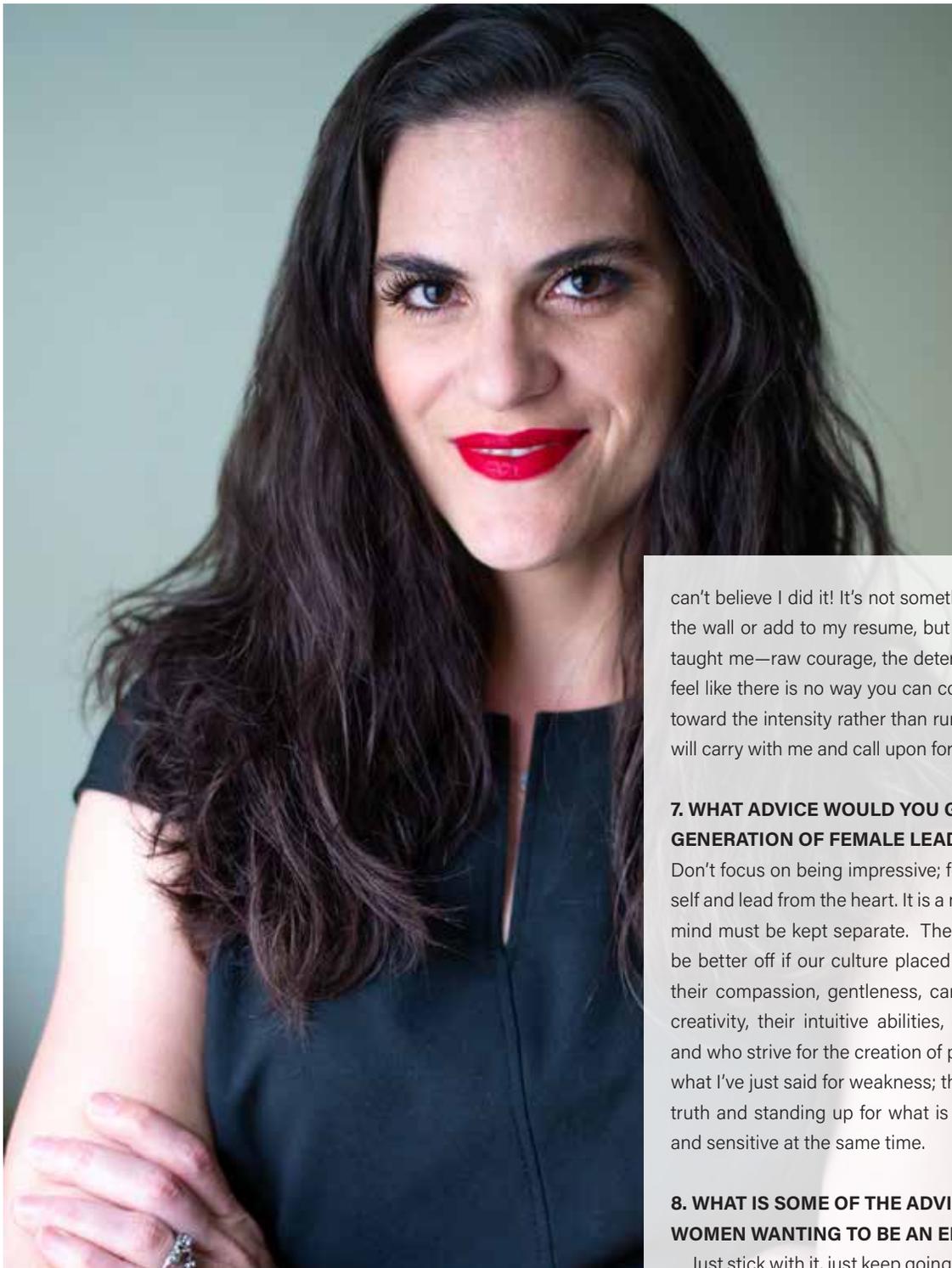
My grandmother—she raised and provided for 5 children, largely by herself. Her husband came back from World War II a different person, she made ends meet by sewing dresses and hosting garage sales, and through all the hardships she faced in her life, she never lost her sense of humor. She serves as an example of resiliency, frugality and lightheartedness in the face of adversity.

## 5. HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE YOURSELF AND STAY MOTIVATED?

The opportunity to tip the scales of justice enough to influence a result for good—that's what motivates me every day. I'm a transactional attorney, so it may be in ways that aren't easily visible, but I am in a unique position to help create a more fair outcome in the business world. So much in this life can arbitrarily favor one person's interests over another's, and if I can even the scales for my client a little more than they would have been, I feel like I've done my part to make the world a better place. Outside the walls of the courthouse lawyers like me can look to Themis—the Greek goddess of justice, the “lady of good counsel”—and be reminded to focus on fairness, truth and standing up for what is right.

## 6. WHAT'S AN ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU ARE PROUDEST OF?

Acknowledging that all mothers are wondrous, no matter how they give birth to their babies, giving birth without the use of any medication is my proudest accomplishment. I still



can't believe I did it! It's not something that I can frame and hang on the wall or add to my resume, but the silent lessons that experience taught me—raw courage, the determination to go on even when you feel like there is no way you can continue, the deep wisdom to move toward the intensity rather than running away from it—are gifts that I will carry with me and call upon for the rest of my life.

**7. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMALE LEADERS?**

Don't focus on being impressive; focus on leading bravely. Be yourself and lead from the heart. It is a misconception that your heart and mind must be kept separate. The world and all of its people would be better off if our culture placed more value on leaders who offer their compassion, gentleness, careful consideration before acting, creativity, their intuitive abilities, empathy and conscientiousness, and who strive for the creation of peace and justice. Do not mistake what I've just said for weakness; there is a fierceness in voicing your truth and standing up for what is right, and you can be both fierce and sensitive at the same time.

**8. WHAT IS SOME OF THE ADVICE YOU SHARE WITH YOUNG WOMEN WANTING TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR?**

Just stick with it, just keep going. The longer you are in it, the more lessons you learn, the more confidence you'll gain, and the easier it will get. That's when you can really make a difference in the world, but you can't get there without going through the trials and tribulations of being a novice.

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