



# Monday Monday

*Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz*



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,  
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

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## The Importance of Building Communities

The isolation created this year by the pandemic provides a stark reminder of the importance of the communities which normally sustain us. We have seen amazing adaptation to enable safe communication and collaboration. Zoom and other video platforms are ubiquitous. We have proven that just about everything can be delivered virtually. We are doing remarkable work to replicate the functions within existing groups. But what does it take to create new communities, groups, and networks? Will technology and social media be viewed as a replacement for building communities and relationships over time? Can trust and mutuality be created remotely using technology or will these valued elements be lost or harder to create?

I have been reflecting on these questions this month in preparation for the [20th anniversary](#) of the Legal Momentum Aiming High Awards on October 6.

In 2001, I had the privilege of creating the Aiming High Awards to help [Legal Momentum](#), the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund, build relationships with powerful women business leaders. I have organized the event now for 20 years as my primary pro bono work each year.

The strategy was a simple one, to replicate among emerging successful women business leaders the same kind of give and take to support Legal Momentum that was engrained in the old boys' network. Since 2001, Legal Momentum has honored [over 100](#) business leaders, women and more recently men, whose support has helped sustain Legal Momentum's mission of protecting the economic and physical security of women and girls.

The inaugural year of the Aiming High Awards marked Legal Momentum's 30th anniversary and we initiated the awards with a grand celebration that honored 25 extraordinary women business leaders. Many of the leaders we have honored became ongoing supporters. Several joined the board of directors. Eileen Simon, Mastercard's General Auditor, is the current Chair of the Legal Momentum Board. Carol Moody, an honoree when she was Chief Risk Officer of Wilmington Trust, is now Legal Momentum's CEO and President. Many more became mentors, helping us to create an enduring network of support in the business community. For 20 years, I have been coached by some of the most successful business leaders on how to attract the best honorees and how to help them access their companies and their networks of law firms and business partners for financial support to sustain Legal Momentum. Imagine having senior executives at major companies like Citi, Wells Fargo, Barclays Global Investors and Ally Bank as guides to make introductions to new honorees and to navigate fundraising hurdles. Most importantly, our honorees have supported one another.

This year, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Aiming High Awards, a group of our former honorees on their own launched an initiative to rally other past honorees to step up to make a statement about the continued importance of Legal Momentum's work and their continued support. This year we are honoring two outstanding individuals, Tonia Calaway, EVP, Chief Legal Officer and Secretary of BorgWarner, and Christine DeBiase, EVP, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel of Brighthouse Financial. In addition, we are honoring Citi with our first Corporate Champion Award for having built a culture of inclusion which created a rich pipeline of women business leaders. In the last 20 years, Legal Momentum has honored seven senior leaders from Citi, the most from any one company, including Jane Fraser who, this week, was named Citi's next CEO, the first woman to lead a major US bank.

As we continue to face the limitations and restrictions of the current global pandemic, this year's program must be conducted virtually. Fortunately, we have the technology to deliver this program to every firm, company, organization and committed individual. So, the ultimate success of this event is in your hands — those of you willing to make a commitment to attend and further support the vital work of Legal Momentum in protecting the rights of vulnerable women and girls. If you in any way share my interest in such a critically important cause, I ask that you please share this information about the Aiming High Awards with friends, family and colleagues who you think might take an interest in supporting Legal Momentum's work. Here is a [link](#) to attend the program as well as an opportunity to contribute.

Thanks for your support!