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I am Clarissa and I currently serve as the National Finance Manager for New Zealand.

A defining moment that changed how I lead was becoming a parent. Parenthood gave me a new lens, one grounded in empathy. I now better understand that people bring their whole selves to work, and that supporting them through different life stages is a strength.

As a middle-aged Asian woman in a leadership role and as a working mother, I am continuously navigating and breaking barriers. Balancing leadership expectations, family commitments, and personal standards is not always easy, but it is something I approach intentionally. In 2024, I was nominated and selected as a Top 3 finalist for the New Zealand Emerging Finance Leader award, which was a significant honour and a powerful moment of representation. At the same time, the experience surfaced imposter syndrome, urging me to question whether I truly belonged in that space. While I did not win, being part of the process was deeply affirming and reminded me that growth often comes with discomfort, and that showing up despite self-doubt is a leadership skill in itself.

To me, giving in leadership starts with trust. I genuinely believe that no one wakes up intending to do a bad job sometimes people simply need clarity, support, or confidence. I trust my team, create safe spaces to learn, advocate for them, and give opportunities to grow. I have grown within Programmed Facility Management, and I want my team to experience that same sense of development and belief.

One action I'm giving in 2026 to help others gain is sharing my knowledge and creating more opportunities for people to step up.