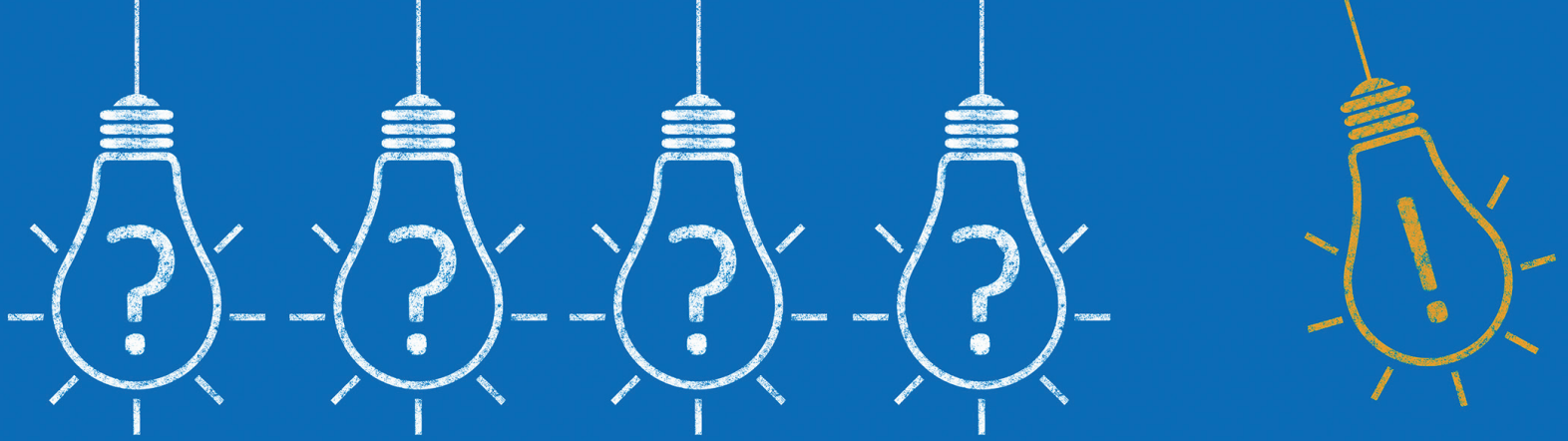




# If I Knew **Then** What I Know **Now**

**Retina Today** asked three women in retina a question:

What do you know now that you wish you knew when you started as a young woman in retina?



choice. You get to choose if and when you jump in!

When I started in retina, I was excited to see patients, perform surgery, and use the skills newly learned in fellowship training. Although that still remains at the core of what I do every work day, here is what I know now: Retina fellowship training opens the door to so many other fun, interesting, even exciting ventures, such as writing, teaching, mentoring, reviewing papers for journals, serving on editorial boards, conducting research, speaking, consulting, inventing, joining societies, being involved in organized medicine, doing mission work, being an entrepreneur—the list is endless. And the beauty of it is

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There are three major things I wish I knew about when I first started in retina:

1. Challenges for working mothers change over time. Many women struggle to juggle work and babies. Power through the early years because some challenges (such as sleep deprivation with infants) resolve.
2. Bias against women is often real. Many publications describe the likeability penalty, housework burden, implicit/explicit bias, and #MeToo concerns that inhibit men from including women in work and social events. It's a challenge picking your battles and deciding when to point out these dynamics.
3. Choose a significant other who treats your career as equal to his or hers. For single women, nourish relationships with friends, family, and colleagues to prevent isolation and burnout.



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There are a few items that come to mind:

- Set yourself up for success by outsourcing as much housework as possible. Use your time for the things that are truly important to you.
- Be aware of the double standard that women face. Learn to recognize it so that you can address it in a positive manner, without naïveté.
- Say yes to opportunities that come your way, which could include being part of a research team, clinical trial, or advisory board; serving on a committee; or working to perfect a new surgical technique.
- That being said, take time to focus your efforts on things you care about. Don't be afraid to ask for opportunities—and for credit for your accomplishments. Know your worth.
- Finally, raise the women around you every chance you get.

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