

S01 - E53 - Rooted & Unwavering – Feb 7 - Hylke Faber & Sabina Nawaz

Presenter 00:07

Music. Welcome to rooted and unwavering, a podcast and radio show which features leaders from all walks of life in conversations about courageous connectedness. How do we stay connected to our best selves, especially when we are challenged, what becomes possible when we truly stay committed to our own and others greatness, also when we don't feel it. Join host Hylke fauber, transformational coach, facilitator and award winning author of taming your crocodiles and his guests as they explore leadership greatness in today's episode of rooted and unwavering.

Hylke Faber 00:47

Welcome to rooted and unwavering connecting live today from Vancouver, Canada and the Netherlands, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host, hylka Faber, and this is episode 53 and I'm here today with Sabina Nawaz, global CEO coach and author of the upcoming book. You are the boss, Sabina, how are you today? I'm

Sabina Nawaz 01:16

doing fantastic. Thank you, Hylke,

Hylke Faber 01:19

okay, great to see you, and I'm glad that you are here. I feel truly blessed to be with Sabina here today. It was a path of coincidence that led us to be here, and one that I would consider very fortuitous about that. More in a second, I will first tell you a little bit more about this podcast, as we do at the beginning of all episodes that we've had. This is number 53 so we've been doing it for a little while. This is a podcast that honors these ideas of being rooted and unwavering. Now, what does that mean? Like think about how we are as human beings and as leaders, and how our mind has a tendency to run to all kinds of places that we may not always find useful, that are not always compassionate, that are not always empathetic, and that aren't always effective. And how do we find our way back so that after we've had lived and have lived through these moments, we can look back and saying, Yeah, this gave me peace in my heart and pride in my actions. Maybe being rooted means I feel taller on the inside. And this is not something that we may experience all the time. It's aspirational, and it's something that we choose. And this is what this podcast is for, to help to galvanize and motivate this choice and this commitment by hearing stories from leaders from literally all walks of life, to learn about what it means to connect to what is most important. So I'm here today with Sabina Nawaz, who is a global CEO coach, amongst many other amazing things, a leadership keynote speaker and writer working in over 26 countries. Actually, I met her on one of her travels in a hotel in Hyderabad, India, as we were both working for a client there, she advises C level executives in Fortune, 500 corporations, government



agencies, nonprofits and academic organizations. She has spoken at literally hundreds of seminars, events and conferences, including at TEDx, and has written for Fast Company inc.com, forbes.com and addition to hbr.org, and other leading publications, and her upcoming book is called You're the boss. Become the manager you want to be and others need. She's been described by previous bosses as a boss with brass knuckle in velvet gloves. He's also been a bad boss in the past, at least for a moment, and then she learned, and she talks very eloquently in this new book called You're the boss. Become the manager you want to be and others need. One of my favorite sentences that I read was we learned to navigate the combined forces of greater pressure and power, or else pressure will corrupt our actions and power will blind us to the impact of those actions. I can personally attest to having been with Sabina that even though she currently also is in a place of power, she brings to it a lot of humanity and humor and openness. And don't be make confused that with not being super competent and razor sharp in it, which is one of the things that I love about Sabina. If you're watching you see Sabina against a library of book. Us to me, she is a deep wisdom carrier and and coach for for many so welcome, Sabina, it's an honor to have you here today. And so I'd like to ask you, what have you learned in your life and leadership about connectedness?

Sabina Nawaz 05:20

Wow. Thank you, Hylke, for your kind words. There's so much I've learned, and I really appreciate the connectedness we we found were just when we met in an elevator in a hotel in Hyderabad, no less, and that you've carried that thread forward with this level of care. So that's the first thing is, care. Do we care about connecting with others? Now, when I think about life and connectedness in life, I start with myself first and the there's two elements, the physical element and the emotional element that make up connectedness. I have learned from a great coach, Val Her name is Valerie Galvin, who to ask you to find in your body where there is ease. And the first time she asked me that question, I was surprised, because I was I'm used to answering the question, where are you stressed? And of course, most of us, it's our neck and shoulders. And I thought, ease. What does that mean? Then I went, Well, maybe my right kneecap, and the minute I started focusing on ease, the more my body connected with that ease. And soon the rest of my body started to ease up and lighten up. So connection physically is finding that spot of ease. Connection emotionally is checking in and seeing how you're feeling. Many of us are not comfortable with our emotions. We we tend to we tend to put grief on a timeline. We tend to dismiss anger. We tend to reassure fear, and as Brene Brown says, we tend to have foreboding joy. So whatever that emotion, can you check in with yourself? Do I and I check in with myself, going, how am I feeling right now? And I wonder why? What's causing that? So that's connectedness to me personally in leadership, I think those are actually great tactics. But another thing in leadership is about connecting with other people, and that connecting with other people, for me, boils down to one phrase, do more and do less and sense more, because there's so much pressure in positions of leadership that we're doing, doing, doing, doing, and we miss things right in front of us. So much of the task of leadership is being and noticing. Read the room. What are the cues? How are people responding in unspoken language to what you're saying? What is the impact you're having on them. The number one piece of feedback I've gotten through 1000s of interviews on how people think actually, what people actually think about their bosses, is that their bosses have a hard impact on them. If you just stop to do a little



bit less, you would start to sense a little bit more of what that impact is. Because even though that's the number one piece of feedback, just about every boss I deliver that feedback to is surprised.

Hylke Faber 08:29

I'm so struck by you saying this, this piece of feedback of do less and sense more, and how this hardness, not heartedness, but hardness, is the feedback that one gives to their boss, or experiences from their boss. And I read in your excellent book, got a preview, and thank you for that. Of you're the boss that you've had your own experiences. Maybe I'd love for you to talk about those and one anecdote that stood out for me as I was reading your book is that you came back from maternity leave and you were promoted, and suddenly you're in charge of a meeting with Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer. Think it was about succession planning or something, and you were in this place of power, and suddenly start to be like the Devil Wears Prada towards your employees. So tell us about your own journey, and how did you have those learnings? Were those things that just came to you naturally, or things that take a while? How did you go about that? Yeah,

Sabina Nawaz 09:37

yeah. I think there are few things to unpack there, and it's really three things that this book is about, and they all come together in this story that I opened the book with. One, that being promoted is the most dangerous time in your career. Two, that it's not power but pressure that corrupts you act. Actions. And three, the higher you go, the less you know about your impact on others. Because power has the has the property of occluding your site, your senses, because no one's going to tell you the truth. When I came back from parental leave after my first child was born the day I was about to go into work. I hadn't even left home yet, my assistant calls me, going, where are you? There's a meeting with Steve in 30 minutes. I didn't know anything about the meeting. Other than that, it was with the CEO of Microsoft, and I had my assistant pull up the memo I was supposed to read on my way to work, and that set the tone for the intensity that met me in this job as I was leading succession planning executive development for the company, fast paced, flooded inbox, lots of meetings, requests coming at me from the highest levels of the company, no peace, no sleep at home, and therefore for me, no patience. So I started becoming short and snippy, short, as in, I'm already five foot three, which most would consider short, but also short tempered. Often when people would come to my office. I would do this. Yes. Talk about complete lack of connection, queuing. I'm a really busy person. You're bothering me. Get on with it. Tell me what it is. Let me move back to my to whatever I'm doing. For

Hylke Faber 11:38

those that are just listening, Sabina was just demonstrating being the executive, being on the computer, on the keyboard, with her head turned sideways towards the person, also coming into the office Exactly, exactly

Sabina Nawaz 11:52

and and because I was working under such High pressure and with in in a very visible way across the company. I was worried that things would not look good if we didn't manage every single detail, so I



started to micromanage, and I started to bark out orders, because I was always running short on time. I didn't take the time to explain things. I didn't take the time to empathize. I figured they're adults. They'll figure it out. There'll be time for all of that later, which, of course, there never was. Now, remember that I came into this job having received feedback from a large swath of people I worked with that I was the best boss ever because I deeply cared about people, but all that caring went out the window when the pressure got up. And the worst part of this Hylke, speaking of connectedness, is I had absolutely no idea about the impact I was having on people until my colleague, Joe came into my office, and here I was with my body turned sideways, typing on the keyboard again, going, Yes, Joe and Joe goes, I have some feedback. Do you have any idea that this person is crying in their office after a meeting with you that got my attention? It was like a gut punch. How had I become this uncaring, unconnected boss that, you know, most people go, Oh, yeah, I've worked for that boss when I was a caring, empathetic person.

Hylke Faber 13:38

Wow, that's and it's such a journey. So I'm curious what went through your mind when Joe delivered that feedback, because my sense where it was, you're in a total disconnected state, and many in your shoes would be like brushing it off. I know that I have in the past when I got that kind of feedback. Well,

Sabina Nawaz 14:00

I think if Joe had just given me feedback, hey, you you kind of don't have an idea how you're coming across, or you have your your power is creating this big gap between you and other people. If he had spoken about it more abstractly, more theoretically, I probably would have gone right back to my keyboard. But the fact that Joe said somebody actually was crying right then in their office, was the gut punch that got my attention.

Hylke Faber 14:29

And then what happened within you,

Sabina Nawaz 14:34

shame, despair and an engineering resolve, since my roots are in engineering, which was, how can the same person be best boss, worst boss? Let's reverse engineer what happened here,

Hylke Faber 14:57

and of a combination. It's game despair and engineering mind. Let's figure this out. I love that, so I'd like to rewind a little bit to get to this moment, right. So because I think that path that you took to get to that seat is important so that our listeners can also see themselves in that maybe right. So tell us a little bit about how did you first become the best boss, and then you talked about the pressure. How did you then undo being the worst boss,

Sabina Nawaz 15:42

best boss. And let's caveat, best boss, not for every single person, but a lot of people appreciated what I was doing. And when I asked them, they said, At the root of it was that I cared. I don't know that I



became a caring person. I'm not sure I could explain that to you. Hylke, my guess is that that started very early in life, where I naturally gravitated toward people and caring. I grew up in a household where we lived with both my grandmothers. One of them had fallen and broken her thigh, her femur, and was bedridden for years, so caring was also part of our growing up and part of our culture. So I think there was some something like that. Whenever I met with people, whenever I met the people I managed, I would ask them, What were their career aspirations? What do they want to do? How could I support them toward that? And then I would support them, including if they said that I so I ran when I managed the most number of people. I was running a test organization software testing. And software testing was considered a little bit inferior to programming so many of the people, not surprisingly, who joined my team, used it as a gateway to become programmers, and I was totally fine with that, as long as they weren't using it as a five minute gateway. Give me a year, two years of your work, and then I will help you. So people would be surprised actually, when I said I'm going to help you get to whatever you're getting to, even if it's outside of my organization. And they saw that in the kind of feedback I would give them, in the opportunities that would come up, and I would think about them and so on. So I think it was deeply caring about what that other person wants and supporting them, even if sometimes that would go against my very sort of short term focus of what success looked like for me personally,

Hylke Faber 17:49

got it so that I'm struck by your grandmothers, and then just having that caring translate. It's very clear to me how you how you how to became part of you, and then I get a sense of what happens. You said, pressure corrupts, not power. It's the pressure that corrupts. So you were under that pressure. Now, after Joe had spoken, it wasn't like Sabina and pressure just wasn't there. That still was there. So what did you

Sabina Nawaz 18:21

do? I wish. I wish we could have just went gone this way. I think first of all, I started to, I just had to pause. No, it's back to that. Do less sense more. So even though every bone in my body is screaming, no time, no time, no time, I'm thinking, Sabina, you gotta slow the hell down. Just slow down and notice so what caused this person to cry? What was I doing? They had given me a straightforward thing that I assumed was a straightforward thing, but it wasn't. I needed to read between the lines. I needed to understand what they really meant, because they were way different from me, from a power position, from a hierarchical position. So they're not going to tell me the whole truth, and I'm going to have to add things to it to understand what they really mean. See, power works in two dimensions. When we are in a position of power, everything we say is getting amplified. So if I'm saying something at a level one, they are hearing it at a level 20, and everything upward gets muted. So they mean something at a level 20, but they're using words and cushioning it and adding positives and praise and whatever to get it to a one. Now combine that with pressure, it becomes a really toxic combination. Because I'm under pressure, I'm taking that person literally. I am not stopping to sense what else might be going on. Mm.

Hylke Faber 20:01



Hmm. So the implication that I hear, and that is, as a leader, you need to extra, do your best and put your attention on listening, because you are guaranteed not to be hearing the whole truth. Yes,

Sabina Nawaz 20:17

and listening, not just literally, but sensing, seeing what else might be going on, getting a provost at a university that I work with said something around triangulating. That is He meant when you hear something, go ask three other people so you can, you can concatenate those data pieces to see what other dimensionality can I give this?

Hylke Faber 20:47

Yes, yes, yes. So that gives a lovely, like definition on how sensing can work. The triangulation as an example. So where Sabina. You're Sabina now, quite a few years later than that occurrence, and you stayed connected to that question. It sounds like of power, and how do I take power, or how do I work with power in a responsible way, in a skillful way? So tell us about how did you stay interested in that question? Because that was then. And yet, what I hear, I hear so much depth in your discourse about it.

Sabina Nawaz 21:32

Well, Hylke, I was fortunate enough at Microsoft at that then point in time, which is slightly more than 20 years, 22 years, something like that ago, to be working with Steve Ballmer, Bill Gates, all the corporate vice presidents. I was an executive myself, and so I was surrounded by people in positions of power. When I left Microsoft 20 years ago, I started coaching senior executives. I coach CEOs as my day job every day, and so I am constantly in the presence of and in connection with people in positions of power.

Hylke Faber 22:19

Totally makes sense. So then you said sensing is such an important part, right? So, and triangulation is a bit of an engineering word. What other ways do you help yourself and others to sense? Because I think it's such an important skill

Sabina Nawaz 22:42

to connect Yes, it's both sense and help the people around them sense the person and position of power as well

22:50

say more

Sabina Nawaz 22:52

because, because people who are have their next craning up to you, are making up stories about you, and usually the stories are, oh, they don't like me. They don't like this thing that's going to happen now I'm going to get a doc in my pay cut. Maybe I should not cancel that vacation, because we won't be able to afford it anymore, right? All those stories of disaster that we're creating. So first thing in terms of



your obligation as a manager, as an executive, is to make sure that the stories that are going to be told about you are not harmful to other people or to their productivity. And so I often tell people, before going into a meeting, rearrange your face. So much of what we convey is non verbally, and there's debate about what percentage that is, but we know it's a significant percentage. And often the CEOs I coach have what I call CEO face. And those of you who are just listening may not be able to see this, but it's, it's looks something like this, absolutely. No affect, yes. And when there is no affect, people are going, Oh, do they hate it? They must hate it. What are they thinking? They're going to trap me with a big question, and so on and so forth. Now, I understand why CEOs have CEO face, because it's sort of a darned if you do And darned if you don't. If they do too much, then that's also going to get amplified. Oh, they love this. We're going to go do everything, and we're going to get 100 new headcount to go do it. So you do have to be metered, but be intentional about what is the face you're projecting. So that's from that direction down. Hylke, your question was slightly different, which was

Hylke Faber 24:43

sensing it up and yet. Let's stay with this for a second, and we'll go back to the original questions. Lovely. So you're saying this, there's a CEO face, and I couldn't help but thinking of middle age British sovereigns or something like that. Whereas you. It like you have no idea what's going on. They're always neutral and unassailable. Talk about the intentionality of facial expressions, not only for CEOs, for all people in leadership and humans in general, because we have an impact on each other. How do you work with that without being fake? Because that's also something that could not work. What

Sabina Nawaz 25:24

a beautiful question. What a beautiful question. There's a distinction between fake, unconscious and intentional. I think most of us go forward with an unconscious face most of the time. If you look very closely, I have a rather deep furrow line next to my left eyebrow, because my unconscious face is often really severe. I frown, and I walk into a room and people go, Oh, my God, she's really upset, and it's nothing close to the reality I just was untended in my facial expression. So it's setting an intention. I found it beautiful right before we started recording Hylke That you said, Let's spend a couple moments in silence. Let's think about our intention. Let's get rooted in that so that we're unwavering with whatever else comes at us, and that setting that intention and making sure that your body language is in fidelity with that intention, here's another problem. People who are really wired to please other people more than necessary, they will sometimes deliver tough feedback with a big smile on their face, and the person receiving it is completely confused. They have no idea if they're on the verge of being fired or if this is just a little tiny adjustment that they need to make.

Hylke Faber 26:58

So do you do you suggest that people set an intention and then, like smile or be look serious. Or is it like, do you? Are you? Are you suggesting that we consciously change how we use our facial muscles? Or do you suggest, or maybe it's a both to be clear about our intentions of what we want to project and share, and then trust that our face will find its way there. I think



Sabina Nawaz 27:30

it's a combination of both for some people, trusting that their face will find it there when they haven't done it often it's not going to happen so so so noticing what are your default patterns with your facial expressions, and how is that conveying or taking away from the impact of the message you want to have

Hylke Faber 27:52

that's beautiful and and I, for me, quite revolutionary to hear. I think it's quite because I, I love that it's a both, and I can see the and it's almost like the how you dress for a meeting, like your face and your facial expressions becomes an act of care for your surroundings and the impact that you have. Absolutely it's very beautiful. So we're almost at break. Last question before the break, Sabina, is you are a, from what I can tell, very busy. Are full schedule. Kind of writer, coach, keynote speaker, mother, etc. Fill in the blanks. You got many other roles in your life. How do you stay centered.

Sabina Nawaz 28:45

I don't think I'm busier or have a fuller life than anyone else. I think we all do. One of the ways to taste stay centered is to not use the term I'm busy, because I think we love to hide behind busy what? What is that? And it's sort of a badge of honor in many of our cultures that we live in. So staying centered for me involves ritual. There are a couple of specific rituals that I follow almost 365 days of the year. I can count on one hand when I don't the first thing is it probably takes me five seconds when I wake up in the morning. I wake up and I have a smile on my face, and I go, I'm so grateful I'm alive, because everything else from there is chump change. I'm alive. It sounds cliched, but it works for me. Yeah. Then I engage in what I call the power of the shower, which is a small gratitude practice. Now, when our lives are full, how many things are we going to add on top of it? Oh, I'm going to have a gratitude practice. Then I'm going to meditate, then I'm going to work out, and I've got to eat healthy enough that's not going to happen, practically speaking, but in the shower, there's not much else I'm doing with my brain. So I take a moment in the shower and just connect with who or what am I grateful to that day? If I've just gone for a 12 mile run, I might be grateful to my legs for having held me up that day, or I might be grateful to a friend who reached out the day before, but whatever that is, I just step out of the shower ready to face my day with my cup filled with gratitude.

Hylke Faber 30:59

Very clear. I love the pragmatism of it. I also love the the being very conscious of how we hold our experience as a full experience or busy is a thought, and then how you make it super accessible, and saying no, the first thing I wake up in the morning with is a smile, practicing what you just taught us, and I'm grateful to be alive. That is a huge feat. Yes, there's, there's a finite number of days that we can say that. So we can be grateful for that, and then using your the power of the shower beautiful to to practice gratitude. What am I grateful for? These are beautiful practices. I think our listeners, and certainly I as a listener, are enjoying that we're going to take a short break. After the break, we're going to continue our conversation with Sabina Nawaz, a global CEO coach and writer of this forthcoming book, very, very soon to be launched, you can already pre order it many different places called You're the boss.



Become the boss you always want to be, and you ever you aspire to be, and others need you to be. I think I see that right. And after the break, we're going to explore more. How do we as a as a boss, go on this journey of evolving as a boss? Because being a boss is not a destination, it's a journey in and of itself. See you after the break, thank you.

Speaker 1 32:39

You are listening to rooted and unwavering presented by growth Leaders Network, the leadership team and culture development company. If you would like to learn more about working on connectedness for yourself, your team or organization, please contact growth leaders network on LinkedIn, and now back to the show.

Hylke Faber 33:05

So welcome back to rooted and unwavering. I'm here with Sabina Nawaz, global CEO coach and writer of the upcoming book. You are the boss and I'm your host, hylkel Fauci. So the question sabinas In my mind, what is this journey of a boss that truly takes on these principles that you're talking about? What does it look like to stay connected? What does it look like?

Sabina Nawaz 33:35

I think to stay connected, you first have to understand where you're disconnected and that disconnected creeps up on you, just like it did with me. We don't look we don't change who we are fundamentally the minute we get promoted, whether it's promoted from individual contributor to manager or from manager to more senior manager, or senior manager to even more senior or an executive, we don't fundamentally change, but our circumstances have changed significantly, and it's a moment to recognize, How do things look like from the other side? That's where that's why I say that being promoted is one of the most dangerous times in your career, because the very thing I'm doing well is now going to be seen less charitably by other people. For example, let's say that I get the sense that you're very calm. Hylke, am I? Am I? Am I correct in that? In general, ask

Hylke Faber 34:39

your husband, my husband would say, yes, and he has his moments.

Sabina Nawaz 34:44

Right by and large, if you're calm as you're getting promoted up the chain, someone might then say, Hmm, where's his passion? Does he care enough? Is he is he aloof? Yeah, so disinterested. It could. It could show up that way. Let's say somebody is your classic detail oriented, they'll show up as a micromanager, even if they're not micromanaging. Yes, yes, yes.

Hylke Faber 35:18

And so and you're in, how would you typecast yourself and and this, what's the shadow that you were working through?



Sabina Nawaz 35:28

I think one of mine is there are many. One of mine is moving super fast, and that will show up as impatient, snippy. Doesn't take the time to pause and set the context. So could leave a break of confusion if I'm not mindful,

Hylke Faber 35:51

very clear. So then once you recognize that, and I can see the aloofness and this interestedness of the personality that I have. So what do you do with that?

Sabina Nawaz 36:08

Recognition is half the problem, of course. So recognizing that makes you think, okay, if this is the particular situation, and my intention is to land as connected, not aloof, then what are some things that are going to work for me? Because it's not a one size fits all all the time. One of the things I talk about in the book is called our unmet hungers. There might be a reason we're showing up that way. So if somebody is showing up super fast, maybe they their unmet hunger, their inner need, is to be seen as very competent, very smart, maybe even smarter than everyone else around,

36:46

no, right?

Sabina Nawaz 36:50

And it's a very human hunger. It's a very human need. All these hungers are need to be praised a lot, or need to be seen as the hero, the martyr, whatever it might be, or need to play small so I don't get attacked. These could be many different hungers. And just like when you go to the grocery store hungry, you buy junk food, when you go to work hungry, you engage in junk behaviors. How might you feed some of those needs? My Need for Speed outside of work, so you don't bring that inside to work. In my case, I run, I'm training for a marathon. That helps me get some of that speed stuff in a healthy way out of my system. And I can come in and be more rooted, be more grounded, take the time to sense what's going on. So depending on your unmet hunger, there are different antidotes. I call it the hunger tracker. So it's it's literally a table with these kinds of hungers. Here's how you would know you might be in this kind of hunger. Here are some things you might want to try out. In many of those cases, I'll go back to what I said before, at the very beginning, of doing less and sensing more. A specific tool that we discuss is called the Shut up muscle, which is about actually consciously finding ways to shut up, especially when you're in positions of power. For example, one meeting a day, can you be at least the third person to speak, not the first? Can you take notes in the margin of your brilliant ideas that you're afraid will get lost if you don't interrupt someone, take notes. Only share them if someone else hasn't already brought them up.

Hylke Faber 38:51

The table. I'm I have it in a laugh inside of I was like, Oh, this is so beautiful. The engineer Sabina, has created a table to figure out how to work with the hunger the ghosts or the not the ghost, the hungry



parts, the hunger parts of us. And I think that's beautiful. So Sabina, you've, you've been writing about this. You think about this, you practice this. What do you find yourself most challenging in being an influencer, kind of an informal boss to many, what do you find most challenging?

Sabina Nawaz 39:34

Where do I begin? Hylke, one of them is in my personal life, is when I leave step outside the door of my office and see my family to be able to consistently practice what I'm speaking is a huge challenge. I remember many years ago, an author who had written a book on parenting was talking and. And at Seattle Town Hall, where I will be speaking very soon on March 6. So if you're in Seattle, show up there. So she was, she was talking about this wonderful book she's written about parenting and how to be an awesome parent. And one day, her teenage daughter and her were having an argument. She went into her teenage daughter's room, and what was the daughter doing? She was highlighting things from the book that her mother had written. So I have the same challenge. Often I will deviate completely from the advice that I have written about, and I am sure, as the book comes out and my kids actually read it. They might be highlighting passages from it as well. So so this is a an ongoing practice, and we have to have some space for grace, for our humanity. There is no such thing as a purely good person or a purely bad person. We have both of those in us, and the more we can recognize that, the less we are ashamed of it and more in a learner mindset of, okay, yep, I screwed up. What can I do now tomorrow?

Hylke Faber 41:14

Yes, yes. How do you work with that yourself and the people with the people that you coach, because you could say that many of the moments that when you're on stage speaking, and let's say, you say something, you do something that is not in alignment with what you just wrote, or you're you have a Client, and often C level executives are in the spotlight. Are very visible a lot, so them doing a not so great thing then becomes a whole thing. And how do you how do you extend yourself that grace when the pressure around you is is higher than when you just have that experience by yourself?

Sabina Nawaz 42:00

Yes, and so I'll start with my clients. And that's the beauty of working with an executive coach, as you know, hylka, is we can extend some of that grace to them, and I'm not doing that to pander to them, believe me, I give them a lot of tough feedback, but it's more about putting it in perspective. Ah, you think you screwed up, and you did, and on a scale of one to 10, what you've done and what say the media is writing about you is a two compared to what it could have been. Now, if it's a 10, we'll have to have a different conversation. But in some ways, normalizing that behavior this is going to happen. You cannot play big without also screwing up. Sometimes it's not going to happen. Or even if you said it all perfectly, people are going to interpret different things and make up make up stories about it, and you cannot control it all, just like when my book lands in your lap. You're going to review it, judge it, use it or not, in your way. I've done whatever I had to do as I wrote those 70,000 words, then it's out of my hands.



Hylke Faber 43:16

I hear an attitude of openness, of self acceptance in it, also of not being not being perfect, and not being okay. And then also, I hear the willingness to to to keep learning and and in indirectly, I'm hearing to be able to stand by yourself, because I think that is one of the things that what I can tell is one of the core challenges of people becoming disconnected is that they abandon themselves, and that's what I see you not do. Yes,

Sabina Nawaz 43:51

yes, wonderful, wonderful. And when you find that you're not able to stand by yourself, find someone who'll stand with you until you can,

Hylke Faber 44:00

until you can, that's beautiful. That's beautiful. So how do you do that?

Sabina Nawaz 44:11

I do try to put it in perspective often. Where else did I screw up? What happened? I do beat myself up. I'm obviously but I then I'm fortunate to have a fantastic partner at home, and he will, he will support me. He will also tell me the truth. So Will my kids. They don't spare any words, but they're also there to hold me. I have great colleagues and friends who I can run things by, people who are in my line of work, I go, Hey, hylka, this happened. What do you think? How bad is this? And and you'll give I will trust you to give me your honest assessment. And that honest assessment is often a lot less sense censuring than. Own assessment, yes, yes, I don't think I have ever faced a situation where somebody has criticized me stronger than I've criticized myself, people who know me who I trust for their opinion. Yes,

Hylke Faber 45:13

I think that's an important distinction, right? Because the media or whoever can do exactly a job, but and the the choosing, the the circle of trust and like I will I can relate to that the people that will stand with you and that you stand with, yes, that is is so important. And to I think, for the listener, important to emphasize and re emphasize, also for myself, is that we are definitely our own bad worst critic often, and we have to live with that critic. So then finding some time, I find it very disarming that you're saying, even when you don't know how to stand for yourself, find somebody to stand with you. Yeah. So how do you in the context of this, help yourself and CEOs face those really tough decisions, right? Because in when difficult decisions have to be made, like layoffs or restructuring, or in your own life, not working with somebody, or ending a relationship, or whatever it is. Those, those really hard moments, I call them black belt moments, those things that require a lot of skill. How do you help bosses in that, like where boss is high pressure, boss in conflict, our boss in re org, our boss in layoff, or Boston, whatever those kind of is even higher pressure. How do you help people with that? Well, we've certainly

Sabina Nawaz 46:55



seen so many high pressure, high stakes scenarios over the last unfold over the last five years, starting with COVID. It's it's about helping them stay I love your title of rooted and unwavering. So yes, this is going to be hard, and let's figure out strategically, what is the effect you want this to have? So for example, if it's a layoff, not just on the people who are being laid off, but the people who remain behind, who are not being laid off. So I have helped them broaden the landscape that they're viewing, because the impact is not just isolated, it spreads. Anything you do in a leadership position goes viral. So how do you ensure that that virality is in line with what you're intending, that you're even aware that that's what's going to happen? So that's one piece of it. The other is to play it out beyond the immediate. We often take a 12 month view in a year from now, what will you regret more in a year from now? What would this look like? Worst case, best case, when in high pressure, when under the gun, to make really tough decisions, we tend to hunker down and home in in the immediate time frame, but really those decisions are going to have a much more longer lasting impact. So expand your horizontal view to look beyond the immediate people and situation, and expand your your future view around timeline.

Hylke Faber 48:48

I've heard that described as the practice of softening your gaze. Mm, yes. So you're you're getting more, you're sensing, in a way, does this. I will probably call this podcast, the sense. Being the sensing leader. You're the boss. You better sense what's going on, right? So this, this sense of, okay, the mind will occlude our vision to use your word in those high pressure moments, yeah, and our, our, our job as a leader is to be able to to take it in, to take the see the broader view, the bigger impact, yeah, and also take the longer view. So it's the broader and the longer view, the horizontal, and the longer view that you're that you're suggesting, that creates actually a sense of peace and energy and focus and wisdom for the person that's in the middle of it. Absolutely,

Sabina Nawaz 49:44

yeah, I'm gonna borrow that phrase, Hylke, softening your gaze. It's such a beautiful term.

Hylke Faber 49:53

Watch the movie The beggar the legend of beggar Vance. That's where it comes from. The Legend of beggar Vance. So that's a sidebar also for the listener, highly recommend as a leadership movie. So, Sabina, what do you do when you are in a really tough spot? Maybe you have a story for us when you are in a really tough spot, you you shared beautiful stories already from the beginning of your career. I'm thinking about the sideway typing leader, that's another thing I'm going to think about. Think about a really tough situation you've been in, and how do you work with that, when the pressure is so high, what do you do with that?

Sabina Nawaz 50:39

I don't always do great. It impacts my stomach feels it. I get this sort of naughty feeling. My breathing becomes shallow. I'm not sleeping, I'm not eating. It really eats me up, and I'm scared. But I tell people, my clients that my job is to raise your heart rate leadership, and acts of leadership require courage. Courage is when your heart is pounding and you're still taking action. So to cope, I will often simply just



disclose my feelings to a few people, like half a dozen of close friends. I might say, Gosh, I'm really dreading this thing tomorrow. I think it's going to be really hard, and I'm not sure where it's going to go. That's all I say, and now I know the next day that there's a half a dozen people thinking about me and rooting for me. Are they going to be able to offer practical help? No, because I have only you can go through certain fires, yeah, but knowing that they're there, and then when I come back, I'll close the loop with them. Either way it's gone, it helps me know that I'm not alone.

Hylke Faber 52:18

I'm going to remember this at the end that you you coach people, and part of that is to raise their heart rate in times. It's it's almost counter coaching culture to say that, and I love it. I also love that you're talking about. You have to find the courage to make those paraphrasing tough decisions when your heart's pounding, when you are when you're in it so you feeling a fear. Is not you failing, it's you feeling fear. And you talk about sharing that with others so that you don't well, I'm hearing you don't deny it. You own it. Yes,

Sabina Nawaz 53:04

own it. Yes.

Hylke Faber 53:08

Beautiful. So what would you say to a person that's new boss and they are getting some feedback that things are going well, and yet their spidey sense is like, um, I'm not sure. And they're like, Well, maybe that's my imposter syndrome, because that's that's also often what you get at that on the whenever you get some new adventure on your on your lap. So how do you what would you say to a person like that?

Sabina Nawaz 53:44

I would ask them to look deeper. It could be one of one the other of those things or something in between. So what is your spidey sense? Telling you what? What have you picked up? And I will try to get it to data or facts or behaviors. What are people exactly saying? What are they doing or not doing, and how are you acting in these situations?

Hylke Faber 54:11

I have to ask you this question, are there behaviors that you've seen leaders not being able to change

Sabina Nawaz 54:19

Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely. And some of them decide that I had this one person who was a wonderful human being. And when I delivered the interview based feedback to them, they said, You know, I get it. I see the damage I may have caused these people unintentionally. I need to stop being a manager. This person went on to become a very successful single shop entrepreneur. Yeah, but recognizing that first do no harm. Recognize that, and that's an exciting. Dream case. But in that case, they were better served not being a manager, if they were not willing to or able to, if that wasn't what gave them fulfillment and joy, and that's probably why they were showing up the way they were. Right.



There are other aspects where people, you know, this isn't about getting a personality transplant. My work is about using specific tools to address certain things, so you remain fundamentally who you are. It's just that you become a lot smarter. You have a lot more tools. There's one client who I said, Well, you know, I think you're acting like a one trick pony, and it really hit them in the moment, but once we unpack that, yeah, I'm always treating things in this one fashion. What about this, this and this other thing that I could look at? So let's give you some tools to broaden that repertoire, to soften that gaze,

Hylke Faber 56:05

gorgeous. So final question then you have written, in my eyes, very beautiful book. Highly recommend it. You are the boss with people reading it, and have people having read it, what is your intention? Will be the impact of that on people, world leadership? What's your intention for the book?

Sabina Nawaz 56:36

My intention is that people see more clearly every action has a reaction. That reaction is outsized when you become a boss. Do you know what that reaction is?

Hylke Faber 56:58

That's such a powerful query. Every action has a reaction. Do you know? Do you see that impact? Do you know what that impact is? That's the start of it. Sabina, it's been a true pleasure. Any closing words that you'd like to share,

Sabina Nawaz 57:22

being an engineer by training, I always love to tinker with tools. So if you're listening to this, and you pick up the book and you try the tools and you modify it in some way, come back and let me know. You can find out how to reach me through my website. Sabinanoaz.com

Hylke Faber 57:42

sab Sabina nawaz.com if you're listening, it's N, A W, a Z, Sabina without the R. Sabina Nawaz is an author of this upcoming book, you're the boss. We've been talking with Sabina about being a boss, being aware of the impact that we have also unintentionally, and how the communication feedback mechanisms become quite distorted often the higher we go up, and therefore we as a Boss have the opportunity and the responsibility, really, to become a sensing boss, to sense what's going on and not to rely on words only, and to also be aware of our impact on others. We talked about using our face intentionally, not fake, but intentionally so that we're not unconscious of what our face does, just like the clothes we would wear to a meeting on the people around us and use it as a tool. We talked about a little bit about self care, the power of the shower, and we talked about, what is it like to make a mistake and find people to stand with you when that's a little hard for yourself at that very moment, Sabrina, it's been a true pleasure to work with you today in this podcast, to listen to your insights and to share this message from this beautiful Book, you're the boss. You've been listening to gluten and wavering. This podcast is about helping people to connect more deeply to their innate potential. You can find us on LinkedIn, on Spotify Apple, or wherever you get your podcast, and you can connect with Sabine. It was



Sabine noahs.com or buy her book. You're the boss. I'm your host today. Pilke Farber, see you next time.

Presenter 59:50

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