

*If you only have a minute:* Rooted and Unwavering is all about connecting deeply with ourselves, others, and our service in the world. Did you know getting a promotion can be one of the most dangerous times in your career? Read on to find out why.

## You're the Boss. That Matters More Than You Think

By Esther Groves and Hylke Faber

Through over two decades of coaching and teaching executives across the globe and navigating her own career, Sabina Nawaz has had many insights about leadership. She shares a few of them in her book, *You're the Boss: Become the Manager You Want to Be*:

- Being promoted is the most dangerous time in a person's career because the person hasn't changed, but the situation has.
- The higher we rise in the organization, the more we impact others, intentionally or not.
- It's not power but pressure that corrupts our actions.

At one time, Sabina was the boss everyone wanted: caring, empathetic, and supportive.

That changed the day she returned to her job at Microsoft following parental leave. She hadn't even left home when her assistant called her asking, "Where are you? There's a meeting [with the CEO] in 30 minutes."

"I didn't know anything about the meeting," she says, so 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. I was leading succession planning and executive development for the company. The job was fast-paced [with a] flooded inbox, lots of meetings, and requests coming from the highest levels."

Sabina found she had no peace, no sleep, no patience, and she became short-tempered. Instead of giving people undivided attention in her office, she looked at them sideways while continuing to type on her computer as if to say, "I'm a really busy person. Get on with it."

"I started to micromanage and bark out orders because I always ran short on time. I didn't take the time to explain things or to empathize. I figured they were adults; they'd figure it out. There would be time for all of that later, which, of course, there never was."

Sabina had no idea of the impact she was having on others until a colleague told her that one of her teammates was crying after meeting with her. Sabina had fallen into a trap many of us fall into as managers. We go into uncaring, command-and-control mode. This was contrary to how she was raised. "Growing up, caring was part of our culture," she says. "So, this was a gut punch. I felt shame and despair."

As a manager, you might think people will tell you what is going on. "Not true," she says. "What you say gets *amplified downward*, and what *they* say *muted upward* because they want to please you."

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?

To stay attuned to the truth, Sabina suggests asking three other people familiar with the situation for their impression of how you are perceived.

“Literally everything counts,” she says, “All the way to your facial expressions. Before going into a meeting, rearrange your face. So much of what we convey is non-verbal, and there's a distinction between fake, unconscious, and intentional [expressions]. Most of us go forward with an unconscious face, so take a moment to be intentional about the face you are projecting and that it matches the message you are delivering.”

“The number one piece of feedback I've gotten through thousands of interviews on what people actually think about their bosses,” Sabina says, “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.”

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*“What you say gets amplified downward, and what they say gets muted upward.” ~ Sabina Nawaz*

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