

Authentic Female Leadership:

Being Heard While Being Yourself

Kate Eberle Walker

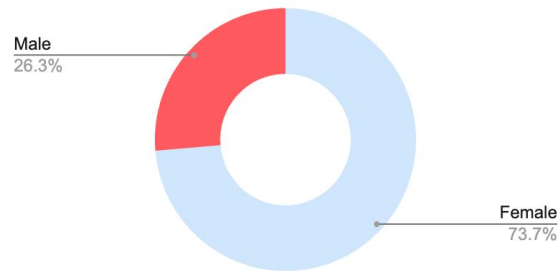


About Me:

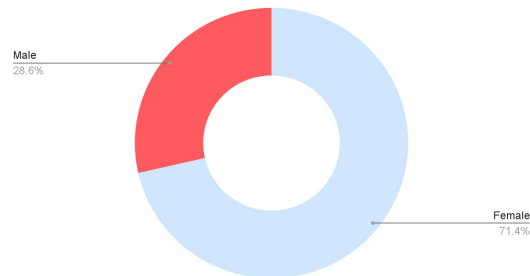
CEO of Presence, a majority female-led company



Employees by Gender



Leaders by Gender



About Me

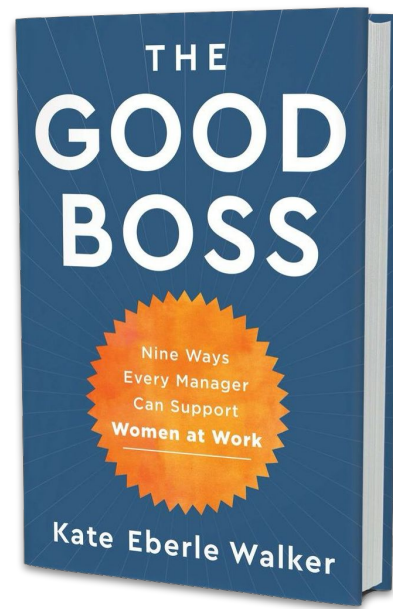
I'm a champion of education, a Mom and an author



tutor.com



BARNES & NOBLE
COLLEGE

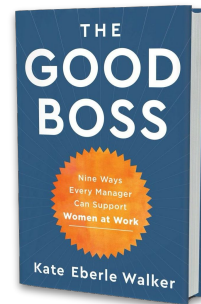


My philosophy

Aspire to the ideal; Live in the practical

The Good Boss is written for three audiences:

1. **The organizational leader.** This group holds the power to impact the experience of all of their employees, in with that comes responsibility to create an environment that embraces diverse perspectives.
2. **The mid-level manager.** Managers generally want to do the right thing in supporting the development of diverse teams, but they don't have power to make big changes. This group needs to learn how to use their power to have a big impact on the environment of a small group of people: those who work directly for them.
3. **The aspiring individual seeking career advancement.** This group needs practical advice that doesn't compromise who they are, but isn't unrealistic about what will work in the current work environment.



The 9 Rules of *The Good Boss*

Rule #1: Call Her By Her Name

Respect starts with getting her name right.

Rule #2: Be Someone She Can Relate To

Build authentic working relationships with the women on your team.

Rule #3: Don't Ask "What Does Your Husband Do?"

Avoid downgrading the ambition of women after marriage or making assumptions about her priorities for work and family.

Rule #4: Don't Sit in Her Chair

Make women feel as essential at work as they feel at home after having children.

Rule #5: Watch the Clock

Be mindful of the time and schedule constraints that women are balancing.

Rule #6: Speak Up So That She Doesn't Have To

Take action to stop bad behavior in the workplace.

Rule #7: Don't Make Her Ask Twice

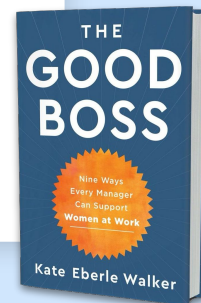
Eliminate negotiation pitfalls.

Rule #8: Be an Equal Opportunity A\$\$hole

Be as tough on her as you are on everyone else.

Rule #9: Tell Her That You See Her Potential

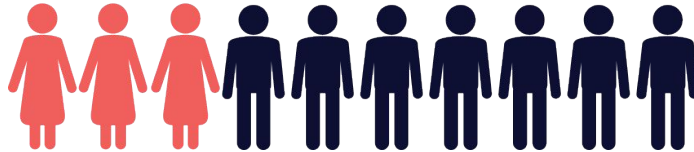
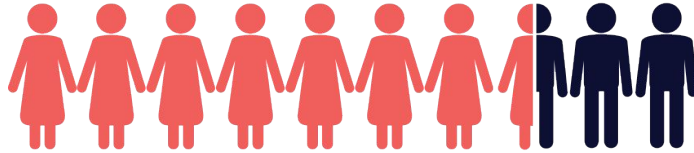
Envision a bigger future for her.



The Landscape

76%

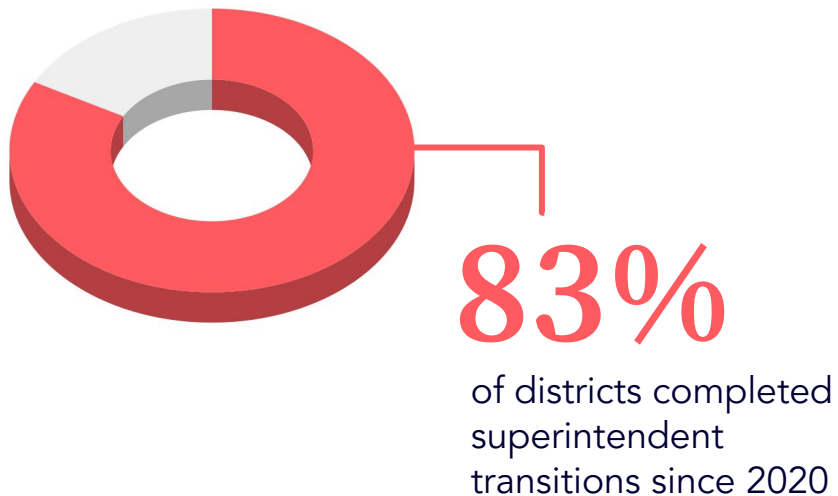
of teachers in K-12
settings are women



70%

of high school
principals are men

The Landscape



Finding your authentic career development strategy



Networking is Key to Success

Men are **1.7x more likely** to receive support from senior level leaders in advancing their careers

The **majority** of women who do reach senior-level positions credit support from a senior leader as a significant factor in their career success, vs **less than half** of men.

Networking as a woman is harder

- **Access.** Women are too often limited to networking with other women
- **Bias.** Women are judged differently when they self-advocate
- **Time.** Women allocate less time to networking activities
- **Authenticity.** Traditional networking opportunities don't always fit women's priorities



Access

Fewer women in influential positions:

5%
of CEOs

24%
of K-12
Superintendents

Women less likely to have a male boss:

36%
of women have a
male boss

66%
of men have a male
boss

Male bosses are more likely to discuss
career development:

53%
of women with a female
boss discuss career goals

67%
of women with a male
boss discuss career goals

Mentorship vs Sponsorship

Mentorship

- Focuses on personal growth, skill development, and career guidance
- Provides advice, feedback, and shares knowledge and expertise
- Helps mentees navigate their career paths and build confidence

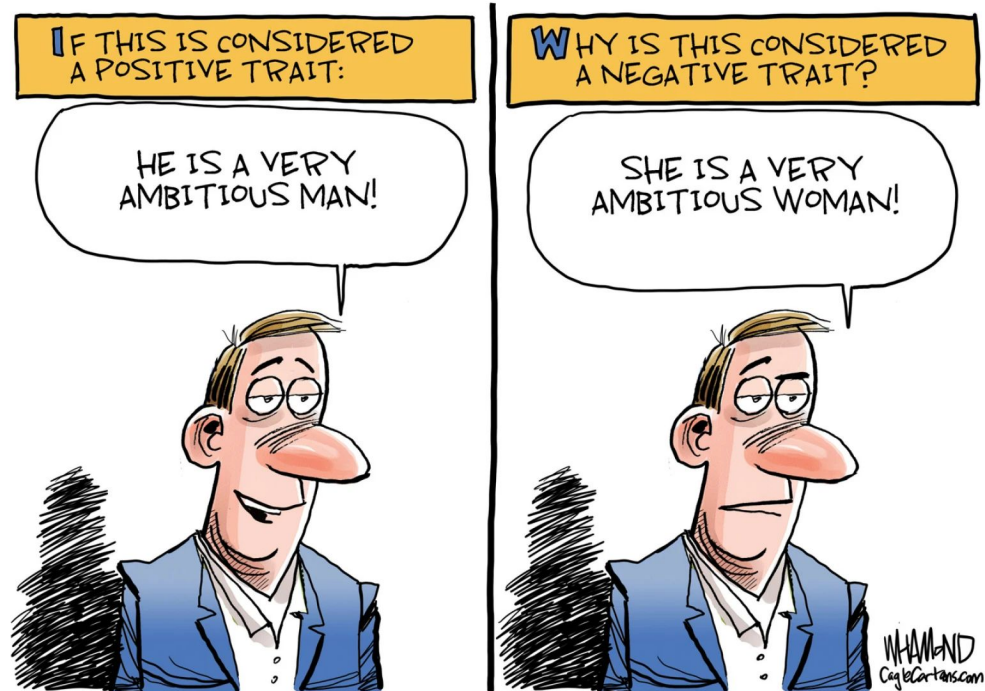
Sponsorship

- Creates opportunities and visibility
- Uses influence, credibility, and networks to endorse
- Actively promotes career advancement within an organization or industry

Bias

Study by the Wall St Journal,
April 2024:

"When women build networks rich with high-status contacts, instead of receiving a status boost, their status gradually declined over time. Such a costly effect didn't occur in men. Why? People typically don't like dominant and ambitious female leaders."



The good news - we can overcome the bias

Also from the WSJ Study, April 2024:

When made clear that the motives for a woman approaching high status people was to benefit and advance the interests of her group, *"the backlash effects disappeared and the woman was granted higher status."*

Communal and team-based approaches are highly valued in women, and can be powerful in achieving higher status

Time

Women spend more hours on housework and childcare than men, regardless of working status

Couples without dependent children



Couples with dependent children*



*Housework and childcare have been combined for couples with dependent children.

Be deliberate with your time

It's easy to let your schedule run you, and to use up all your time on the demands of the day

Beware of treating areas that are essential as “nice to have” instead of “need to have”

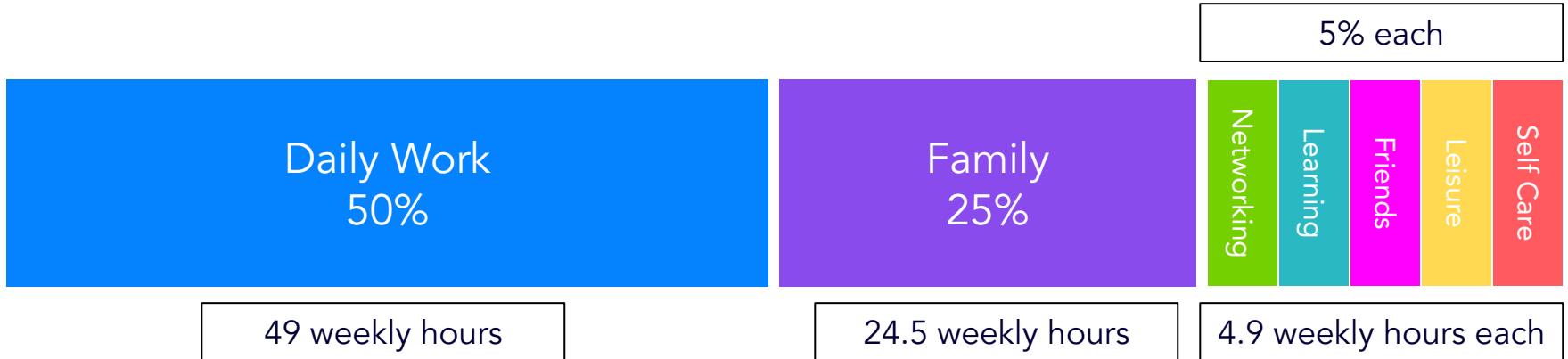
Map out your building blocks to take stock of everything that matters:



Be deliberate with your time

Allocate your time - map it out and use a forcing mechanism to ensure nothing drops (ie, put it on your calendar)

This was my first attempt at this exercise:



Multitasking is our friend!



With blending, we can do more!

Exercise + business podcast = Self Care + Learning

Coffee with colleague = Networking + Friends

Vacation = Family + Leisure

To maximize multitasking, we need authenticity at work...

Authenticity

More than half of women answered yes to the following statement...

"Do you feel you need to change certain aspects of who you are in terms of how you look, speak or act at work?"



Common Authenticity Challenges for Women

Family

- Being open and honest about time spent caring for family and household

Presentation and Perception

- Putting extra effort into physical appearance, attire, facial expressions

Language

- Giving long explanations with extra context
- Softening language with permission words and punctuation ("if you don't mind..." "that would be great!")

Adapting Language

“ Hello! Hope you're well and that you're having a lovely week! So sorry to bother you, but I was just wondering if you could read the below article I've written? No worries at all if not – I know you must be super busy. Thank you so much for your time! Best wishes.

SOURCE: THE JOURNAL OF COMPUTER MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

WSJ

73% OF ALL EXCLAMATIONS
WERE MADE BY WOMEN

27% OF ALL EXCLAMATIONS
WERE MADE BY MEN

To Golf or Not to Golf?

Why Golf?

Networking Value: 80% of executives say golf has helped their career

Rewarding: Activity that blends leisure + strategy + business

Why Not?

Time: The average 18-hole round takes 4.5 hours plus travel, meals, etc

Preference: Will you enjoy it?



Is it a good use of time to plan events?

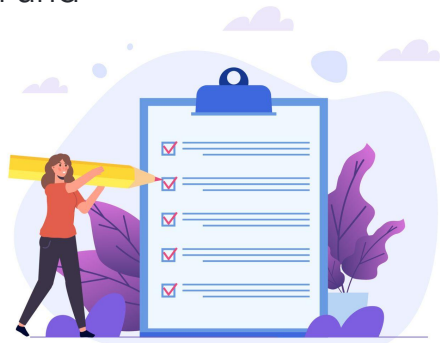
The Downside

The burden: 70% of work event planning falls to women

Time consuming: Average event requires 20-50 hours of logistics, vendor coordination and management

The Upside

Control: Plan events that you actually will enjoy, and influence the time and date



We put a lot of work into adapting ourselves - what would it take to stop?

Change and challenge the norm

- More diversity in teams shifts the dynamic

Substance always wins

- Demonstrate success (and get others to talk you up!)

Raise others up

- Women are better perceived when viewed to be helping others, so raise up others to raise yourself!



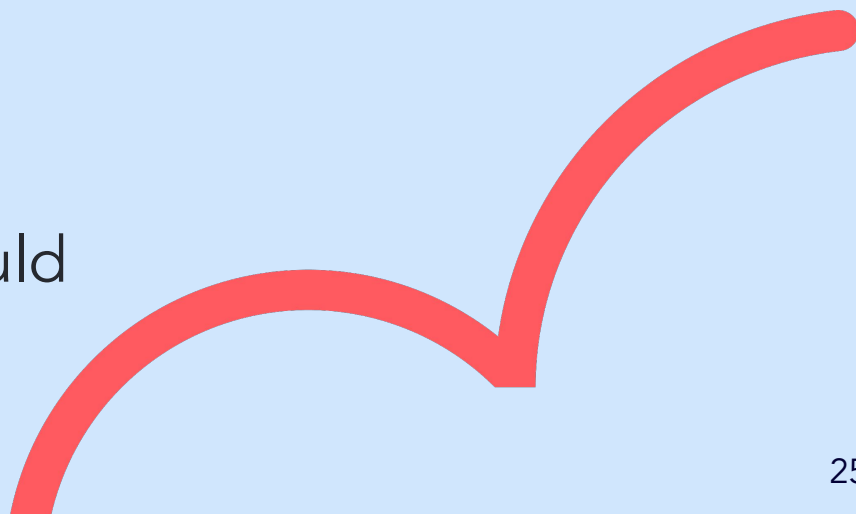
“Taking up space in improv is being nice and loud, taking your time, believing that you belong here. Taking up space in the world is exactly those same things.”

Discussion

Share Your Stories

Share a story - when did you decide to just be yourself and what happened?

Where have you been able to “change the norm” and shift the expectation of how a leader should be?



A Strategy to Take Forward

Access Power

Seek sponsorship from male leaders



Overcome Bias

Advocate for team instead of self



Allocate Time

Be deliberate in setting time for external relationship building



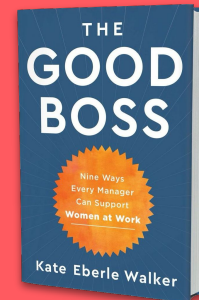
Find Your Connectors

Blend networking with things you actually enjoy



Thank You!

The workplace wasn't made for women. But we can change that.



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