

Closing the Confidence Gap: Boost Your Peace, Your Potential, and Your Paycheck

Kelli Thompson

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Closing the Confidence Gap is an engaging and pragmatic career handbook for women in leadership roles.

Kelli Thompson's *Closing the Confidence Gap* is an insightful guide for women leaders who want to improve their leadership skills and elevate their careers.

This book compiles stories of women overcoming workplace difficulties, subverting cultural expectations, and aligning their work with their personal values. A story relaying Thompson's imposter syndrome introduces this work: as a recently divorced mother with a high-powered job in which she was unhappy, she realized that she had prioritized other people's expectations over her own ambitions and values. After reorganizing her life and work and gaining knowledge and confidence, she was inspired to build a toolkit for other women in leadership roles to encourage their tenacity, integrity, and morale.

Each chapter defines and draws forward the application of a skill or detrimental concept related to women's struggles in the workplace, including imposter syndrome, values-based leadership, and unpaid labor imbalances at home. The topics flow in a logical order, building in complexity as the book progresses. Conversations about women holding back on applying for jobs or asking for higher wages combine with compelling data, resulting in a full, detailed image of the contemporary landscape of women's leadership. There are empathetic but brief mentions of the particular struggles of women of color too.

Though each story is pertinent to the corresponding chapter's purpose in at least a broad sense, some of the anecdotes run long and include extraneous details. Further, the toolkit sections are open-ended to the point of being vague at times. For example, the toolkit suggests a four-step process for delving into each section: notice it, own it, reframe it, and act on it. The corresponding questions and journal prompts are short and straightforward, encouraging deeper thinking, but with minimal guidance. Still, when paired with the chapters' informative narratives, these exercises become more practical and thought-provoking.

The book's definitions are thorough and sharp. It elucidates what it means to differentiate one's goals ("finite things we check off a list") from one's values ("the guide to how we achieve those goals"), as well as distinguishing doubt (the "feeling that precedes stepping out of your comfort zone") from imposter syndrome ("self-sabotage"). The tone is authoritative, using direct and confident language to inject esteem and trustworthiness into the text. Candid language balances with scientific research for added credibility.

Closing the Confidence Gap is an engaging and pragmatic career handbook for women in leadership roles. It includes guidelines for celebrating their skills and gaining confidence in the workplace.

AIMEE JODOIN (August 22, 2022)

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