

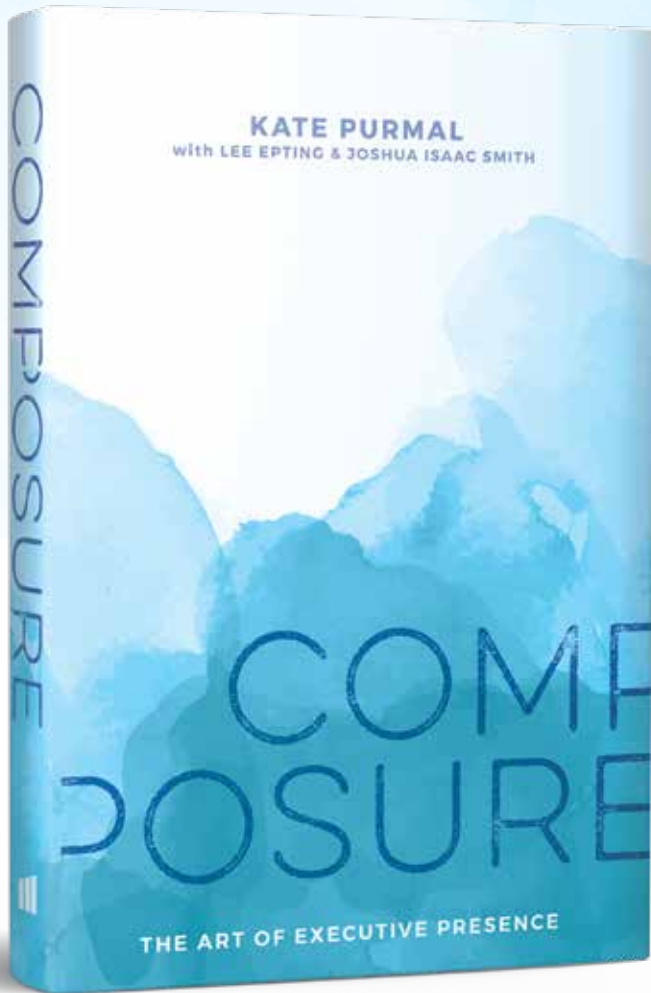
**KATE PURMAL**

with **LEE EPTING & JOSHUA ISAAC SMITH**

**COCOMP  
POSURE**

**THE ART OF EXECUTIVE PRESENCE**

ALL-STAR EXECUTIVE COACHES AND LEADERSHIP EXPERTS  
PRESENT THEIR GUIDE TO CULTIVATING COMPOSURE



#1 New Release

**COMPOSURE: The Art of Executive Presence**

*Elevate your Executive Presence and become more resilient—at home, at work, everywhere!*

Many of us experience being overly sensitive and more reactive than we'd like to be throughout the day at work, but why? When we are overly reliant on external validation and reactive to external pressures—driven by fear of judgment, criticism, and failure—we lose our composure.

The good news is, like any important skill, composure is something you can learn and cultivate by creating strong personal boundaries, building confidence, developing self-awareness, and aligning yourself and your values. This is what is explored profoundly in this book.

Drawing on more than twenty years of experience as corporate executives, executive coaches, and their expertise in neurolinguistics and trauma and PTSD therapy, Kate Purmal and her colleagues Lee Epting and Joshua Isaac Smith deliver a unique approach to navigating work environments that don't feel psychologically safe.

Using proven techniques, *COMPOSURE* shows how you can compose yourself to elevate your presence at work, at home, and, ultimately, within yourself.

**OCTOBER 19, 2021**



**Who They've Worked With:**



## THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SUCCESS

### **KATE PURMAL** Executive Coach, Former Corporate Executive, & Stanford Business School Lecturer



Kate is an executive coach, corporate board director, and business school lecturer at Stanford, Georgetown, and the University of Michigan. She has served as CEO, COO, and CFO for numerous technology companies. Kate is a passionate advocate for diversity at the highest levels of business and is a firm believer that unwavering optimism can transcend even the most daunting systemic barriers in the workplace. She has spent decades as an executive coach, bringing out brilliance in leaders and their teams. She is also the author of *The Moonshot Effect: Disrupting Business as Usual*.

### **LEE EPTING** Executive Coach & Tech Executive



Lee Epting is an executive coach and business school lecturer at the University of Michigan. She is a former technology product executive from Nokia, Vodafone, and, most recently, Samsung, where she led a multibillion-dollar business unit. Lee has spent over 30 years focusing on building high performance teams and delivering market-winning technology products/services to the world. Throughout her career Lee has used the world stage she operates on to spearhead a number of projects focused on ensuring women have access to mobile technology in emerging markets.

### **JOSHUA ISAAC SMITH** Trauma Therapist, Behavioral Specialist, & Executive Coach



Joshua Isaac is an executive coach, trauma therapist, and behavioral specialist focusing on neuroscience-informed approaches to mindfulness, leadership and resilience. He currently coaches executives and teams globally, and leads courses in resilience, leadership, agile team building and mindfulness in trauma therapy. Joshua was previously CEO of a telecommunications company that he sold at age 32. He has been seen by an estimated 10 million people on CBS news, ITV, Channel 4, Living TV, and has appeared on radio on numerous occasions including BBC and LBC.

*Kate, Joshua and Lee share a passion for equity in business and in releasing the untapped potential in leaders. As C-level technology executives with decades of experience in research, coaching and clinical therapy, they have come together to launch the Elevate Group, an organization that aims to address Impostor Syndrome by closing the confidence gap and unlocking the full potential of executives, entrepreneurs, and their organizations.*

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## Praise for **COMPOSURE**

"The authors' understandings of the nuances of insecurity and the workings of entitlement are delivered with refreshing complexity...An intelligent, wide-ranging examination."

—**KIRKUS** Reviews

"A quick, crisply written read...[readers] will find useful thought exercises to assist them in putting their Imposter Syndrome to rest."

— **BLUEINK** Review

"Finally. A well-written and engaging book that provides honest and practical guidance to unlock what's standing between you and your best self. Written in very human terms, *COMPOSURE* delivers a structured process and clear examples to give high performers the tools to own their future success."

—**MARY MCDOWELL**, CEO, Mitel Networks

"This insightful yet unusual book will be powerful for anyone who is seen as successful by others but inside feels stuck, insecure, or unhappy."

—**SUZANNE SKYVARA**, VP Marketing & Editorial, Goodreads

"If there's anyone who knows how to excel under pressure, it's Kate Purmal. *COMPOSURE* should be required reading for those of us who have to lead in complex high-wire environments."

—**MARK LEVY**, Founder, Levy Innovation LLC; Author of *Accidental Genius*

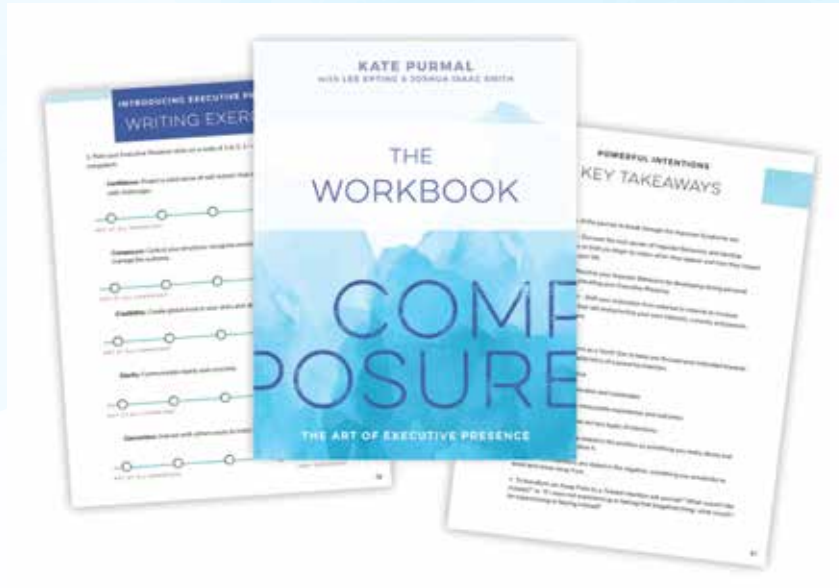
"With this important book, Kate Purmal shows us how **WE CAN** replace self-doubt, inadequacy, and worry with confidence, self-worth, and courage. She is a brilliant writer and teacher who provides volumes of warm, yet practical guidance and advice to help women accelerate their path to the C-suite and boardroom."

—**ROBIN TOFT**, CEO, Toft Group, a ZRG company; Co-Founder, We Can Rise;  
Author of *WE CAN: The Executive Woman's Guide to Career Advancement*

"*COMPOSURE* is both practical and inspirational. Through three key steps—awareness, resolution, and transformation—it guides the reader to new heights of self-awareness and greater outcomes!"

—**TERRY KRAMER**, Faculty Director, Easton Technology Management Center, UCLA Anderson School of Management; former CHRO  
Vodafone Group Plc and President, Vodafone Americas

## Download Your FREE Companion Workbook



Thinking through and writing about what they have read enhances the reader's ability to absorb and benefit from the practices and techniques introduced in *COMPOSURE*. In response to this, authors Purmal, Epting, and Smith have created a **FREE editable digital Companion Workbook** to *COMPOSURE: The Art of Executive Presence*.

The workbook includes chapter-by-chapter summaries of key takeaways, instructions for the tools and techniques introduced in *COMPOSURE*, and writing exercises. It also contains links to audio and video guided meditations and guided exercises, demonstrations, and other **FREE** resources.

Download the **FREE** Companion Workbook at  
[www.composurethebook.com/workbook](http://www.composurethebook.com/workbook)

## What is Impostor Syndrome and How Does it Impact People at Work?

According to a 2020 study released by KPMG LLP, the US audit, tax, and advisory firm, 75% of female executives across all industries have experienced Impostor Syndrome at certain points in their careers. The study found that 81% of women put more pressure on themselves to not fail than men do, and 56 being afraid that they won't live up to expectations or that people around them won't believe they're capable. Nearly half the female population (47%) say their feelings of self-doubt are because they never expected to reach such a high level of success.

And, sadly, 32% of the women who identify with Impostor Syndrome claim they didn't know there were others out there like them (either personally or professionally). It's no wonder executive women feel like frauds.

Through our studies, we've found five behaviors that are incredibly consistent, comprising the fingerprint for the Impostor Syndrome:

- Lack of Confidence
- Rejection Sensitivity
- Depressed Entitlement
- Perfectionism
- Feeling like a Fraud

Here is how Impostor Syndrome affects one of the subjects of our book, Sarah:

### ***Lack of Confidence***

A person with Impostor Syndrome most likely lacks confidence in their ability to perform situational tasks. While they may generally be quite confident, certain situations create anticipatory anxiety and self-doubt. This lack of confidence can be paralyzing, especially if they are faced with taking on something new that tests the limits of their skill and experience. Their lack of self-belief often impedes the kind of experimentation that leads to faster learning and growth.

Sarah considers herself to be a generally confident person. However, when she's under pressure—like in a job interview or when she makes an important presentation to the executive team—she swings to self-doubt and panics. “I start to sweat, my throat tightens up, and my voice cracks. I'm worried I won't know the answer to a question or that I'll say something that reveals I haven't fully thought it through.”

### ***Rejection Sensitivity***

Sensitivity to being judged, criticized, or found lacking, even in the most constructive ways, is also a common trait among people living with Impostor Syndrome. As a result, they tend to internalize and experience intense shame about any type of criticism and feedback. In their hypervigilance to avoid or prevent such rejection, they often find their self-worth through the approval of others, often at the expense of their own needs. While this may make them valuable contributors, the constant people-pleasing and approval-seeking is exhausting, especially when they don't allow *what they want* to be part of the equation.

As Sarah describes her experience, “Even when I know I've done a good job, I dread receiving feedback. I know the intent is positive, but just the slightest negative feedback stings, and I get defensive. It fills me with the shame that I didn't perform better. In my annual performance reviews, if I don't get a perfect rating on everything, I feel terrible, and it takes days to shake the disappointment.”

### ***Depressed Entitlement***

People with Impostor Syndrome feel like part of the “outgroup” and have a persistent fear that they don’t measure up to their colleagues. As a result, they constantly feel the need to work harder than others in order to prove themselves. Because their own sense of self-worth is connected to their performance, they often undervalue their contributions and feel less deserving of the compensation that’s commensurate with their actual worth.

Sarah illustrates this with her own experience. “I’m proud to have made it as one of the only women in a male-dominated field. But because I’m a woman, I have always felt like there is more pressure on me to prove myself. This is particularly an issue for me when it comes to compensation. Before I got my last job, I asked a trusted male colleague what he thought I should be making in my new role. It turns out my number was significantly lower than what he thought. He convinced me to ask for the higher number, even though it just about killed me to do so. I was shocked when they gave me what I wanted without question, which makes me think I could have asked for even more. Even so, sometimes I worry that I’m being paid too much—which puts more pressure on me to work harder and deliver more.”

### ***Perfectionism***

For people with Impostor Syndrome, failure is not an option, and there is no sense of “good enough” — they strive for flawlessness in everything they do. This compulsion for perfection drives them to over-prepare and over-work, long after most people would call it a day. However, this is often wasted effort that hardly ever leads to the kind of payoff that would make their heroic efforts worthwhile. Impostors rarely experience the satisfaction of accomplishment — at best, they feel some internal relief when the task is over. And yet, they climb right back on the treadmill to prepare for their next herculean effort, unwittingly perpetuating the cycle of anxiety, overwork, and fleeting sense of accomplishment.

In Sarah’s experience, “When the stakes are high, I tend to over-prepare and second-guess my work for fear that it will fall short. And now that I’m struggling with not having enough time for both work and family, the time I spend doing more than required has become a problem.”

### ***Feeling Like a Fraud***

People with Impostor Syndrome never really feel like they have achieved true success, leaving them feeling undeserving of the rewards of status, prestige, or money they receive. Instead, they feel inauthentic and phony. They don’t believe in their own competence and they fear being exposed as a fraud, that people will find out it’s all a ruse. Naturally, this drives them to strive for more success, leaving them feeling vulnerable and exposed.

This is by far Sarah’s most acute Impostor Behavior. “I don’t feel like my success up to now has been the result of luck. However, since being passed over for a VP role, when I do finally get to the next level, I suspect I’ll question if I deserve it, since clearly the executives who hired my boss over me didn’t think I was ready or capable. That weighs on me now.”

It’s often a huge relief for the people who read our book to realize they’re not alone in feeling like an impostor, and that even senior executives — both men and women — and those who ooze confidence may be concealing Impostor Behaviors that lie below the surface.

## A Story: Two Powerful Techniques to Cultivate Executive Presence

Jacqueline was promoted to the chief customer officer of a hundred-person start-up, a job she secured while going through one of our programs. A few months later, Jacqueline was recruited to interview for a role as senior vice president of customer success at a \$17 billion multinational company—a significant step up!

After passing an initial phone screening with the internal recruiter, Jacqueline reached out to Lee for guidance, because she didn't feel confident enough to ace the upcoming round of interviews. She worried that she didn't have the level of experience they needed. She told Lee she was managing 40 people in her current role, but she would be responsible for 200 employees in the new role. She had never managed that many people before.

Lee knew that Jacqueline needed to boost her Executive Presence in order to nail her interviews. One of the secrets to Jacqueline's success would be to ensure that she communicate clearly and concisely to promote her accomplishments without coming off as arrogant. Lee taught her how to use the Rule of Three in response to interview questions. "Whenever you're asked a tough question," offered Lee, "take a breath, count backward from three to one, and start your response with, 'Well, Joe, there are three things to consider...' You'll certainly have an answer for the first thing, and as you talk you'll come up with the other two."

Lee asked Jacqueline to think of a tough question she might be asked in the interview.

Jacqueline thought for a second and then answered: "The EVP will probably ask me how I would deal with a problem with a large and strategic customer."

Lee asked her to take a breath and count backward from three to calm and compose herself, and use the Rule of Three to formulate her answer.

"There are three things I'd do when I face a challenging customer discussion," Jacqueline said. "The first is to meet with my team to do a deep dive into the client account so I understand the situation. Next, I'd evaluate the client's

mix of products and services in the context of our portfolio, so I can determine creative ways we might address their problem. And finally, I'd set up a meeting with the client, at the most senior level possible, to work through the issue collaboratively. I'd do my best to make them feel like we're both sitting on the same side of the table, so we discover a win-win solution for everyone."

Lee also used an envisioning technique to boost her confidence even more. She asked Jacqueline to imagine herself as the SVP of customer success at the company, having just been told in her six-month performance review by her boss that she was the best hire he'd ever made. "Now what do you see?" asked Lee.

"I see myself strutting down the hallway in a sharp black suit and Christian Louboutin stilettos," replied Jacqueline smiling. "I'm confident, owning my role and influence in the business. Though it is a big step up, I'm doing a great job, my team is working well together, and we've had several visible wins since I was hired. And now I'm a sought-after speaker in industry groups and events, and I'm becoming known outside the company. Even more importantly, I'm having a big impact on other women at the company as a role model and advocate."

This vision instilled even more excitement and confidence in Jacqueline that she could take with her into her interviews. Not only was she ready, she actually looked forward to the hiring process because it put her one step closer to her vision. "When I walked in, I could really see myself in my black suit and stilettos walking the halls and talking with my team members. I knew that I have what it takes and whatever they asked me, I could compose my thoughts and respond clearly and concisely. And it worked! I used the Rule of Three several times during the interview, and each time I could see they were impressed."

Jacqueline aced the interviews, ultimately making it to the final round of three candidates.



## What is the Process Used in *COMPOSURE* to Unlock Executive Presence?

The journey to break through the Impostor Syndrome to unlock Executive Presence involves three phases: awareness, resolution, and transformation.

In the first phase, awareness, you discover how Impostor Behaviors impact your work and your life. By exploring these root causes, you see how family and social dynamics throughout your life not only create, but also strengthen, your Impostor Behaviors. These behaviors are “safety patterns” your brain puts into place to keep you from taking risks that could possibly result in failure, judgement, or criticism. As co-author Joshua Issac Smith explains, “You can’t ‘think away’ safety patterns; you can only resolve them by making internal changes so that they’re no longer necessary. In essence, you have to update your brain and let it know that the older safety patterns are no longer relevant and may in fact block you in your ability to move forward into a more desirable future.”

The second phase is resolution. Here we work to shift and resolve your Impostor Behaviors so that you develop greater self-awareness and stronger personal boundaries. Once those are in place, you’re able to operate with greater confidence and clarity, becoming more sensitive to your own needs. The pay-off is that you’re less driven by the interests of others. You become more willing to take risks without experiencing self-doubt, shame, and guilt when you make a mistake. Your stress and anxiety levels come way down, bringing you to a place of greater well-being. As a result, you naturally show up with greater composure and Executive Presence.

And finally, we have transformation. In this phase your motivation shifts inward to focus— often for the first time—on your own interests, curiosity, passions, and intrinsic values. Doing so allows you to create a more powerful, aligned sense of self. This is important, because when you factor *the whole you* into your life, your priorities change. Suddenly societal pressures, prestige, accolades, and even your relationship with money, are no longer your primary motivators. As you move through your life in congruence with your true self, you can’t help but find greater ease and grace. And not by coincidence, flow and serendipity tend to show up for you more often. You’ll see that when your emotional energy recalibrates in a positive direction and you act in alignment with your core values, you are naturally guided and supported in unexpected ways.

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