



I See You: A Guide for Women to Make More, Have More, and Be More—Without More Work

Amy Kemp

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(262pp)

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Incise and comfort filled, I See You is a business coach's holistic guide for professional women.

A warm hug of a self-help book for women, entrepreneur Amy Kemp's *I See You* aims to help audiences harness their innate talents and recognize their worth.

Kemp, who left a high-powered sales career to start a coaching business, wants women to “understand how astonishingly brilliant [they] are.” Knowing that women business leaders often contend with feelings of “isolation, self-doubt, exhaustion, frustration, and overwhelm,” her book presents strategies for overcoming “limiting thought habits,” embracing one’s “natural genius,” and reaching one’s full potential for success and personal satisfaction. Questions appear at the end of each chapter to help women drill in, recognize their talents, and refine their approaches, as with James Clear’s “What feels like fun to me, but work to others?” and mental and physical health check-ins.

Kemp, who acknowledges her own positions of privilege, also knows that women work and live “within many invisible but powerful systems that were not created with their best interests in mind.” Issue by debilitating issue, her book tackles the common habits that hold women back, like doing everything for everyone rather than empowering others to work well in supportive roles, shushing one’s intuitive voice, underselling one’s accomplishments, and undervaluing one’s worth. It names clear strategies to help women stop treating every task as if it is urgent (“I dare you to wait twenty-four to forty-eight hours before you respond to a request,” Kemp says), listen to their internal cues and address old traumas, and avoid doing unpaid labor. In presenting alternatives to limiting behaviors, Kemp acknowledges that stepping back, and even making room for fun, can feel unnatural to those who are inculcated to believe that they have to work harder to get ahead. To help overcome such doubts, her book supplies plenty of examples of how following her recommendations has led others to more productive, healthier work lives, even improving organizations on the whole.

Kemp is an enthusiastic guide throughout—sometimes exclamatory and often vulnerable. Her storytelling methods are engaging, whether she’s covering a revealing coaching session or talking about gluing googly eyes on tubes during a period of personal financial stress. Indeed, her text is replete with intimate examples that reveal just how important it is to concentrate on what you’re good at and build a supportive team to help with the rest.

There are searing general examples too, as with the juxtaposition of Simone Biles's step back from competing in consideration of her own well-being to Kerri Strug's being pressured to perform through an injury, ending her career—examples used to question whether any “accomplishment, even on a global scale, [is] more important than a human being's health and well-being.” While some such examples are familiar (Kemp revisits *The Giving Tree*, refreshing her critique with the more particular reflection that “it isn't healthy or inspiring for women to imagine that our highest goal in life is to wind up as a stump”), they still complement Kemp's messages well. And while the text deviates from its general advice in places, as with a middle chapter on “woo woo” that addresses spiritual beliefs, it does so in a self-aware manner (for example, acknowledging the possibility of skeptical responses), making even the book's narrower sections feel welcoming.

A fresh, supportive coaching session in miniature, *I See You* is an encouraging women's leadership guide with tips for making the most out of one's natural gifts.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (February 2, 2024)

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