

THINKING LIKE A
BOSS

Uncover and Overcome the Lies Holding
You Back from Success

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For my sweet baby girls.

*Annabelle, your life gave me the push
to run toward this book dream.*

*And Charlotte, thank you for giving mama
the extra time to meet her deadline!*

I love you girls with my whole heart.

Contents

- Introduction 11
- LIE #1 I Need to Have It All Together 23
- LIE #2 I'm Not Ready to Start 37
- LIE #3 I'm Not Qualified (I'm Not Smart Enough, Young Enough, or Old Enough to Succeed) 55
- LIE #4 I Will Never Have Enough Money 67
- LIE #5 Making Money Is Greedy 83
- LIE #6 I Need to Say Yes to Every Opportunity that Comes My Way 101
- LIE #7 I Can't Possibly Have a Successful Business *and* Be a Good Mom 115
- LIE #8 I Need My Friends' and Family's Understanding in Order to Succeed 133
- LIE #9 I Don't Have Enough Time 145

Contents

LIE #10 It's Already Been Done Before 159

LIE #11 I Am My Business 177

LIE #12 I Am Not Capable of Handling Success 195

Conclusion: Thinking Like a Boss 209

Acknowledgments 213

Notes 217

Introduction

If you had told me even just five years ago I'd be a private practice therapist running a successful coaching business mentoring female entrepreneurs around the globe, writing a book, speaking to groups, mothering two babes under two, all before the age of thirty-five—I would have probably spit my coffee out in disbelief! At the time, I was struggling to figure out how to take the next step in my career. I had big dreams of launching a business, but I felt paralyzed by doubts and fear that I would fail. The thought of even starting a website or social media account felt so foreign to me. I was used to the nine-to-five grind—although not so fulfilling, it felt safe.

I wanted something different for myself, but I had no idea how to make it happen. Would it be possible to earn enough money? And if so, how long would it take to replace my nine-to-five income? What if I left my job, couldn't cover my bills, and ultimately failed at running a business? There were times when the excitement and possibilities kept me up at night—I could imagine my business booming and having the life I

dreamed of. But honestly, more often than not, I was wide awake with the fear of failing. Rather than counting sheep, I counted lie after lie about my ability to succeed.

Clearly, reaching the ultimate goal of being my own boss felt nearly impossible. I looked at women who owned businesses and assumed that they had attended business school or had investors backing their idea. They seemed to have the confidence and mindset to step into the CEO role of their own business—something I could hardly dream of. I wanted what those women had, but I didn't know how to make it happen.

I am guessing that since you picked up this book, you may be in a similar place. You have hopes and dreams for your life and career, but the vision you're holding for your future feels out of reach. You dream of growing a business to the place where you can finally take the leap and quit that corporate career, but you wonder, *Do I really have what it takes to sustain a full-time income?* Maybe you dream of scaling your business to six and then seven figures, while creating an empire that employs stay-at-home moms, but you fear you won't have adequate leadership skills to execute a production of this size. Or maybe, like I did, you look around at all of these successful CEOs and wonder, *Do I have what it takes to thrive? Can I grow this business from a small home base to an office with employees even though I never attended business school?* I get it. If I had a nickel for every time I doubted myself, I'd be rich. You're in a place where it's hard to think beyond your to-do list. Anything more brings up a torrent of doubts. *Do I really have what it takes? Is this all really possible for little old me?*

Well, I'm here to tell you it is possible! It is possible for each and every one of us to not only reach our dreams, but overcome the lies that hold us back from thinking and succeeding

like a boss. You are fully capable of becoming successful in your business—and in your life—if you can get rid of the negative, fear-based mindset holding you back. Not only have I personally journeyed through limited thinking and come to the other side with a thriving business and personal life, I have also coached thousands of women to overcome the same set of lies that were holding them back. Before becoming a confidence and mindset coach for female entrepreneurs, I practiced psychotherapy as a licensed clinical social worker. For several years I worked in the field of addiction, primarily in disordered eating.

After recovering from a lifelong eating disorder in 2009, I began to research and study the mind—in particular, how to *heal* the mind. This became not only my passion project, but in time, my job: helping women overcome negative thinking and limiting beliefs. If I could heal and move beyond doubts and fears that kept me from the success I so deeply desired, so could others. For many years I studied and practiced a modality called Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), which was developed by Dr. Marsha Linehan.¹ DBT is one of the top treatments for eating disorders, substance use disorders, and other obsessive thought disorders. And as you will see, the mindset work that I do with my clients today targets many of the same behaviors that people with those disorders struggle with—distorted perception and obsessive thinking. Through my own recovery, research, and work in the mental health field, I have created a framework of skills for coaching female entrepreneurs to outcomes that truly work. I practiced this modality as a therapist in one-to-one and group support settings, and it worked. Today, these skills are the very foundation of the work I do with my business-coaching clients. I found

that if these skills can work with someone who is clinically struggling, they are bound to work with anyone else.

Here's the thing: it all starts with mindset. A mindset is simply your attitude or way of viewing things. The most common way that people view themselves is in a growth/abundance mindset or a fixed/limited-thinking mindset. You either believe that your knowledge and capability can grow with experience and practice (growth mindset) or you view your skills and traits as fixed, unchanging characteristics that will not grow or improve over time (fixed mindset). What you believe about this is crucial. When we are stuck in a fixed mindset, we limit our potential and hold ourselves back from achieving our highest levels of success.

Mindset shifts don't have to be complicated and messy—with simple steps, change is possible. When we are set free from limiting and broken beliefs, we are empowered to move in the direction of our deeply held dreams and desires. Many women have said to me, "I can't believe how many hours I wasted in the past criticizing myself. My life now feels spacious, and I can replace the time I would have spent in negativity with doing the work to achieve my goals and dreams."

The Lies That Keep You from Success

The hundreds of women I've worked with over the last few years are some of the smartest and savviest women out there. We all struggle with deeply embedded lies, or limiting beliefs, that hold us back from success—but it doesn't have to be this way. Some of the most common blocks that I see in women I coach are fears around speaking up, selling their services/

products, and getting visible on social media; difficulty setting boundaries with customers; fears around what others think of them and struggling to show up authentically; limited thinking around what success could look like for them; and sadly, dozens of other obstacles.

Can you name the lies that keep you from the success you desire? What lies and limiting beliefs are holding you back from accomplishing your business and career goals? Here are some of the most common limiting mindsets I've heard from women trying to pursue their business goals. Circle the ones that you've wrestled with in your own life:

1. I'd really love to mentor other women, but I can't even get my own stuff together. I feel like a complete fraud.
2. I really want to launch this business, but I need to accomplish x, y, and z before I'm ready.
3. I see women who are thriving in business because they have their MBA. I dropped out of school, so there is no way I can experience that kind of success.
4. Everyone with a successful business had someone else backing them financially. I'm in debt as it is and doubt I will ever get myself out of this mess.
5. Will people think I'm greedy when they find out I'm making a decent living in my business? I love what I do, and my business feels like an avenue to create impact. But am I letting people down because I'm not serving for free?
6. I finally have someone interested in my business idea, but something doesn't feel right. If I say no to this opportunity, I may never have the chance again.

7. I'm at the age when I have to decide whether to start a family. I know other women run businesses while mothering, but I don't know if I can really handle both. Something is bound to suffer.
8. If I tell my friends and family I'm quitting my job to start this business, they are going to want to have an intervention. They don't understand how I can possibly make a living as my own boss.
9. My husband is driving me nuts. He wants to spend more time together, but I really just don't have time. I have big business dreams and goals, and I am my business—if I'm not present, how will it actually run and generate income?
10. I have a business idea, but everyone tells me the market is saturated. I look around and everyone else is already doing what I thought was my unique dream.
11. Someone recently asked me what my hobbies were and I drew a blank. Somehow in the swirl of the last few years, I no longer do those things that used to give me life outside of work.
12. I think I may block myself from moving forward. When I find myself getting ahead, I begin experiencing doubts and fears and look for every reason to stay safe and comfortable.

Can you relate to any of these? How many did you circle? Roughly 90 percent of the women I work with have experienced five or more of the above doubts. If any (or all) of these resonate with you—you are *not* alone! I've personally experi-

enced every single one, and if you have too, this doesn't make you damaged or incapable of moving forward. This gives you a story; something to learn and grow through. And growth gives us a solid foundation for *resiliency*—a key part of overcoming lies about our capability and potential.

Resiliency is the ability to overcome obstacles and bounce back. And resiliency is the very trait necessary for growing a successful business. That's right—the difference between women who succeed in business and those who quit is their ability to move beyond limiting beliefs and mentally overcome setbacks. It's not their upbringing, degree, business savviness, IQ, financial stability, or social support. It's how well they can jump back up after being knocked down time after time. Resiliency isn't something you are born with. Just like confidence, it is a muscle that needs to be developed and then nurtured. It takes practice.

Many of the strongest women I know have struggled the most. These women made the decision not to let their circumstances dictate their destiny. The key word here is *decision*. We all have a choice. And I want to applaud you today for making the choice to open this book and begin working on what you see as your limitations.

This is not your average self-help or get-rich-quick book. This is a life and business manual. We will dive deep into the twelve common but destructive lies we tell ourselves. Each one of these limiting beliefs has the potential to derail your path to success—but only if you let it. Once you know how to recognize limiting beliefs and fight back, you can overcome the lies and achieve the success you dream of. I'm here to share intimate stories of how my clients and I overcame and continue to overcome each and every one of the lies we

will address in this book. I am going to be real and open with you—and I’m not going to sugarcoat anything. It’s not easy, but *it is possible!*

Now I am just your average thirty-something woman. There are thousands of people out there smarter and more well-off than I am. So what enabled me to overcome these lies and achieve success? I practiced confidence. I learned to “fake it until I became it.” And I learned to let go of what was out of my control by practicing each of the twelve mindset shifts I’ll be sharing with you in the coming chapters.

Setting the Foundation for Your Big Picture Vision

Before we do anything else, I want you to know what it is that you’re working toward—a big picture vision. What is your big picture vision for your business? This is one of the most common questions I ask new clients—and it’s essential that we start here too. We can’t disarm the lies that hold us back if we aren’t clear on where we want to go and why. This dream looks different for each of us depending on where we are at in our business careers and in our lives. Maybe you have grown your business to a place of financial freedom, but now you want to expand. Maybe you are in the vision-casting phase of launching—you have the business plan, and now you need to take the first step. Or maybe you are content with how your business is running, but you want to dream *bigger*.

The truth is, it can be hard to discern exactly what this dream is. Too often we bury it under a pile of fears, insecurities, and lies. We convince ourselves that we don’t really want it, that we never really wanted it in the first place—and so we lose sight of it altogether.

I want to walk you through a visualization exercise to help uncover your dream and recover the belief that you can, in fact, achieve it. (I know, I know, a visualization exercise—but bear with me!) In order to clearly find, see, and achieve this, you need to go back to the simple belief you had in yourself as a child, before the lies crept in. This exercise, which I call the inner child visualization exercise, is a crucial part of taking the next steps. And it's imperative that we examine where the roots of our limiting thinking began.

Get into a comfortable place. Maybe it's sitting on your couch in your favorite yoga pants with a warm blanket, coffee in your right hand, and a furry friend to your left. Make sure the room is free from noise and distractions. Now think back—all the way back to a time when the idea of failure did not exist for you, when doubting yourself was not a part of your self-talk or mindset.

Imagine yourself as a small child. What did you love? Who did you want to be? Remember those feelings of truly believing you could be whoever or whatever you wanted. Before others told you that you weren't enough. Before others told you that you were too much. And before you believed that you must have it all together. Who were you?

When I visualize myself as a small child, I remember feeling limitless. I close my eyes and envision running through the sprinklers in my little one-piece bathing suit with the warm sun beating down on me, feeling as free as a bird. I believed I could be anything I wanted to be. I was fearless. I wasn't afraid to say what I wanted to say. I embraced who I was, and I certainly didn't second-guess whether I had it all together.

Does any of this resonate?

Ask yourself, *What did I believe about myself early on?*

Today I am going to challenge you to get back to that “inner child mindset.” Take a moment and repeat after me:

- I can do anything if I put hard work into it.
- I won't let fear hold me back.
- I will say what I want even if people dislike me.
- My potential is bigger than the obstacles I will face.
- I don't need to have it all together to be a successful business owner.
- I don't need to have it all together to make an impact on others.

Now hold on to this picture. Imprint it on your mind and on your heart. As a little one, you believed you could be anything you wanted to be. Go back to that innocence and firmly grasp on to it with each new chapter. I assure you something will begin to shift.

I would like to linger on the dream a little longer as you ask yourself what it is that you really want. I have a sneaking suspicion that your initial answer only scratches the surface of what you are truly capable of. It feels scary to be vulnerable and to confidently declare what can be possible for your life. I get it—we all feel this at times. Let's try this again. If there were no limitations holding you back, finances, education, season of life, etc., what would this vision hold for you? I know the thought of this can feel terrifying, and you may be asking yourself, *What if I fail?* or even, *What if I actually succeed?* If so, I want you to set aside those questions for now. Just say *this* dream out loud. Actually say it. Then write it down in the space below.

After you complete this exercise, I encourage you to take it a step further and tell someone about your dream. I know you might experience some hesitation and fear. And I know what you're going to say next: "But Kate, I don't have it together enough to make this dream a reality. I'll look and sound like a fool. People will think I'm an imposter. Who am I to say this out loud?" I get it. I've been there, and I still don't feel I have it all together, but with tenacity and a vision anything is possible.

Before we dive into each of the twelve most destructive beliefs that hold you back from accomplishing your dreams, I am going to leave you with one small piece of advice. I am lovingly asking you today to keep moving forward. Even if you don't feel ready. I am going to ask you to quit waiting for that special sign, that first customer, more money in the bank, more clarity, to be more _____ or less _____, more time, and so on.

The longer you wait for the perfect moment or sign, the more anxiety and stress you will experience, and the more unclear you will feel about your decision. Today, I invite you to act in a way that your future self will be proud of. Imagine how good it will feel to wholeheartedly dive into these principles and in six months or a year from now be able to say to

yourself, *Thank you—thank you for doing the uncomfortable work because look at where I am today.*

While reading this book, I want you to be open to thinking bigger. I want you to leave your judgment at the door. It's very easy to read a story and say, "I can't do that because my circumstances are different." But I want to say this again: leave your judgment at the door! Each time you catch yourself in a frenzy stating, "But I can't," I invite you to replace it with, "Actually, I can." Begin with an open mind, open to the possibility that anyone (yes, you!) can create a life and business of purpose, passion, and abundance.

LIE #1

I Need to Have It All Together

For much of my life I've felt less than qualified or competent and more like the hot mess express. This was certainly true when I entered graduate school at Columbia University in 2008. First of all, Columbia University? Ummm, who did I think I was? My life felt like a disaster, and the staff and faculty would be sure to find out I didn't have it together enough to be a real student. My relationships were unsteady. I felt alone. I felt no one liked me. I felt I didn't fit in, like an outsider in groups. But the saddest reality was that I felt like I didn't belong in my own body and presence. I couldn't stand myself. I believed I was fat, ugly, dumb, and incapable of success. My mindset was so mired in lies and limited thinking that owning a business or making an impact in this world never even crossed my mind. I didn't believe that there was a purpose for my life. Why would there be?

During this time I was struggling with an eating disorder that had plagued me for years. I'd done a pretty good job of

hiding it from everyone in my life. People thought I ate healthy or had food intolerances that kept me from indulging in the things I used to enjoy. One evening in my second semester, though, it became clear I'd no longer be able to hide it. I had just hopped out of the shower in my tiny Upper West Side apartment. I had ten minutes before my boyfriend arrived, and I was rummaging through my closet in a frenzy trying to find something to wear. I looked in the mirror at my diminishing frame and panicked. I couldn't go out looking like this—looking as fat as I did. Today, of course, I can clearly recognize this as distorted thinking—none of these beliefs about myself and my body were grounded in reality. But at that time, there was no convincing me I was wrong. I truly believed it. I'd think to myself, How could he love me looking like this?

When my boyfriend arrived, I was in tears. I told him I couldn't leave—I didn't want anyone to see me. Even greater than my fear of others seeing my “fat” body, there was a much deeper fear: that because I had issues, I was no good to anyone.

I was going to school to be a therapist, but my own life was the furthest from together. *How will I ever be able to help others if I have something wrong with me? Don't all good therapists have it together?* This was my question and something I truly believed. Deep down I felt I wasn't qualified and never would be because I couldn't get my life together. Luckily that day I had the slightest bit of clarity, power, and discernment, which led me to make the right decision: to first confess to my boyfriend everything that was happening, and then to go and get the help I needed. By leaning into my own weakness, claiming it, and agreeing to face it head on, I opened up a small space for healing—and for the possibility of actually achieving my dreams.

My entire life I was a people pleaser. I did everything I could to make others like me, keep them as friends, and make them proud. What held me back from getting help was my fear of disappointing others—whether my parents, my friends, or my professors. Can you relate to this? Do you hide the fact that you don't have it all together because you don't want to let people down, or do you fear that others will view you as weak? Or perhaps you feel like you *shouldn't* be struggling with anything. I wrestled with this one too. I was abundantly blessed with the happiest of childhoods. I would say to myself, *I've had a good life on paper; how can I possibly be unhappy? I should be grateful for the things I've been given.* But you probably know as well as I do that your internal beliefs don't always mirror your external circumstances. There are any number of reasons you might feel inadequate or broken even when your life looks great on the outside—and there is no shame in that.

We Are All Winging It

“I don't think I can do this. If my current and potential clients only knew how much I'm really winging it in this business, I doubt they'd want to work with me.” I can't tell you how many times I have heard this phrase from more-than-capable, seasoned, well-educated women who come to me for business coaching. These women, many of whom are therapists, attorneys, business consultants, marketers, photographers, etc., have a picture in their mind of what a professional, successful businesswoman must look like. And no matter how hard they work to move toward what they see as success, it never feels like they've done quite enough. And as these women grow, they continue to raise their own bar of what having it all together looks like.

It's a never-ending cycle. "Once I feel in control of this particular area, I'll be set in my business," they insist. Even as they gain experience and make progress, they feel as though nothing has changed—the inadequacy and the limiting belief that they don't have it together enough to succeed persists. "But Kate, if I could just get to x, y, or z place in my business, I will feel legit and no longer in a frenzy of winging it."

Do you relate to this—a sense that no matter how hard you work, you never have things together the way you think you should? That while you may present a nice façade, you're actually a total mess behind the scenes? That everyone else has it together, but you don't—and therefore, your dream for your business will never truly flourish? Well, guess what? This feeling is a lie—and a big one. It's the first lie I want to tackle in this book because it underlies so many others—the sense that you're not enough will spread and infect every aspect of your business life if you're not careful. This lie will convince you that even though you've done everything you can to prepare to launch your business, you aren't ready to take the first step. It will have you believing that even though your business is booming, you don't have what it takes to expand. It may even softly whisper to you that when times get tough, it's because you're a failure and you should just give up.

Ladies, if you don't deal with this lie from the get-go, it will continue to spread, robbing each new accomplishment of the joy and pride it deserves. You'll find yourself even more disappointed when you reach that place you once believed would be your saving grace. Every rung up the ladder will only remind you of how far you still think you have to go. That's why we have to crack through this lie right now. I am going to confidently tell you this today:

- YOU are enough exactly as you are.
- YOU have what it takes to create a life and business of your dreams.
- YOU are already making an impact, whether you believe it or not.
- YOU already have the power within to create the success you dream of.

I want to help you believe that you have what it takes to show up as your best self—that you have it together *enough*, for this moment right now, so you *can feel together* in that next phase. Because the truth is, we don't have to change anything about our circumstances. We just have to change how we view them and how we view ourselves.

The quick and easy answer to achieving more peace around our circumstances is acceptance. And the long and hard answer to achieving more peace about our circumstances is acceptance. Many dislike the word *acceptance* because they take it literally: *I have to agree with this circumstance*. But what acceptance actually means is not approval or agreement, but solely *acknowledgement* of the circumstance.

Let's just say you experience a not-so-ideal situation. Your perspective of this situation is evident—there is nothing you can change about it, thus, you have *accepted* the situation. However, accepting that this event happened to you does not mean that you are in approval or agreement with it: *I do not agree with what happened, but I will choose to shift my thinking around it and move forward. I can acknowledge that I don't have it all together and still shift my mindset around this situation to move myself and my business toward success*. It's essential to

understand that the work must be done internally in order to experience fulfillment in any current or future place on your journey. Let's dig into how this can be possible for you. Ready?

Leaning into My Weakness

Going back to that breakdown in my apartment, I knew all of this was no longer about everyone else. This was about me. If I did not help myself, I would be incapable of helping others. Until I acknowledged that I didn't have it all together—and that maybe it was *okay*—I wasn't going to accomplish any of the things I wanted for my life. And so I took what felt to me like a huge step: I began therapy. I was beyond scared. I had no idea what to expect. It felt as though my heart was jumping out of my chest, but I did it anyway. Because the truth is, radical things don't happen unless we are prepared to take big, scary steps.

You Don't Need to Have It All Together

Here's a truth—I don't think we ever completely have it together. I don't know about you, but I am quite skeptical of those who look like they've got every aspect of their life in order. You know, the perfectly posed family pictures on Instagram, the clutter-free, stock-photography-worthy desk and kitchen, posting about their perfect boyfriend, traveling on fancy vacations, yada yada yada, the list goes on. It may sound and look amazing from afar—but my guess is that the reality is much less picture-perfect.

Chances are, your life has felt or currently feels more like a disaster than a magazine-worthy photo spread. Maybe you are wondering how you will ever quit replaying stories in your

mind of how that first business failed. Maybe you are wondering how you will ever heal from that breakup and find the strength to keep building the business. Maybe you are wondering how you will ever appear to have it all together in your business when depression is keeping you in bed.

Well, take heart: I believe there is a purpose for your life and for your business. I know right now you may feel like a disaster, lacking direction and clarity, but little by little a vision is being unpacked. And do not let anyone make you believe that success requires that you have it all together. That's right—we are not required to show up perfectly from day one, let alone ever; which means you don't have to expect that of yourself either. If you want to find success in pursuing your business goals, you've got to drop the lie that you need to have it together and lean into the truth that you are acceptable—even amazing—just the way you are. You are enough. Just because that's true doesn't mean it's easy, of course—you know this as well as I do. So let's look at a few tangible, concrete ways you can ditch the lie of having it all together and start living as your best self today.

Build Your Confidence

It's nearly impossible to feel confident when we think we need to have it all together. But the more you grow your confidence, the more you become okay with *not* having it all together. I've been working on my confidence the past eleven years, and it's become easier to accept my faults and imperfections.

So where do you start with confidence building? Ultimately with statements of truth, which we also call affirmations. First, you need to believe that you are good enough in this very moment—even as you continue to refine your life daily.

Consider writing one or more of the following affirmations on notecards and placing them around your home to continually renew your mind:

1. My life has purpose. I was born to _____.
2. My life has meaning, and that thing I was born to do will bring significance to my soul.
3. It's okay if it takes me longer than I expect to achieve my goals.
4. I am enough exactly where I am today, and I have nothing to prove.

Second, you need to be able to turn the focus outward. When we hone in on ourselves, we tend to become overwhelmed by our insecurities, perceived flaws, and fear of failure. But the truth is that this journey isn't about us—it's about finding a bigger purpose for our life. There are people out there waiting to receive our special gifts and talents. When we don't step into our confidence, the world misses out. You have something so very special that someone else doesn't have. Don't keep it to yourself. Think about those past iterations of yourself—the woman who needed someone like you mentoring, leading, or serving her with your current gifts.

Third, make a list of your achievements to visibly remind yourself of how far you've come. Take some time to fill out the space below. If you are having difficulty finding five, I want you to think of what others have said you've achieved and write those down. After completing this exercise, I guarantee you will feel more confident than you did just a few minutes ago.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Remember, you are qualified and successful exactly where you are with the resources that you already have.

Here is a last little boost of encouragement for you. You need positive self-talk to act as a shield to protect you from lies and negative thought patterns. When the false belief that you need to have it all together threatens to undermine your confidence, try using something like the script below, which I often return to as a mantra. Remind yourself of how far you have come, and celebrate where you currently are.

Where I am in this moment is EXACTLY where I need to be. My level of confidence today is far beyond what it was _____. [Fill in with a time period when you had a big challenge.] There are women who would kill for the level of confidence that I have in this very moment. I don't have to be perfect in order to make an impact and find success in my business. I am qualified exactly where I am.

Fake It Till You Become It

Trust me—you aren't the only one who feels she's winging it 24/7. Even the people who I thought had it all together with major successes have reported to me quite the opposite: on the inside, they felt totally unqualified and uncertain. The difference, though, is that they are okay with this reality—they own the fact that they will never truly have it all together.

They know that business is about stepping outside of comfort zones daily, even when they're not feeling prepared. I'm sure you've heard the term "Fake it till you make it." I take this a step further: if you can practice faking it enough, in time, you are destined to *become* it.

When my confidence was at an all-time low in college, I began to practice this concept of "Fake it until you become it." I daydreamed about what my life could look like if I weren't struggling with an eating disorder. I visualized being free from the eating disorder and telling others about my story. I could see myself on a stage speaking to women. I could picture myself in black high heels, dress pants, and a white button-down shirt with my hair pulled back, walking across a stage holding a nifty presentation clicker.

At that time, I believed this was something that could never happen, but I challenged myself to pretend I was already there. I embodied confidence even in the midst of insecurity: I began to stand tall, dress confidently, walk purposefully, and speak more slowly. In time not only did I begin making decisions that the confident, more poised Kate would make, but I also began going for the things that felt way out of reach. And to my surprise, little by little I began to grasp on to those things that once felt impossible. Years later I was introduced to a fascinating TED Talk on this very topic by a woman named Amy Cuddy.¹ She takes it a step further and encourages you to practice walking around a room doing something she calls "power poses." This exercise not only mentally prepares you, but also physically helps you step into that more confident version of yourself.

Take a moment and in the space below write about what your life could look like if you *became* the confident, successful woman you want to be. Where would you be standing, and

what would you be wearing? How would you be spending your days, weekends, and evenings? Who would you be hanging out with? How would you be impacting the world? Don't second-guess or say *x, y, z* is too far off; just write what comes to you.

Does this seem unattainable? I promise, it's not. How you perceive your future self *is* 100 percent attainable—in fact, she's already there beneath all of those layers you've been holding on to. And I am going to challenge you to start showing up as her today. Little by little, place yourself in situations that feel out of your comfort zone. Act as if you already are that future self—take on her attitudes, postures, and style, even if only for a single moment each day.

This next exercise is rooted in the theory of systematic desensitization²—essentially a behavior modification that introduces new patterns of behavior little by little until we've become desensitized to the thing we were once afraid of. It works in all kinds of situations, but it can be particularly useful to us when we're trying to build our confidence as successful businesswomen. For instance, if fear of public speaking is holding you back, consider how you could apply this concept:

1. Begin with the visualization activity above, closing your eyes and imagining what speaking on stage to an audience of 100 would look and feel like.

2. Speak to yourself in the mirror, practicing a simple three-minute speech (for example, how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich).
3. Record your voice and play it back.
4. Record a video and watch it.
5. Find a friend or family member to practice on.
6. Give your three-minute speech at a local meet up.
7. Say yes (even though you feel afraid) to an opportunity to speak at your next community networking event.

Now get creative and find a topic that feels true to you! Several years back I had a client who was given this exercise for homework. She chose to record a video on how to apply moisturizer to her face. At first she experienced some fear and resistance to doing this, but after completing the exercise she said she experienced a newfound level of confidence.

Most likely this will be an ongoing process, depending on the size of the fear and how quickly you want to immerse yourself in it. You're not going to go from panic to being on stage sharing a mic with Oprah overnight. However, this is one of the most effective ways to overcome fears and step out of your comfort zone.

The Power of Letting Go

Without the first act of accepting that I didn't have it all together, I would not be here to share this message. I'll be honest, it felt more than intimidating, and I had no idea how I'd ever be in a place of having it all together. But as I let go of the belief that I had to be perfectly together to take the first step, I finally found the freedom to put one foot in front of the other.

I bet you're wondering how exactly to let go of the belief that you have to have it all together to move forward. Honestly, I kept this exercise for last because although the simplest, it's certainly the hardest. We want tangible steps that we can hold on to and measure over time. Letting go is not that. It's a mind, body, spirit connection that *takes time* to cultivate and grow—and it's a big part of overcoming the lies that hold you back from being the boss you dream of. That said, there are some practices you can engage in today that will move you toward a place of letting go. Here's how I encourage clients to take the first steps:

1. Say what it is you're struggling with out loud: "I feel I don't have it together enough to be successful." Name and identify the fear.
2. Declare out loud: "I've done the best that I can do, and now I let go of the rest."

Afterward I encourage you to take the necessary time and do the work to begin to release this limiting belief. Ladies, releasing and letting go of negative patterns takes TIME! I wish these shifts could happen overnight, but that's just not feasible. After you've walked through these steps, I want to encourage you to walk away feeling satisfied that you have done your part and the outcome is out of your hands. I do this by visualizing handing this situation over and surrendering it to God. Depending on your beliefs, this may be different for you. How do you visualize letting go of these expectations?

If you can begin to cultivate this approach toward your fears and insecurities, things will begin to feel easier and lighter for you. My life is ten times more full in many ways today than

it was before starting my businesses—and it could feel much more challenging than it used to. But honestly, I experience more peace and fulfillment because I use these steps daily in my life. I quit trying to control my environment, and there’s a freedom that has come with this. In letting go, I no longer carry the weight of the world on my shoulders—believing that I need to have everything perfectly together to realize my dreams.

Having It Together Like a Boss

Before we move on from this limiting belief, I want to reassure you that I still don’t have it together. Sure, I’ve come a long way from where I once was, but I still battle feeling like a hot mess. We *all* do—and we can still experience success despite not having it all together. You don’t need to be perfect, it’s about accepting that you are fully capable of thinking like a boss *today*. You’ve taken the reins to change the trajectory of your life. If you had never suffered disappointment, mistakes, or hardship, do you really think you’d be starting or running a business? Every moment of failure has shaped you, and if it weren’t for those experiences, would you have had the courage to pursue this path? I highly doubt it.

Often what we see as weakness or a lack of having it all together is the very force that has pushed us ahead. And if we can let go and embrace this truth, we can move ahead in confidence that there is beauty in the imperfection of our journey. We have so much to offer exactly as we are. Don’t let the lie that you need to have it all together hold you back from being a confident, successful boss *today*.