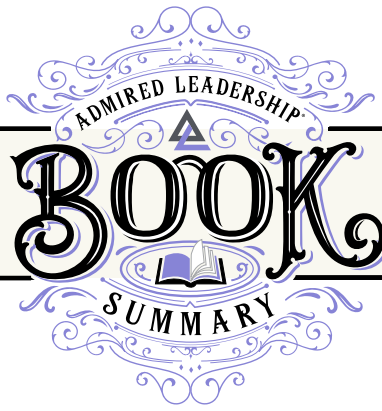




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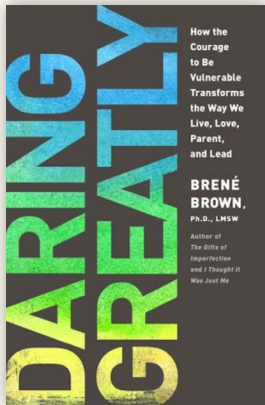
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Daring Greatly

How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead.

BOOK AUTHOR: **BRENÉ BROWN**

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In ***Daring Greatly***, bestselling author and research professor Brené Brown defines vulnerability as the risk and exposure that all of us face every day. According to Brown, there is no escaping vulnerability, but there are ways we can nurture “the courage and willingness to engage,” so that we can be transformed as leaders, parents, and friends. Through hundreds of interviews, the author unveils common ways in which we shield ourselves from vulnerability. Brown then suggests new frames of mind to help us put down these shields and become “wholehearted” in how we treat ourselves, our friends and family, and the people in our organizations.

Key Quote:

“Rather than sitting on the sidelines and hurling judgments and advice, we must dare to show up and let ourselves be seen. This is vulnerability. This is daring greatly” (p. 2). — **Brené Brown**

Key Points:

What It Means to Dare Greatly. Daring greatly is the willingness to engage authentically, to share our gifts, efforts, and ideas with others, and to be vulnerable despite the risks. “It’s being all in” (p. 2).

Scarcity: Looking Inside Our Culture of “Never Enough.” Scarcity is our tendency to believe we are never good enough. It is a growing theme in our culture, yet it is not what we actually want for ourselves. We don’t want to live a life focused on fear or blame, instead, we want to be brave.

Debunking the Vulnerability Myths. In this chapter, Brown discusses what true vulnerability is not. It is not weakness, it is not avoidable, it is not synonymous with “letting it all hang out,” and it is **not** for loners. Being vulnerable is a brave thing to do, not a weak thing to do.

Understanding and Combating Shame. Shame thrives in secrets and silence. But exposure through “language and story bring light to shame and destroy it” (p. 58). Recognizing and understanding shame, and effectively addressing it, sets us free to heal and to be daring. Our mistakes and weaknesses should be acknowledged and addressed, but they should not define us.

The Vulnerability Armory. Recognizing and addressing the forms of armor we wear to protect ourselves opens us up to joy, imperfect beauty, authentic experience, true belonging, mindful and intentional openness, being present, and healthy accountability.

Mind the Gap: Cultivating Change and Closing the Disengagement Divide.

As you seek to dare greatly, Brown explains that it is important to “hold our aspirational values up against what I call our practiced values” (p. 176).

Disruptive Engagement: Daring to Rehumanize Engagement and Work.

Innovation happens when people can share without being ridiculed, and courageous leaders can forge the way in this endeavor. This kind of engagement is disruptive. “To reignite creativity, innovation, and learning,” leaders must always be “learning how to engage with vulnerability, and recognizing and combating shame” (pp. 187-188).

Wholehearted Parenting: Daring to Be the Adults

We Want Our Children to Be. Brown shares the quote, “What we **are** teaches the child more than what we say, so we must be what we want our children to become” (p. 217).


Key Concepts:

DARING GREATLY

Brown uses an excerpt from Theodore Roosevelt’s “Citizenship in a Republic” speech to define and illuminate vulnerability:


It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly. . . (p. 1)

Brown writes that “daring greatly,” as Roosevelt explains it, is being engaged fully in the “arena” of life rather than letting our fears or struggles with perfection hold us back (p. 2).



*“Language and story bring light
to shame and destroy it.”*

*Our mistakes and weaknesses
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THE SCARCITY PROBLEM

Brown defines the societal implications of scarcity as the “never enough” problem. We wake up in the morning and our first thought is that we didn’t get enough sleep. We compare ourselves to others and think we are not good enough, not successful enough. “We spend inordinate amounts of time calculating how much we have, want, and don’t have, and how much everyone else has, needs, and wants” (p. 26).


The scarcity mindset causes us to perpetuate a culture of shame, comparison, and disengagement and ultimately inhibits “our willingness to own our vulnerabilities and our ability to engage with the world from a place of worthiness” (p. 29).

Brown writes that the opposite of “never enough” isn’t overabundance, but “enough.” She names this way of thinking “Wholeheartedness.” When we are living as wholehearted people, we recognize our worthiness and can face “uncertainty, exposure, and emotional risks” because we know we are enough, even if we should fail (p. 29).



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SHAME AND SHAME RESILIENCE



One of the casualties of living in scarcity is the pattern of shame. When we attach such high values to the work that we produce or the appearances we portray to other people, we distort our self-worth. When we fail or make mistakes, we fall back into thinking we are “never enough,” which causes us to hang back instead of trying again. Brown writes that a big part of “daring greatly” is having shame resilience: “Shame resilience is the ability to say ‘This hurts. This is disappointing, maybe even devastating. But success and recognition and approval are not the values that drive me. My value is courage and I was just courageous.’” (p. 67).

Brown writes that one of the first steps of learning and practicing shame resilience is moving from self-talk that reflects shame to self-talk that reflects guilt instead. For example, if we made lunch plans with a friend and then forgot about them, saying, “I’m a terrible friend” communicates shame and that we are bad or wrong. Instead, saying, “I can’t believe I **did** that; what a [terrible] thing **to do**” communicates guilt and the sense that our actions were wrong or bad, but we as a person are not – we can change our behavior and amend the situation (p. 72).

Shame resilience allows you to experience vulnerability and “to come out on the other side of the shame experience with more courage, compassion, and connection than we had going into it” (p. 74). Brown writes that the actionable steps for achieving shame resilience include recognizing shame and its triggers; measuring messages and expectations with reality; reaching out to others about shame; and talking openly about shame.

THE VULNERABILITY ARMORY AND ANTIDOTES

Brown provides a series of common practices that we use to protect ourselves from being hurt or shamed and to avoid vulnerability:

“Foreboding joy.” When we live in scarcity, experiencing joy can feel “too good to be true.” Even in joyous moments, we prepare ourselves for tragedy and undermine our ability to fully experience joy.


Brown writes that practicing gratitude for the “person, the beauty, the connection, or simply the moment before us” is an effective way to combat constant foreboding (p. 123).

“Perfectionism.” We try to avoid shame, judgment, and blame by thinking that we can “look perfect and do everything perfectly” (p. 130). Perfectionism is destructive, unattainable, and addictive.


Brown writes that practicing self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness in place of practicing perfectionism are better approaches to vulnerability.

“Numbing.” Numbing our vulnerabilities includes busying ourselves with other outlets and thinking that our shame, judgment, or other truths won’t catch up with us. Numbing can be making sure our schedules are “crazy busy,” stress eating, or self-medicating with alcohol, caffeine, or sleeping pills.

Brown writes that “setting boundaries, spending less time and energy hustling and winning over people who don’t matter, and seeing the value of working on cultivating connection with family and close friends” are strategies to combat numbing and approach vulnerabilities while daring greatly (p. 146).



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Disruptive Engagement

Organizations can reach new levels of “creativity, innovation, and learning” if they can “rehumanize education and work” (p. 187). Leaders need to acknowledge scarcity and its impact on our lives. They need to learn how to have conversations with their teams about engaging with vulnerability and building shame resilience, rather than letting the status quo of scarcity live on. Brown writes that the four best strategies for building a culture of shame resilience are the following.

1. “Supporting leaders who are willing to dare greatly and facilitate honest conversations about shame and cultivate shame-resilient cultures.”
2. “Facilitating a conscientious effort to see where shame might be functioning in the organization and how it might even be creeping into the way we engage with our co-workers and students.”
3. “Normalizing is a critical shame-resilience strategy. Leaders and managers can cultivate engagement by helping people know what to expect. What are common struggles? How have other people dealt with them? What have your experiences been?”
4. “Training all employees on the differences between shame and guilt, and teaching them how to give and receive feedback in a way that fosters growth and engagement” (p. 196).

THE DARING GREATLY LEADERSHIP MANIFESTO

*To the CEOs and teachers. To the principals and the managers.
To the politicians, community leaders, and decision-makers:*

We want to show up, we want to learn, and we want to inspire.

We are hardwired for connection, curiosity, and engagement.

We crave purpose, and we have a deep desire to create and contribute.

We want to take risks, embrace our vulnerabilities, and be courageous.

When learning and working are dehumanized – when you no longer see us and no longer encourage our daring, or when you only see what we produce or how we perform – we disengage and turn away from the very things that the world needs from us: our talent, our ideas, and our passion.

What we ask is that you engage with us, show up beside us, and learn from us.

Feedback is a function of respect; when you don't have honest conversations with us about our strengths and our opportunities for growth, we question our contributions and your commitment.

Above all else, we ask that you show up, let yourself be seen, and be courageous.

Dare Greatly with us (p. 212)

THE WHOLEHEARTED PARENTING MANIFESTO

Above all else, I want you to know that you are loved and loveable.

You will learn this from my words and actions – the lessons on love are in how I treat you and how I treat myself.

I want you to engage with the world from a place of worthiness.

You will learn that you are worthy of love, belonging, and joy every time you see me practice self-compassion and embrace my own imperfections.

We will practice courage in our family by showing up, letting ourselves be seen, and honoring vulnerability. We will share our stories of struggle and strength. There will always be room in our home for both.

We will teach you compassion by practicing compassion with ourselves first; then with each other. We will set and respect boundaries; we will honor hard work, hope, and perseverance. Rest and play will be family values, as well as family practices.

You will learn accountability and respect by watching me make mistakes and make amends, and by watching how I ask for what I need and talk about how I feel.

I want you to know joy; so together we will practice gratitude.

I want you to feel joy; so together we will learn how to be vulnerable.

When uncertainty and scarcity visit, you will be able to draw from the spirit that is a part of our everyday life.

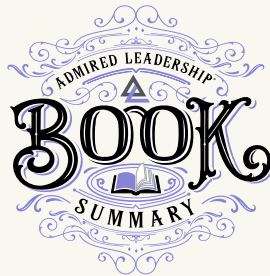
Together we will cry and face fear and grief. I will want to take away your pain, but instead I will sit with you and teach you how to feel it.

We will laugh and sing and dance and create. We will always have permission to be ourselves with each other. No matter what, you will always belong here.

As you begin your Wholehearted journey, the greatest gift that I can give you is to live and love with my whole heart and to dare greatly.

I will not teach or love or show you anything perfectly; but I will let you see me, and I will always hold sacred the gift of seeing you. Truly, deeply; seeing you (p. 245).

Brown, B. (2012). **Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead.** New York: Gotham Books.



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The Latest and Greatest Books for Leaders

We work hard to stay abreast of the current writings on leadership, especially those books our clients are reading or have been recommended to read. As a benefit to our clients and to facilitate our own learning, the Admired Leadership team has long maintained a tradition of summarizing the newest books of interest to leaders. Better to read a summary for eight minutes before investing eight hours in the entire book. After reading a good summary, we believe leaders are able to make better choices as to what to ignore, what to peruse and what to make the time to read closely.