

Discussion Guide for Church-Wide Book Read

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead

Author: Brené Brown, PH.D., LMSW

Introduction

My Adventure in the Arena

“Vulnerability is the core, the heart, the center, of meaningful human experiences.” (Page 12)

Would you make this statement? Why or why not?

Chapter One

Scarcity: Looking Inside Our Culture of “Never Enough”

How would you fill in these blanks?

I am never _____ enough.

There is never enough _____ to go around.

What does your faith offer you as a rebuttal to these thoughts many of us have?

Chapter Two

Debunking the Vulnerability Myths

“Whenever someone supports you, or is kind to you, or sticks up for you, or honors what you share with them as private, you put marbles in the jar. When people are mean, or disrespectful, or share your secrets, marbles come out.” (Page 48)

1. Do you have marble jar friends? How do you earn their trust?

2. Are you a marble jar friend? What do you do to earn your friends' trust?

“I did believe that I could opt out of feeling vulnerable, so when it happened – when the phone rang with unimaginable news; or when I was scared; or when I loved so fiercely that rather than feeling gratitude and joy I could only prepare for loss – I controlled things.” (Page 55)

3. Are there times you feel the need to control things in order to look brave on the outside when you are fearful on the inside? What are the benefits and the consequences of this behavior?

4. As a church family how can we support one another when we are feeling vulnerable because of our current circumstances?

“Nothing has transformed my life more than realizing that it’s a waste of time to evaluate my worthiness by weighing the reaction of the people in the stands. The people who love me and will be there regardless of the outcome are within arm’s reach. This realization changed everything.” (Page 56)

5. What if God was the one in the stands looking back at you every time? What do you think you are worth in God’s eyes? Is there any performance or action you need to do to be loved more by God?

Chapter Three

Understanding and Combating Shame

1. Did you gain any insight about guilt and shame from this chapter? If so, what?

2. Do you agree or disagree that gender impacts what causes a person to feel shame?

3. Do you hold onto “a list” of what is required for your worthiness? If so, what would you have to let go of in order to move toward wholeheartedness?

Chapter Four

The Vulnerability Armory

Think about the ways you shield yourself from vulnerability. How would you fill in these blanks?

My first instinct is to _____, but that never worked, so now I _____,
and that's changed my life. I spent years _____ until I one day I tried
_____, and it made my relationship stronger.

1. Brown says we put up shields to block feeling vulnerable. What are some of the shields people use?

2. Did you recognize any shields that you have used in the past? What might be an alternative way to respond the next time you are in this situation?

"I believe that owning our worthiness is the act of acknowledging that we are sacred. Perhaps embracing vulnerability and overcoming numbing is ultimately about the care and feeding of our spirits." (Page 141)

3. What ways have you found to feed your spirit? What new ways would you be willing to try?

Chapter Five

Mind the Gap

1. On page 174 Brown lists 10 questions that she uses to understand the values and culture of a group. Can you apply these questions to a small group that you are a part of?

2. If so, what did you learn about your group?

3. Brown says that calendars are the truth tellers. What does your calendar say about your values?

4. Look at the church's calendar. What does it tell us about our values as a community?

Chapter Six

Disruptive Engagement: Daring to Rehumanize Education and Work

“Blame is simply the discharging of pain and discomfort. We blame when we’re uncomfortable and experience pain – when we’re vulnerable, angry, hurt, in shame, grieving.” (Page 195)

1. Has this been your experience? Share if you would like.

2. Brown talks about how moving from blame to acceptance and/or accountability. What would it take for a relationship to move to acceptance and/or accountability?

Chapter Seven

Wholehearted Parenting: Daring to be the Adults We Want Our Children to Be

“One of the biggest surprises in this research was learning that fitting in and belonging are not the same thing.” (Page 232)

Brown says fitting in is about being who we need to be to be accepted, while belonging doesn't require us to do anything except be our true selves.

1. What can we do in our church to create a strong sense of belonging?

2. Are there other thoughts about the book you'd like to share?

3. What questions would you like to ask Brené Brown?

4. Were there any “ah ha” moments of ways we might “dare greatly” – as a community of faith?