

Dare to Lead - by Brené Brown

Reviewed by : M. Ridwan Zalbina

Introduction

If asked to describe some characteristics of a great leader, most people wouldn't use adjectives like "vulnerable," "empathetic," "open-minded," or "willing to ask for help." Yet that's exactly how Dr. Brené Brown, a leadership expert and research professor at the University of Houston, would describe one.

Brown has been studying leadership for over two decades. Her 2010 TED Talk, "The Power of Vulnerability," is one of the top five most viewed talks of all time, and she's written several New York Times bestsellers like "Daring Greatly" and "The Gifts of Imperfection," which have amassed thousands of positive reviews and accolades from some of the world's best leaders, thinkers, and doers.

Brown has tested the skills and processes in "Dare to Lead" with over 10,000 individuals. She's applied these concepts in more than 50 organizations, from giant entities such as the Gates Foundation and Shell to small family-owned businesses. According to Brown, the strategies outlined in this book have led to a significant positive impact on these organizations.

In "Dare to Lead," Brené Brown has created a handbook for anyone who wants to learn how to be an authentic, empathetic, and courageous leader. Her use of the word "leader" can apply to many different roles and situations. Brown defines a leader as "anyone who takes responsibility for recognizing the potential in other people or processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential."

About the Author

Brené Brown was born in 1965 in United States. She is a research professor at The Graduate Collage of Social Work at the University of Houston. She has spent the past two decades studying about courage, vulnerability, shame and empathy.

Brown is the author of 4# 1 New York Times bestsellers.

"Atlas of the Heart", "You Are Your Best Thing", "The Gifts of Imperfection", "Dare to Lead", "Braving the Wilderness", "Rising Strong", "Daring Greatly", "I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn't)", "The Power of Vulnerability", "Rising Strong as a Spiritual Practice"

For whom is this book dedicated

If you want to learn how to be a better leader, you need to forgot about all the status, power etc. Instead, be prepared to engage your heart and mind by finding out how the most courageous leaders think, feel and behave.

Main idea of this book

- Courage and vulnerability always go hand in hand
- Limiting your values to just two, you can be a successful person even in the most difficult times
- Vulnerability leads to innovation and why bravery and perfectionism don't mix

Summary of content

#1 Far from being weakness, vulnerability is an essential asset for innovation

What makes you feel vulnerable ? The author always question to thousands of individuals over 6 years of research. Gathering all the information that looks familiar, like : Vulnerability is the first date after your difficult divorce, starting out your first business or how you feel when you laid off from the company. So that is what the common terms for vulnerable. In fact, vulnerability can be described as universal human emotion that we feel when we expose ourselves to others during times of risk and uncertainty.

However, most of us may know vulnerability as a weakness, but there is not single piece of empirical data suggest that vulnerability is associated with weakness.

Vulnerability contains a lot of uncertainty characteristics in the creative process, since innovation often requires some portions of failures to be successful.

#2 Courageous leaders give and solicit honest feedback

Sometimes, the truth is hurts. As soon the author Brene Brown went through a situation that left her stunned, her collaborators sat down with her to discuss some of the concerns she had.

They told her, how bad was her time management and how bad her habits on settings the deadlines, which they usually struggled to find. Although not be easy to hear criticism. But to be a practical on dare to lead, she was grateful for the feedback from her team.

After all, for her to be clear is to be gentle, like using a communication that is not clear is the same as being cruel. In that way, if you do not use clarity when you set your expectations about what you want from your contributors, you will blame them for not giving more.

According to Brown, the time that you spend for doing this, will be less than the time you spent for trying to match the unproductive and ineffective behaviour of your subordinates or employees

It is important to always ask for clear feedback from team members by listening to them truly.

#3 Core values anchor and guide daring leadership

Our values inform our judgements about what is most important in our lives. The most courageous leaders that the author came across during her research were those who had the most clarity about what their values were. During times of uncertainty and vulnerability, their values were an important support to them. They were more willing to take risks, secure in the knowledge that their values would guide them through without compromising their integrity.

#4 Trust is an important and Crucial aspect of our working relationship

First, we need to ask ourselves : What does the concept of trust really mean? The authors team of researchers has highlight seven behaviours that could encourage trust, expressed together with the acronym "BRAVING".

B : Boundaries, the element of trust involves respecting others boundaries.

R : Reliability, doing what we say we will. In short, Being aware of our abilities and limitations so that we do not end up overpromising and under delivering the commitment

A : Accountability means we take responsibility and apologize for our mistakes

V : Vault means safe, this behaviour is extremely important because there is information that is not ours to convey. People need to make sure we keep their confidences to ourselves

I : Integrity. This is fifth behaviour that means choose courage instead of comfort. Choose to do what is right instead of what is easy, legal or advantageous. Practices the value you convey.

N : Non-judgment, with it people can freely tell us what they really feel. That's because we won't judge them for it

G : Generous. Being generous in our attitudes we increase the chances of people to trust us, as they will know that we see the best in others, not the worst.

Implement this 7 behaviours to become successfull. trustworthy leader.

#5 Learning how to fail help us to be brave

Research has shown that when it comes to teaching leaders resilience skills, timing is everything. Specifically, teaching them early on as part of a wider training program is more likely to result in them demonstrating courageous behaviors. Why? Quite simply, they are confident in their ability to get back up again if their daring behavior doesn't pay off. So companies that fail to instill these resilience skills in their workforce are effectively deterring their leaders, both present and future, from bravery. Some organizations may worry that teaching leaders how to fail from the get-go promotes a culture of low expectations.

#6: Perfectionism holds us back from self-improvement and true courage.

Right from childhood, we seek to shield ourselves from vulnerable feelings like disappointment, hurt and diminishment. By building a wall out of our behaviors, emotions and thoughts, we protect ourselves from the big bad world. But to live and lead with courage, as we already know, we must let ourselves be vulnerable. This means letting down our walls and recognizing protective thoughts and behaviors for the defense mechanisms they really are. One of the most pervasive types of self-protection is perfectionism. To become daring leaders, we must rid ourselves of perfectionism. To do so, let's start by busting some of the myths around this damaging phenomenon. Perhaps the most damaging myth of all is that perfectionism is about self-improvement and striving for excellence. But in fact, perfectionism is really about attempting to win approval. Furthermore, perfectionists are more likely to miss opportunities and experience mental paralysis that keeps them from fully engaging in life. Why? Because their fears of being criticized or not meeting the expectations of others keeps them from entering the messy arena of life, where healthy competition and striving for true greatness occur to become a daring leader, take off the armor of perfectionism and jump into the fray of life. You might make mistakes in the process, but you'll gain something valuable in exchange: the courage to succeed and lead.

Analysis, Perspective & Evaluation

This book, I think is one of the most important and relevant book for us to bring it to our daily basis. We all ever had a failure of our leadership in many different areas : family, workplace, community, organization, governance, or anythin that could led us to engage with people.

What makes “Dare to Lead” so compelling is its humanness. Brown isn't afraid to share stories of her weaknesses, and of all the times she fell woefully short of doing her best. She's not afraid to detail the rifts she's had with her spouse or team because of her failures and weaknesses.

Some downside of this book, I think there is so much terms that likely unfamiliar with unless we have read other books. Maybe, it would have been more helpful to include the glossary in the book itself.

Despite all of that, this book is structured and carried with a good narration.

Conclusion

I think this book is more that about some factors to be a great leaders, but also for us to live a life in fast pace condition. How to embrace failure, how to maintain vulnerability to be an innovation throughout courageous. This book is really amazing to read, and it's really helpful to face the day in life, and learn to not afraid and take off the armor of perfectionism.