



January, 2019 In The Know Summary

Dare to Lead

Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.

by Brené Brown

Discussion Facilitator: [Janice Shack-Marquez](#)

About the Book

[Dare to Lead](#) is Brown's newest publication. The basic premise is that managers and executives must lead with three core mental qualities: **mindfulness**, **selflessness**, and **compassion**. One of the core concepts in the book is the notion of "Rumbling." "Rumbling" = Having a good/consequential conversation. Per Brown, you cannot be courageous if you are not willing to rumble—i.e., to be open and to discuss tough issues.

This book is filled with many insightful concepts and Brene-isms. We'll do our best to capture the concepts here:

Sample concepts around establishing a mindset for being a Daring Leader:

- "Embrace the stuff" = Bad things happen. Welcome it in. Figure out how to move forward.
- "Permission Slip" = Idea for opening a workshop/meeting is to ask participants to reflect on, "What do you need to give yourself permission to do/feel/not do, to be present this morning?"
- "Vulnerability" = Per Brown, when you set out to become a daring leader, you have to start with vulnerability. Example: "I used to work in a very macho work environment. I learned that I need to give myself permission to not be tough all the time." Trust comes before vulnerability. It's about being honest about having feelings. To feel is to be vulnerable.
 - Note: Feeling vulnerable is not (always) about divulging something personal or telling secrets.
 - Example of vulnerability in the workplace. Ask someone: "What do you need from me to be successful?" Or "What does support from me look like?"
- "Armored" = When you are "armored," you worry about what others will think. Often in the workplace, when you ask people what your greatest weakness is, you hear, "I am a perfectionist." When you are a perfectionist, you may be controlling and not give anyone permission to do something new. Also, in this mindset, you don't let yourself grow and develop.
- "Foreboding Joy" = The mindset of, "I am not going to be happy about this because I might lose it." Example: Your vacation is off to a great start, but you don't celebrate that day 1 of vacation was great, because it "might jinx things." In the workplace, leaders need to consciously lean into successes as much as they do with problems.

Activity: Draw a 1" X 1" box. Now, in that box, list the names of people whose opinions really matter to you. Reflect on the people whose names are on the list. Did you fill up the box? Did you have trouble filling up the box? What does this say about the core people in your life who you turn to for guidance and/or acceptance?

Concepts related to Shame/Guilt/Humiliation

- “Feelings” = We call emotions “feelings” because we feel them (physiologically) in our bodies. Need to get in touch with feelings and what it feels like to have different emotions. It gives you power and courage to be comfortable with discomfort when you can recognize the feelings.
- “Shame” = This is the emotion of not being good enough. If you don’t feel shame, you are a sociopath! We are all trained to be afraid of shame and to be afraid to talk about shame. Once we start talking about it, it has less hold on us. Where there is s that shame, there is rarely empathy.
- “Guilt” = Can be a productive emotion that allows for learning.
- “Humiliation” = Feeling that something bad happened to me, and I don’t deserve this. It can be productive.
- Observation: In a workplace where there is a culture of shame (perfectionism, favoritism), you don’t have a lot of vulnerability and honesty.

Concepts related to Feedback

- The group discussed the importance of giving positive feedback so people know what behaviors to repeat. Take time to notice something someone did, and tell them. Tell people why it matters or why it made an impact.
- Why don’t we give a lot of positive feedback?
 - It’s assumed you will do your job
 - If we give too much, we fear people will slack off
 - Feedback tends to be negative, and people want to avoid it
- Activity: Observe your speech. Calculate the ratio of compliments and criticism. How often do you give compliment versus criticize someone?

Concepts related to Values

- Brown’s book includes a list of 120 values. Idea for an exercise for Coaching Clients:
 - Create one index card for each value.
 - Work with client to sort values and prioritize. Brown says you only have two core values.
 - First, sort into: Most important / Somewhat important / Not important.
 - Then, compare “Most important” until you settle on your top two values.
 - Next step is to understand behaviors that reflect the values.
 - Think about: What are the things that you are likely to do that are not consistent with your core values?
- Discussion: Notion of “Polarities” can help you understand values. From Polarities, you navigate between two seemingly opposing forces. “Kindness” and being “Courageous,” for example.

Concepts related to Trust

- Survey: What do your team members do to earn your trust?
 - Top answer: I trust staff members who ask for help when you need help.
 - It’s about being honest. When a team member is at their most vulnerable, that is when they ask for help.
- Discussion: We live in a society of “fake it until you make it” and many success stories that reflect this. It works in an entrepreneurial setting, but note in an environment where you are a team member.

Seven Elements for Building Trust

1. **Boundaries:** You respect my boundaries, and when you’re not clear about what’s okay and not okay, you ask. You’re willing to say no.
2. **Reliability:** You do what you say you’ll do.
3. **Accountability:** You own your mistakes, apologize and make amends.
4. **Vault:** You don’t share information or experiences that are not yours to share.

5. **Integrity:** You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast or easy.
6. **Non-judgment:** I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can ask each other for help without judgment.
7. **Generosity:** You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words and actions of others.

Related Resources

- [Blog post by Laura Mendelow](#)
- Brené Brown's website <https://brenebrown.com/>

*The Chesapeake Bay Organizational Development Network (CBODN) Book Club is a monthly session, open to all learners. Each month, a presenter shares highlights from a book related to leadership, business, or coaching. There's no obligation to pre-read the book. The session summary is intended to provide a recap of the conversation at Book Club, rather than serve as a thorough book summary. [Register here](#) for upcoming events. For a listing of Book Club summaries, [click here](#).