

## February Live Happier Book Club: Daring Greatly by Brené Brown PhD, LMSW.

### Preface: What it means to Dare Greatly

*“Vulnerability is not weakness, and the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure we face every day are not optional. Our only choice is a question of engagement. Our willingness to own and engage with our vulnerability determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose; the level to which we protect ourselves from being vulnerable is a measure of our fear and disconnection.” Page 18 (iBook edition)*

1. How would you define vulnerability?
2. What are the beliefs you hold around vulnerability?
3. How was vulnerability viewed in your family? What were the lessons (spoken or unspoken) about being vulnerable?
4. Did you grow up seeing vulnerability modeled?
5. What’s your current comfort level with vulnerability?

### Introduction: My Adventure in the Arena

*“Vulnerability is the core, the heart, the center, of meaningful human experiences.” Page 55 (iBook edition)*

1. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

### Chapter 1: Scarcity

*“Scarcity thrives in a culture where everyone is hyperaware of lack. Everything from safety and love to money and resources feels restricted or lacking. 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.” Page 55 (iBook edition)*

1. Do you agree? Where does this play out in your life?

### Chapter 2: Debunking the Vulnerability Myths

*“If we want to reclaim the essential emotional part of our lives and reignite our passion and purpose, we have to learn how to own and engage with our vulnerability and how to feel the emotions that come with it.” Page 66 (iBook edition)*

1. How do you feel about this quote?
2. For you, what about vulnerability is the most frightening?

*“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 101 (iBook edition)*

1. How would your life look different if you no longer evaluated your worthiness by weighing the reaction of the people in the stands?
2. Who are the people who are with you in the arena?

*“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 88 (iBook edition)*

1. Who are your marble jar friends? How do they earn your trust?

### Chapter 3: Understanding and Combatting Shame

*“Understanding our shame tapes or gremlins is critical to overcoming shame because we can’t always point to a certain moment or a specific put-down at the hands of another person. Sometimes shame is the result of us playing the old recordings that were programmed when we were children or simply absorbed from the culture. My good friend and colleague Robert Hilliker says, “Shame started as a two-person experience, but as I got older I learned how to do shame all by myself.” Sometimes when we dare to walk into the arena the greatest critic we face is ourselves.” Page 117 (iBook edition)*

1. What are your “gremlins,” and what do they say to you to prevent you from moving forward?

*“Guilt = I did something bad. Shame = I am bad” Page 125 (iBook edition)*

1. How do you feel about these definitions?

*“Guilt is just as powerful as shame, but its influence is positive, while shame’s is destructive. In fact, in my research I found that shame corrodes the very part of us that believes we can change and do better.” Page 128 (iBook edition)*

1. Do you agree there is no good use of shame?

*“I mean the ability to practice authenticity when we experience shame, to move through the experience without sacrificing our values, and to come out on the other side of the shame experience with more courage, compassion, and connection than we had going into it. Shame resilience is about moving from shame to empathy—the real antidote ” Page 130 (iBook edition)*

1. How do you experience shame?
2. How do you experience empathy?

*“But the real struggle for women—what amplifies shame regardless of the category—is that we’re expected (and sometimes desire) to be perfect, yet we’re not allowed to look as if we’re working for it.”*

*Page 158 (iBook edition)*

*“Basically, men live under the pressure of one unrelenting message: Do not be perceived as weak.”* Page 160  
(iBook edition)

3. Based on your personal experiences, do the list of masculine and feminine norms ring true for you? Why or why not?

#### Chapter 4: The Vulnerability Armory

*“That’s the paradox here: Vulnerability is the last thing I want you to see in me, but the first thing I look for in you.”* Page 193 (iBook edition)

1. Do you agree with the above quote?
2. How do you feel around people who don’t let you in or who armor against vulnerability?

#### The Shield 1: Foreboding Joy

*“Once we make the connection between vulnerability and joy, the answer is pretty straightforward: We’re trying to beat vulnerability to the punch. We don’t want to be blindsided by hurt. We don’t want to be caught off-guard, so we literally practice being devastated or never move from self-elected disappointment.”*

*Page 207 (iBook edition)*

1. When are you most likely to experience “foreboding joy” in your life?
2. Do you agree with this philosophy?
3. Do you find yourself just waiting for the other shoe to drop?

#### Daring Greatly: Gratitude:

*“Gratitude, therefore, emerged from the data as the antidote to foreboding joy. In fact, every participant who spoke about the ability to stay open to joy also talked about the importance of practicing gratitude.”*

*Page 210 (iBook edition)*

1. Do you practice Gratitude?
2. How does Gratitude show up in your life?

#### The Shield 2: Perfectionism

*“Perfectionism is not the key to success. In fact, research shows that perfectionism hampers achievement. Perfectionism is correlated with depression, anxiety, addiction, and life paralysis or missed opportunities. The fear of failing, making mistakes, not meeting people’s expectations, and being criticized keeps us outside of the arena where healthy competition and striving unfolds.”* Page 221 (iBook edition)

1. Do you agree perfectionism is a negative?
2. How does perfectionism show up in your life?

Daring Greatly: Appreciate the Cracks

*“To claim the truths about who we are, where we come from, what we believe, and the very imperfect nature of our lives, we have to be willing to give ourselves a break and appreciate the beauty of our cracks or imperfections.” Page 224 (iBook edition)*

1. What are your cracks?
2. Where do you need to give yourself a break?

The Shield: Numbing most popular way of numbing:

*“I often say that when they start having twelve-step meetings for busy-aholics, they’ll need to rent out football stadiums. We are a culture of people who’ve bought into the idea that if we stay busy enough, the truth of our lives won’t catch up with us.” Page 232 (iBook edition)*

1. How do you numb out?
2. Do you get caught up in ‘who is more busy competitions’?

Daring Greatly: “Setting Boundaries, Finding True Comfort and Cultivating Spirit

*“Learning how to actually feel their feelings.  
Staying mindful about numbing behaviors (they struggled too).  
Learning how to lean into the discomfort of hard emotions.”  
Page 240 (iBook edition)*

1. What are some ways you release hard emotions?
2. How do you de-stress?

Chapter 5: Mind the Gap

*“The space between our practiced values (what we’re actually doing, thinking, and feeling) and our aspirational values (what we want to do, think, and feel) is the value gap, or what I call “the disengagement divide.” Page 298 (iBook edition)*

1. What are your top values?
2. What is the difference between your practiced and aspirational values?

**Chapter 6: Daring to Rehumanize Education and Work**

*“Shame breeds fear. It crushes our tolerance for vulnerability, thereby killing engagement, innovation, creativity, productivity and trust. And worst of all, if we don’t know what we’re looking for, shame can ravage our organizations before we see one outward sign of a problem. Shame works like termites in a house. It’s hidden in the dark behind the walls and constantly eating away at our infrastructure, until one day the stairs suddenly crumble. Only then do we realize that it’s only a matter of time before the walls come tumbling down.” Page 317 (iBook edition)*

1. How does shame show up in the environments you work and live in?

**Chapter 7: Wholehearted Parenting:**

*“Ironically, parenting is a shame and judgment minefield precisely because most of us are wading through uncertainty and self-doubt when it comes to raising our children.” Page 360 (iBook edition)*

1. How does shame show up for you as a parent?

*“As parents, we help our children develop shame resilience and worthiness by staying very mindful about the prerequisites that we’re knowingly or unknowingly handing down to them. Are we sending them overt or covert messages about what makes them more and less lovable? ” Page 370 (iBook edition)*

1. What messages might you be sending your kids (knowingly or unknowingly)

*“You can’t claim to care about the welfare of children if you’re shaming other parents for the choices they’re making.” Page 383 (iBook edition)*

1. Do you agree?
2. How does shaming other parents play a role at parenting events and gatherings?
3. How can you fit in without engaging in these behaviors?

*“One of the biggest surprises in this research was learning that fitting in and belonging are not the same thing. In fact, fitting in is one of the greatest barriers to belonging. Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be in order to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn’t require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are.” Page 387 (iBook edition)*

1. Do you agree with the difference?
2. Where do you fit in?
3. Where do you belong?