



Dare to Lead

Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.

By Brené Brown

How can we cultivate more daring leaders and embed courage in our culture?

First, we must **expand our capacity for vulnerability**. Unfortunately, being vulnerable isn't easy. It involves owning-up to our shortcomings and listening with the same passion with which we want to be heard. Vulnerability is extremely important in business. Google completed a five-year study on how to establish and foster highly productive teams. They found that “psychological safety” was the most important factor that set high-performing teams apart from poor-performing ones. Psychological safety is established when team members feel safe enough to take risks and be vulnerable in front of one another.

Courage flows from **living our values**. The first step of living your values is figuring out what's most important to you. Do you aspire to be a good parent, above all else? Are you passionate about improving the environment? Do you want to earn enough money to retire and sail around the world? When we learn to live our values, we begin to make decisions that are thoughtful and well-reasoned, as well as decisive and bold.

Finally, we must learn how to **be resilient**. Learning to bounce back starts with being more aware of our feelings and the stories we tell ourselves. When we're hurt or afraid or ashamed, our stories are often wrong or incomplete. To combat this, ask yourself questions like: “What do I know objectively vs. what assumptions am I making?” and “What questions or clarifications might help?”

To see how this could be applied in real life, picture yourself having a conversation with a colleague following an emotionally-charged meeting. You might say: *“Hey, tough meeting today. You were uncharacteristically quiet, and I'm wondering if you didn't like my marketing proposal. Can we talk about that?”* And their response might be: *“I appreciate you checking in. I didn't say anything because I'm exhausted. My son was throwing up all night. Let's grab a coffee and I'll give you my thoughts about the proposal.”* This example shows how it's possible to write a new, happier ending to a story when you've taken the time to fill in the missing pieces.