

*“Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process  
is the bravest thing that we’ll ever do.”*

Brené explains that for her, this statement means “You better be able to tell the truth about who you are and where you come from and what you’re up against and like yourself in the process of telling that truth” because our sense of worthiness lives inside that story.

- What does the statement mean to you? How would you explain it to someone else?
- How does the belief that one’s sense of worthiness lives inside their story impact your relationship with *your* story?
- Are there parts of your story that are more difficult to own than others?
- What would reclaiming those orphaned stories mean for you?

Brené shares that it is difficult to own our story because when we look at the world we get “a pretty scripted fable that we’re supposed to live by.”

- What is the fable you were told?
- What does it feel like when your life does not match the story you were told you *should* have?
- Who are you afraid of disappointing?
- Who will hold space for your full story?

Brené explains that if we do not claim worthiness inside our story, we end up hustling for worthiness on the outside of our story – who we are and what we believe becomes secondary to who do you want me to be and what do you want me to believe.

- What does it look like for you when you hustle for worthiness on the outside of your story?
- How has who you are become secondary?
- What does your hustle look like? Is it perfectionism, pretending, pleasing, always being right, staying quiet . . . ?

*“The dark does not destroy the light, it defines it.  
It’s our fear of the dark that casts our joy into the shadows.”*

Brené discusses a tension between not wanting to walk into our story and own our experiences and the truth about who we are and the desire to be honest and authentic.

- What parts of your story first comes to mind when you think about the tension of wanting to feel worthy and being afraid to feel worthy?

*Shame, fear & vulnerability – the things that get in the way*

Brené shifts the focus from how to, to the things that get in the way.

- Thinking about your goals and dreams, do you know “how to” achieve them?
- If so, what’s getting in the way? Why?
- If not, who can you ask for “how to” help? And, are you open to asking that person about some of the potential things that get in the way?

*Shame’s universal tapes – “Never good enough” & “Who do you think you are?”*

*For women shame is a web of competing and conflicting expectations  
For men shame is a box – do not want to be perceived as weak, do not want to be criticized or ridiculed*

*Guilt – “I did something bad”  
Shame – “I am bad”*

*continued...*

As Brené illustrates in her story about her airline companion, even the mere mention of shame creates a lot of discomfort. However, Brené also shares three universal truths about shame: 1) We all have it, 2) We're all afraid to talk about it & 3) The less we talk about it, the more we have it.

- How do you think the ability to acknowledge shame will impact your ability to cultivate authenticity and courage?

*Wholehearted:  
people who learn to own their story and live with authenticity,  
sense of love & belonging, resilient spirit and a sense of gratitude & joy*

Brené asks the question, "If we can talk about the things that get in the way, if we can own our story, what does that look like?" to which she presents the concept of Wholehearted.

- What person(s) in your life live wholeheartedly? How do you see the aspects of authenticity, love & belonging, resilient spirit and a sense of gratitude & joy in their life?

#### *Authenticity*

- What does the courage to be imperfect look like in your life? What boundaries do you need to set in your life? Where can you practice saying "no" more? Where can you practice saying "yes!" more?

#### *Love & Belonging*

Brené shares that our capabilities for love and belonging hinge upon our ability to love ourselves, and our sense of self-acceptance. This can be a very controversial idea, especially when we start to question if we can love our partners and children more than we love ourselves.

- What do you believe about the relationship between how we feel about ourselves and how we feel about others?
- What about the relationship between how we treat ourselves and how we treat others?
- Do you think we can give people what we don't have?

#### *Resilient Spirit*

- How do you numb or take the edge off? What are the specific behaviors you engage in to numb vulnerability?
- Do you allow yourself to embrace and soften into joy or are you waiting for the other shoe to drop?
- What are the most vulnerable positive emotions for you?
- What struggles are you most likely to numb?

#### *Gratitude & Joy*

- How do you practice or how would you like to practice gratitude?
- What is something you can do everyday to acknowledge what you are grateful for?
- How can you incorporate a gratitude practice into your family or work culture?
- How is gratitude tied to joy for you?