



## *Rumbling with Vulnerability:* **SQUARE SQUAD**

See pages 22-23 in *Dare to Lead*.

Length: 20 minutes

### **Our Why:**

We will identify whose opinions matter to us so that we know who we can reach out to when we need to share something vulnerable.

### **Vocabulary:**

*Criticism* – judgment and/or disapproval by someone

*Square Squad* – people whose opinions matter most to me

### **Materials:**

1 inch x 1 inch shapes (cut up so each student can have a square)

<b>Starting with the Learning</b>	<b>Teacher Notes:</b>
<p><b>Connection for engagement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell students, “<i>Criticism is when we are judged and/or experience disapproval by someone. How many of you have ever experienced a time when someone criticized you for something? What does criticism look like for you?</i>” Share a personal example if you notice students are struggling to come up with their own.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Ex. Someone leaves a mean note about me in my desk, someone says something unkind about my family members, making a mistake and being fearful because of how mean the teacher is, sharing a suggestion and the teacher telling me it is a terrible idea without telling me why, etc.</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>During the class exercise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During the 1” x 1” square activity, if you have already done the Marble Jar lesson, feel free to refer to it and share how people in your square squad should be someone you consider a marble jar friend.</li><li>• It is possible that there will be students who feel like they have no one they can write in their square squad. Acknowledge to the class that this could happen. Ask how they might begin to find people who could be included in their square squad.</li></ul>

**Mini-lesson:**

- Sometimes we go to a place of, “*I don’t care what anyone thinks.*”
  - Ask students, “*Where does this thought come from?*”
  - The people that say this the loudest can sometimes be the ones needing the connection most.
  - When we stop caring about what people think, we lose our ability to be connected with others.
- When we are defined by what people think, we lose our ability to be brave and courageous.
- Exercise: Think about the people in your life whose opinions really matter to you.
  - Write those people’s names or initials in a 1” x 1” square. You don’t need to share the names. The square is small because you shouldn’t have a huge list of people that fit in this box. The people listed in my square are people who I consider my “square squad.” These are people whose opinions matter the most to me.
  - Model this for students using your own example and explain to them why these people made it onto your square squad.
  - These people are the people:
    - We trust
    - We love
    - Who don’t need us to be anything other than our real or authentic selves
- This helps us create the concept that it’s not about not caring what anyone thinks, it really about caring what the people in your box think.
- Discussion
  - Why did you include these people in your box?
  - Are you surprised by anyone you put in your box?
  - Are you surprised by anyone you didn’t put in your box?

**Lesson Closing:**

- Review why knowing whose opinions matter to us is important. If time allows, go around and have each student share one reason why they are grateful for their square squad.

**Extension Activity:**

- Have students write a simple letter of gratitude to the people on their square squad so they know how important they are to them.
- Think about how you’re going to lean on the people listed in your square squad the next time you need someone to talk to after receiving critical messages.

**Moving from Knowledge to Daily Practice**

- Whenever there is a situation in class where a student feels they have been hurt by someone’s criticism, help them work through identifying who their square squad consists of and if they’ve been able to lean on them for support.

Square Squad (1 in. x 1 in. shapes)

