

Reading Guide

RISING STRONG TRUTH AND DARE: AN INTRODUCTION

Brené Brown, Ph.D., MSW

“While vulnerability is the birthplace of many of the fulfilling experiences we long for – love, joy, creativity, and trust, to name a few – the process of regaining our emotional footing in the midst of struggle is where our courage is tested and our values are forged.” (p. xviii)

How do you define vulnerability?

When do you feel vulnerable? How do you experience vulnerability?

Have you gotten clear on what values guide your life? If so, what are they?

In what ways have your courage or your values been tested in your life?



CHAPTER ONE: THE PHYSICS OF VULNERABILITY

“Rising strong is the same process whether you’re navigating personal or professional struggles... Just because you’re standing in your office or your classroom or your studio doesn’t mean that you can take the emotion out of this process.” (pp. 7-8)

When do you feel that it is okay to express emotion?

What do you do when you feel emotionally exposed?

“Courage is contagious. Rising strong changes not just you, but also the people around you.” (p. 10)

When have you been inspired by the courage of someone around you?

When have you inspired those around you with your own courage?



CHAPTER TWO: CIVILIZATION STOPS AT THE WATERLINE

The goal of the rising strong process is to rise from our falls, overcome our mistakes, and face hurt in a way that brings more wisdom and wholeheartedness into our lives.

What resonates with you about this process?

What does this process mean to the stories you have wanted to forget, hide, or not own as your own?

CHAPTER THREE: OWNING OUR STORIES

“This [rising strong] process teaches us how to own our stories of falling down, screwing up, and facing hurt so we can integrate those stories into our lives and write daring new endings.” (p. 39)

What would it look like to use the rising strong process in your life?

How might using this process, rather than the way you have handled falls in the past, lead to a different result?



CHAPTER FOUR: THE RECKONING

“Recognizing emotion means developing awareness about how our thinking, feeling (including our physiology), and behavior are connected... I have seen no evidence in my research that real transformation happens until we address all three as equally important parts of a whole.” (p. 48)

How do you know when you’re emotionally hooked?

What is your typical response?

How does it vary based on the situation or people?

“Hurt doesn’t go away simply because we don’t acknowledge it. In fact, left unchecked, it festers, grows, and leads to behaviors that are completely out of line with whom we want to be, and thinking that can sabotage our relationships and careers.” (p. 59)

Which of the “off-loading hurt” strategies below are your “go to” responses at work?

bouncing hurt
chandeliering

stockpiling hurt
feeling high centered

numbing hurt
the Umbridge

How do you feel when you realize that you have off-loaded hurt on others?

What do you feel when someone off-loads hurt this way around you?



CHAPTER FIVE: THE RUMBLE

“The goal of the rumble is to get honest about the stories we’re making up about our struggles, to revisit, challenge, and reality-check these narratives as we dig into topics such as boundaries, shame, blame, resentment, heartbreak, generosity, and forgiveness.” (p. 77)

In what ways could you envision using the questions listed on pages 92-93 to rumble?

1. What more do I need to learn and understand about the situation?

2. What more do I need to learn and understand about the other people in the story?

3. What more do I need to learn and understand about myself?

On page 93, Brené lists “rumbling topics,” such as failure, forgiveness, shame, perfectionism, fear, and others. Which of these feel okay and which feel not okay to talk about? Why?



CHAPTER SIX: SEWER RATS AND SCOFFLAWS

“Living BIG [Boundaries, Integrity, Generosity] is saying: ‘Yes, I’m going to be generous in my assumptions and intentions while standing solidly in my integrity and being very clear about what’s acceptable and what’s not acceptable.’” (p. 123)

Do you believe that people are doing the best they can? Why or why not?

How does your belief about that shape your relationships and decisions?

In what ways could you imagine being more generous in your interpretations of others?

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE BRAVE AND BROKENHEARTED

“We can’t rise strong when we’re on the run.” (p. 130)

In this chapter, Brené describes the rumble topics listed below.

Disappointment, expectations, and resentment

Love, belonging, and heartbreak

Grief

Forgiveness

Compassion and empathy

Have you rumbled about any of these topics with people you care about?

What was the result?



CHAPTER EIGHT: EASY MARK

One key learning Brené took from rumbling with the story she made up was: ***“When you judge yourself for needing help, you judge those you are helping. When you attach value to giving help, you attach value to needing help.”*** (p. 180)

Are you more likely to ask for help or to offer help, or do you do both?

Describe a time when you were hard on yourself for needing help.

What was your self-talk?

How did it feel to ask for that help?

CHAPTER NINE: COMPOSTING FAILURE

“In my research, seven elements of trust emerged as useful in both trusting others and trusting ourselves. I came up with an acronym – BRAVING – for the elements [Boundaries, Reliability, Accountability, Vault, Integrity, Nonjudgment, Generosity].” (p. 199)

When you consider these trust elements, what positive examples in your life come to mind?



What do you do to build trust in your relationships?

CHAPTER TEN: YOU GOT TO DANCE WITH THEM THAT BRUNG YOU

“We can’t be brave in the big world without at least one small safe space to work through our fears and falls.” (p. 220)

Fill in the blanks:

My safe space to work through my fears and falls is _____

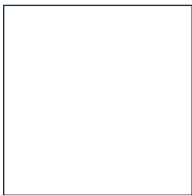
“One of the greatest challenges of becoming myself has been acknowledging that I’m not who I thought I was supposed to be or who I always pictured myself being.” (p. 235)

I thought I was supposed to be _____

I always pictured myself being _____

“When we stop caring what people think, we lose our capacity for connection. But when we are defined by what people think, we lose the courage to be vulnerable.” (p. 245)

Whose opinions and feedback really matter to you? (*All of these names should fit on a one-inch-by-one-inch square.*)



Why?



CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE REVOLUTION

On page 257, Brené shares the “5 Rs” that are essential to the story rumble she and her team at The Daring Way use:

Respect for self, for others, for story, for process

Rumble on ideas, on strategies, on decisions, on creativity, on falls, on conflicts, on misunderstandings, on disappointments, on hurt feelings, on failures

Rally together to own our decisions, own our successes, own our falls, own and integrate our key learnings into our culture and our strategies, and practice gratitude

Recover with family, friends, rest, and play

Reach out to each other and the community with empathy, compassion, and love

In what ways do you see these 5 Rs helping with your rumble?

“All revolutions start with a new vision of what’s possible.” (p. 255)

What is your vision of what is possible for you?

