



## *The Dare to Lead Glossary*

# KEY LANGUAGE, SKILLS, TOOLS, AND PRACTICES

---

### A - B

---

#### ***Accountability***

- You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.
- Part of the BRAVING acronym for Trust.

#### ***Back-Channeling***

- Back-channeling is a term that describes a broad range of behaviors that all share in common not being direct or upfront with people. The opposite of back-channeling is upfront or direct communication.
- Back-channeling includes sharing our reactions, emotions, or opinions with people before or after a meeting, rather than sharing them in the meeting. *I think this is a terrible idea. I don't think he knows what he's talking about. In the meeting this afternoon, I'm going to suggest that we kill the project – will you support me?*
- Other terms for back-channeling include *the meeting after the meeting*, *gossip*, and the *dirty yes* (where I say “yes” to your face and then “no” behind your back).
- The goal is to develop a culture where back-channeling stops because people have the courage to have hard conversations and refuse to participate in back-channeling.

#### ***Bandwagon effect***

- Feeling like you have to hop on-board with the consensus, even if you might disagree, vehemently or mildly. This often happens when you're the only objector or you're the last to share and the group is already excited about an idea.

#### ***Boundaries***

- **Setting boundaries is making clear what's okay and what's not okay, and why.**
- Setting boundaries is vulnerable and brave.

---

## B

---

- Failure to set boundaries can quickly lead to resentment.
- Leaders should model appropriate boundaries, and all team members must take responsibility for establishing their own boundaries and respecting the boundaries set by others.
- Examples of appropriate boundaries might include starting all meetings on time, not checking or responding to emails after a certain time in the evening, or not taking work home on weekends.
- When we asked people why they hesitate to set boundaries, the number one answer that emerged from the research was, “I don’t want to make people mad, disappoint others, or make them stop liking me.” The number two reason was related to the first, “I don’t know how to set boundaries without sounding selfish or unlikeable.” What’s really interesting is that when we asked the same participants to describe or explain the consequence of not setting boundaries, the overwhelming response was resentment. Followed by anger. Followed by frustration. These emotions eat away at our individual and collective confidence and trust. They lead to people talking behind each other’s backs and to blame. This is why daring leaders set, hold, and respect boundaries. Even when it’s hard.
- We often feel like we need to apologize or justify when setting a boundary. We don’t. And, likewise, it’s not your team’s job to make you feel better or more comfortable setting a boundary. Just be clear, respectful, and open for questions. Most of the time, people will be thankful for the clarity and appreciate the rarity of seeing someone ask for what they need rather than be passive aggressive or pissed off.
- Part of the BRAVING acronym for Trust.

### ***Box breathing or Tactical breathing***

- Box breathing, also called tactical breathing, is the reckoning tool to use when staying with emotion (instead of offloading it) and cultivating calm.
- Box breathing consists of four simple steps:
  - 01.** Inhale deeply through your nose, expanding your stomach, for a count of four.
  - 02.** Hold in that breath for a count of four.
  - 03.** Slowly exhale all the air through your mouth, contracting your stomach, for a count of four.
  - 04.** Hold the empty breath for a count of four.

### ***BRAVING Inventory***

- The acronym BRAVING breaks down trust into seven elements: **B**oundaries, **R**eliability, **A**ccountability, **V**ault, **I**ntegrity, **N**onjudgment, and **G**enerosity.

---

## B

---

- *Boundaries*
  - Setting boundaries is making clear what's okay and what's not okay, and why. See also Boundaries for more information.
- *Reliability*
  - You do what you say you'll do. At work, this means staying aware of your competencies and limitations so you don't overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.
- *Accountability*
  - You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.
- *Vault*
  - You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.
- *Integrity*
  - Choosing courage over comfort; it's choosing what's right over what's fun, fast, or easy; and it's practicing your values, not just professing them.
- *Nonjudgment*
  - I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment.
  - We love to judge other people, because it feels so, so good, in that moment, to feel superior. But the bitter irony is that, based on research, we judge in areas where we're most susceptible to shame, and we judge people who are doing worse than we are in those areas.
  - If you find yourself being incredibly judgmental around a specific issue—appearance, parenting, gossip—then it's a clue that it's a difficult issue for you. We don't judge in areas where we feel a strong sense of self-worth and grounded confidence, so the more you can focus on building yourself up in areas where you feel weak and exposed, the more you can operate from a place of full empathy—including toward yourself.
- *Generosity*
  - Extending the most generous interpretation to the intentions, words, and actions of others.
  - The assumption of generosity is believing that people are doing the best that they can.

- The BRAVING Inventory can be used as a rumble tool—a conversation guide to use with colleagues that walks us through the conversation from a place of curiosity, learning, and ultimately trust-building.

### **Calm**

- The definition of calm is **creating perspective and mindfulness while managing emotional reactivity**.
- Calm is a daring leadership superpower because it heals anxiety and creates the space we need to become emotionally grounded. This, in turn, prevents us from managing anxiety by over- or underfunctioning.
- In tense situations, in order to *respond* calmly (rather than *react*), sometimes all it takes is counting to ten.
- Calm is contagious, and it can be modeled to lessen group anxiety.

### **Circle back**

- Circling back gives us the opportunity to revisit a conversation or interaction after we've had time to fully process. *I need to think about this. Can we circle back in an hour?*
- We may need to circle back if we need more information or clarification. *Can we circle back on the decision to move the project date? I've got some questions.*
- We might want to circle back to make amends for something we did or for not fully listening. *I don't like how I showed up in that meeting. Can we circle back?*
- Sometimes in the middle of a difficult conversation you find yourself feeling defensive or needing time to think. It can be helpful to request a time out with a circle back in a specific period of time. This signals that you're considering the conversation carefully rather than rushing to placate or dismiss what's being said. *I think I need a time out. Can we circle back and finish up this conversation in a couple of hours?*

### **Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.**

- Sometimes speaking the truth feels like we are being unkind, especially when sharing difficult information or feedback. But in reality, dancing around the truth is unkind. When we avoid stating the truth—when we are vague or ambiguous under the guise of being kind—it is often because we are trying to lessen the discomfort for ourselves, not for the other person.
- Direct, honest, straightforward communication is kind. Sidestepping the truth doesn't serve a useful purpose for anyone involved.

### ***Comparative suffering***

- Comparative suffering is a race to misery where some people believe they inherently win (*I hurt more than anyone could possibly understand*) or don't deserve to be in the marathon at all (*I'm embarrassed that I'm upset, because worse things happen to other people*).
- It hinges on the false belief that empathy is finite. Fortunately, the opposite is true—empathy is not only infinite, it is renewable. The more empathy we infuse into our relationships, organizations, and culture, the more there is to go around.

### ***Confabulations***

- A confabulation is defined as a lie told honestly. To confabulate is to replace missing information with something false that we believe to be true.

### ***Conspiracy theories***

- Stories based on limited real data and plentiful imagined data, blended into a coherent, emotionally satisfying version of reality, are called conspiracy theories.

### ***Container Building or Safe Container***

- Container building (building a safe container) is the process of establishing the ground rules of a group – what rules need to be in place for people to feel safe to communicate and to freely express their ideas and concerns?
- Taking the time to create a safe container builds trust and improves communication. It provides an atmosphere where team members can be vulnerable and take risks.
- The best way to establish these rules is to ask the team members what they need to feel open and safe. Consolidate the answers and post them in plain sight. Point out when people aren't "following the rules."
- One question we often get asked is "How often do we need to do container building in our teams?" We found that if you invest the time to write up an agreed upon list of ground rules that emerge from a session of container building (e.g., What does support from the group look like?, What's not okay?, etc.), you can post it where you meet and just check in to see if anyone has something to add. Or, you can periodically ask the team if they think it's time to rumble on it again. If a tough or sensitive issue emerges in your group (e.g., someone is leaving, there are big changes or a team setback), revisit the safe container list—and definitely start with permission slips.

### ***Curiosity***

- Curiosity is the feeling of deprivation we experience when we identify and focus on a gap in our knowledge.
- We need to have some level of awareness and interest in a topic before we become truly curious.
- When we are curious, the brain is primed to learn and retain information.
- Curiosity can be uncomfortable because it requires uncertainty and vulnerability.
- Curiosity is about listening and asking the right questions.
- “Tell me more” is a great curiosity rumble tool.
- In the context of solving problems, failure to be curious results in poor solutions. Curiosity means focusing on the nature of the problem before even considering a solution.
- Curiosity and knowledge-building grow together—the more we know, the more we want to know.

### ***Delta***

- The delta is what we learn during the rumble when we compare the story we make up and the truth.
- By rumbling with our stories, we can find wisdom and meaning in the delta.

### ***Desirable difficulty***

- The correct level of difficulty to result in meaningful learning.

### ***Embarrassment***

- A fleeting and often somewhat humorous feeling of self-conscious discomfort in response to our own actions, thoughts, or circumstances.
- Embarrassment falls in the category of self-conscious emotions along with shame, guilt, and humiliation. What distinguishes embarrassment from shame is knowing that we are not alone, that others have likely experienced something similar, and that the feeling will go away.

### ***Emotional literacy***

- Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize the emotion we are feeling, name it, and describe what is happening to us emotionally.
- We can't effectively move through an emotional experience without emotional literacy.

- There are at least 30 emotions. To be fully fluent, it's important to be able to name them all as they come up for both you and others during difficult conversations and moments.
- Emotional literacy is a prerequisite for empathy, shame resilience, and the ability to reset and rise after a fall.

### *Empathy*

- **Empathy is not connecting to an experience; it's connecting to the emotions that connect to the experience.**
- We don't need first-hand experience of an event to extend empathy—we don't need to have been dumped, or fired, or lost a parent or sibling or partner to relate. If you've ever felt grief, disappointment, shame, fear, loneliness, or anger, you're qualified to extend empathy.
- Empathy consists of five skills: perspective taking, being nonjudgmental, understanding the other person's feelings, communicating your understanding, and mindfulness.
- Empathy isn't about fixing. It's the brave choice to be with someone in their darkness—not to race to turn on the light so we feel better.
- Empathy builds trust and increases connection.

### *Empathy miss or Empathic miss*

- When it comes to empathy, it is difficult to always get it right. It's a matter of the right person, at the right time, on the right issues.
- An empathic miss is when you share something personal and vulnerable and you don't feel heard, seen, or understood. It's a sinking feeling, where you feel exposed and right on the edge of shame.
- The clinical term for empathic miss is empathic failure.
- There are six common types of empathic miss:
  - Empathy Miss #1: Sympathy vs. Empathy
  - Empathy Miss #2: The Gasp and Awe
  - Empathy Miss #3: The Mighty Fall
  - Empathy Miss #4: The Block and Tackle
  - Empathy Miss #5: The Boots and Shovel
  - Empathy Miss #6: If You Think That's Bad...
- It's likely that you've been on the receiving end of all of these. And it's also likely that you have done all of them when trying to be empathic to someone else.
- The best solution to an empathic miss is to circle back and try again to get it right.

### ***Empathy Skills***

- #1: To see the world as others see it, or perspective taking
- #2: To be nonjudgmental
- #3: To understand another person's feelings
- #4: To communicate your understanding of that person's feelings
- #5: Mindfulness
- Skills 1-4 are attributed to nursing scholar Theresa Wiseman.  
Theresa Wiseman, "Toward a Holistic Conceptualization of Empathy for Nursing Practice," *Advances in Nursing Science* 30, no. 3 (2007): E61-72; Theresa Wiseman, "A Concept Analysis of Empathy," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 23, no. 6 (1996): 1162-67.
- Skill 5 is attributed to self-compassion researcher Kristin Neff.  
Kristin D. Neff, "Self-Compassion: An Alternative Conceptualization of a Healthy Attitude toward Oneself," *Self & Identity* 2, no. 2 (2003): 85-101.

### ***Enmeshment***

- Enmeshment is the failure to establish a clear boundary between where you end and another person begins.
- When practicing empathy, we don't take on their struggle as our own. Rather, we demonstrate empathy by showing that we understand what they are feeling.

### ***Generosity***

- Extending the most generous interpretation to the intentions, words, and actions of others.
- The assumption of generosity is believing that people are doing the best that they can.
- Part of the BRAVING acronym for Trust.

### ***Gritty faith and gritty facts***

- The expression gritty faith and gritty facts is inspired by the Stockdale Paradox, which was named after Admiral Jim Stockdale, who spent eight years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. He explained that the optimists—those who believed they'd be released by Christmas, then Easter, etc.—were often the ones who didn't survive. In reflecting on this, Stockdale told Jim Collins, the author of *Good to Great*, "This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be."
- It boils down to the idiom, "Hope for the best, prepare for the worst."
- Gritty faith and gritty facts requires dreaming big for sure, but then reality checking those dreams with cold, hard facts.



- In our organization, this means that everyone takes responsibility for being both a dreamer and a fact-checker.

### ***Guilt***

- The feeling of self-conscious discomfort in response to our own actions, thoughts, or circumstances.
- Feelings of guilt focus on the behavior, in contrast with shame, which focuses on the self.
- Examples of thoughts that might accompany guilt include: *I did something bad*, or *I made a mess*.
- Guilt has the potential to motivate us toward positive change.

### ***Halo effect***

- When team members see what the person with the most influence in the room wants and tells them what they want to hear, even if it defies their perception of company priorities and what's feasible in a certain amount of time.

### ***Healthy striving***

- Healthy striving is the practice of trying to be better, while understanding that perfection does not exist.
- The underlying motivation for healthy striving is self-improvement, not gaining the approval of others.

### ***Horizon conflict***

- Every person in an organization focuses on a specific horizon depending on their role. The CEO needs to keep the long-term horizon in mind while also being aware of current affairs, whereas an operations person may need to focus on a short-term project horizon.
- Horizon conflict comes into play when these different lenses interfere with planning and decision-making.
- Everyone needs to consider the organization as a whole, regardless of which horizon is most important to their role.

### ***Humiliation***

- A feeling of painful self-conscious discomfort.
- Very similar to shame with one important exception: we believe we deserve our shame, whereas we don't believe we deserve our humiliation.
- We are more likely to talk about it when we are feeling humiliation as compared to when we are feeling shame.

### ***Integration***

- As described under wholeheartedness, integration is the unification of thinking, feeling, and behavior.
- Integration involves letting down the armor and showing your whole, complex, messy self.
- Integration requires not buying into the myth that we are more productive at work if we put emotion aside.
- Strong back, soft front, wild heart. Strong back = grounded confidence + boundaries; soft front = staying vulnerable + curious; wild heart = fierce + kind.

### ***Integrity***

- Choosing courage over comfort; it's choosing what's right over what's fun, fast, or easy; and it's practicing your values, not just professing them.
- Part of the BRAVING acronym for Trust.

### ***Invisible army***

- People often use “we” to express their own point of view, implying that they are putting forth an opinion that is backed by (invisible) others. *We don't like the direction the company is headed.*
- Pretending to represent others' opinions is a form of criticism from the cheap seats.
- Whereas there may or may not be others with the same opinion, speak for yourself and let others do the same.

### ***Key learnings***

- Key learnings are often the outcome of a rumble: When we stand in the middle of an issue and identify the problem and the root cause, we can typically extract a key learning that helps us navigate similar problems or issues going forward.

### ***Leader***

- **Anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes and who has the courage to develop that potential.**

### ***Living BIG***

- The acronym *BIG* in *Living BIG* refers to living with **B**oundaries, **I**ntegrity, and **G**enerosity.
- Living BIG operationalizes the value of assuming positive intent. The assumption of positive intent is only sustainable when people ask themselves this question: *What boundaries need to be in place for me to be in my integrity and generous with my assumptions about the intentions, words, and actions of others?*

- Brené introduces Living BIG in *Rising Strong*, where she discusses the concept in detail.

### ***Marble jar***

- The marble jar is a metaphor for trust. People earn trust one small gesture at a time – each gesture is a marble in the jar. The people we trust are those who have earned a full jar of marbles. Trust-disrupting behaviors result in a handful of marbles coming out of the jar – it’s hard to rebuild disrupted trust.
- When talking about trust, people talk about “earning marbles” and many leaders have gifted their teams mason jars and glass marbles as a symbol of trust building work. The jar serves as a reminder that trust is built slowly over time, one meaningful gesture at a time.

### ***Meeting minutes***

- Meeting minutes are often perceived in businesses to be both a necessary evil and a complete waste of time. They’re often fastidiously collected and then routinely ignored.
- Structured collaborative meeting minutes can serve as a great communication and record-keeping tool.
- We suggest including: date, meeting intention, attendees, key decisions, tasks and ownership.
- Although one person captures the minutes, everyone in the meeting is responsible for taking their own notes and for flagging important information that should be captured in the minutes. Most important, we leave time at the end of the meeting to review and agree on the minutes. Notes are shared in Slack channels, where they are available to everyone involved.
- When using this process, meeting minutes are no longer subjective, everyone stays up to speed on decisions and changes.

### ***Myths of Vulnerability or Vulnerability Myths***

- Myth #1: Vulnerability is weakness
- Myth #2: I don’t do vulnerability
- Myth #3: I can go it alone
- Myth #4: You can engineer the uncertainty and discomfort out of vulnerability
- Myth #5: Trust comes before vulnerability
- Myth #6: Vulnerability is disclosure

### ***Nonjudgment***

- I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment.
- We love to judge other people, because it feels so, so good, in that moment, to feel superior. But the bitter irony is that based on research, we judge in areas where we're most susceptible to shame, and we judge people who are doing worse than we are in those areas.
- If you find yourself being incredibly judgmental around a specific issue—appearance, parenting, gossip—then it's a clue that it's a difficult issue for you. We don't judge in areas where we feel a strong sense of self-worth and grounded confidence, so the more you can focus on building yourself up in areas where you feel weak and exposed, the more you can operate from a place of full empathy—including toward yourself.
- Part of the BRAVING acronym for Trust.

### ***Nostalgia***

- In an organizational context, nostalgia is the pronouncement of “that’s how we’ve always done things” or “that’s not how we do things here,” with no real logic to back up the argument.
- Nostalgia often arises as predictable resistance to change.
- Although not always recognized as such, nostalgia can be a form of criticism.

### ***Offload the emotions or Offload emotion or Offloading strategies***

- Offloading describes the various (unproductive) ways that we “manage” or discharge emotion when we are trying to avoid feeling it.
- The productive way of managing emotion is to feel it, get curious about it, and learn from it. When we feel and get curious about emotion, we don't need to offload.
- Many of us lack the vocabulary and emotional literacy to identify what we're feeling in the moment, and that lack of awareness can manifest in unpleasant ways—instead of understanding that we're feeling scared, for example, we get scary.
- There are six offloading strategies, and most of us operate using several, if not all of them. Each of these is described in greater detail in *Dare to Lead* (and also in *Rising Strong*).
  - *Chandeliering*: I'm going to stuff all of my feelings down so hard that I will occasionally erupt, much like a volcano, in a way that is unpredictable and terrifying;

- *Bouncing hurt*: I'm going to find someone to blame, even if it's myself, so I can "fix" it; alternately, since I feel powerless, I'm going to profess to be unaffected and tell you that I could give two shits about what's going on;
- *Numbing hurt*: my busy-ness/drinking/perfectionism/eating is a distraction device for what's really going on in my life that I absolutely, definitely cannot face;
- *Stockpiling hurt*: I'm going to stuff feelings down (like chandeliering) until my body suffers in the form of physical and/or mental health symptoms;
- *The Umbridge*: I'm going to act like everything is fabulous, but underneath is festering anger and pain;
- *Hurt and the fear of high centering*: I'm going to deny my feelings because I'm afraid that if I start to feel them, I will get flooded, overwhelmed, and stuck—there will be no going back.

### ***Paint done***

- Painting done means not just assigning a task, but explaining the reason—clarifying how the end product will be used.
- Providing color and context—the purpose, not just the mechanics.
- Sharing the reason for a task helps uncover stealth expectations and stealth intentions, cultivates commitment and contribution, and facilitates growth and learning.

### ***Perfectionism***

- Perfectionism is so insidious and pervasive, it requires careful study. In a complete over-simplification, when we're driven by perfectionism, we engage in a self-destructive and addictive belief system that is fueled by feelings of inadequacy and scarcity: *If I look perfect and do everything perfectly, I can avoid or minimize the painful feelings of shame, judgment, and blame.*
- Perfectionism is armor that is driven by shame and fear of failure.
- Perfectionism is, at its core, about trying to earn approval and acceptance.
- Perfection is unattainable, interferes with achievement, and is correlated with depression, anxiety, addiction, and missed opportunities.
- When perfectionism manifests in an organization it is typically concealing shame and needs to be unpacked using empathy and self-compassion.

### ***Permission slips***

- Permission slips are a useful ritual for teams, particularly before meetings or conversations that require vulnerability. Everyone on the team writes down and

shares something that they intend to give themselves permission to do or feel in the meeting.

- These aren't promissory notes. These are intentions only, so there are no repercussions if you fail to deliver; however, they are useful for understanding where everyone in the room is coming from, and what cave they might be exploring. One team member might be working on listening with generosity, another might be focused on paying attention, rather than letting their mind obsess over an endless to-do list, another might want to listen more than they talk.
- Sharing permission slips is a great way to check-in with teammates, practice vulnerability, and build trust.
- Permission slips are a great part of any container building activity. They help establish safety.
- Permission slips can be useful in many situations beyond team meetings. Anytime you are stepping into vulnerability, it can help to write a permission slip and put it in your pocket, as a reminder of your intentions.

### ***Power***

- **Power over**
  - At its most pernicious, power over is despotism—it is when individuals make decisions that benefit the privileged and limit the rights of those over whom they rule.
  - In business, power over translates to heavy handed and punitive managers, or those who were hazed themselves and only know to pass down the abuse.
  - Power over elicits the instinct to resist and rebel.
- **Power with**
  - Power with (along with power to and power within) is a pathway of power that allows team members to maintain their own agency.
  - Acknowledging that the synergy of a group is greater than its individual parts.
  - Building collective strength based on individual talents.
- **Power to**
  - Giving everyone on your team agency over their lives and acknowledging their unique potential to make a difference.
- **Power within**
  - The ability to recognize the differences of others and the self-confidence to challenge assumptions and long-held beliefs.

---

## R

---

- The terms power with, power to, and power within are attributable to Just Associates.

Just Associates, *Making Change Happen: Power; Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace*. Just Associates, 2006, [justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/mch3\\_2011\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/mch3_2011_final_0.pdf).

### **Reckoning**

- **The reckoning is as simple as that: knowing that we're emotionally hooked and then getting curious about it.**
- The first step is just noticing that we are feeling emotion, but emotional literacy can help us understand and name the emotion we are feeling.

### **Reliability**

- You do what you say you'll do. At work, this means staying aware of your competencies and limitations so you don't overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.
- Part of the BRAVING acronym for Trust.

### **Revolution**

- A fundamental, transformative change in thoughts or beliefs. In contrast to evolutionary change, which is incremental, revolutionary change is deep, tumultuous, groundbreaking, with no turning back.
- Practicing daring leadership has the potential to revolutionize and transform your culture!

### **Rumble**

- **A rumble is a discussion, conversation, or meeting defined by a commitment to:**
  - **lean into vulnerability,**
  - **to stay curious and generous,**
  - **to stick with the messy middle of problem identification and solving,**
  - **to take a break and circle back when necessary,**
  - **to be fearless in owning our parts,**
  - **as Harriet Lerner teaches, to listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard.**
- We use the word *rumble* to say, "Let's have a real conversation, even if it's tough." It's an intention setter and a behavioral cue or reminder.

- More than anything else, when someone says, “Let’s rumble,” it should cue us to show up with an open heart and mind.
- The only thing a rumble has in common with *West Side Story* is that you’ve determined to step bravely into potential conflict—and you have agreed to show up fully.
- Rumbling on an issue is not permission to be defensive or permission to engage in unproductive arguing.

### **Say more**

- Asking either a leader or team member to say more often leads to a profoundly deeper level of understanding—context and details matter.
- Asking someone to say more is a curiosity tool.
- Stephen Covey’s sage advice: “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

### **Self-compassion**

- It is essential that we learn how to be empathic toward ourselves, that we meet mistakes with kindness rather than flagellation and generosity rather than shame.
- Dr. Kristen Neff describes three elements of self-compassion: Self-kindness (being warm and kind to ourselves in the face of failure rather than punishing); common humanity (the idea that we are not alone, and that suffering and feelings of personal inadequacy are something most of us share); and mindfulness (not taking too much responsibility for feelings and emotions, and not getting stuck in obsessive thought patterns about what we have done wrong).

### **Self-kindness**

- Self-kindness is one of Kristin Neff’s three elements of self-compassion (along with common humanity and mindfulness).
- Brené’s straightforward explanation of self-kindness: **Talk to yourself the way you’d talk to someone you love.**
- We are much more likely to trash-talk ourselves than we are to belittle others. Stop doing that! Practice self-kindness.

### **Shame**

- **The intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging, and connection.**  
*I am bad. I am a mess.*
- The focus is on self, not behavior, with the result that we feel alone.
- Shame does not lead us toward positive change.



- In the context of work, shame is often hidden, but when present it can eat away at innovation, trust, connection, and culture.
- Red flags that shame might be a problem in an organization: perfectionism, favoritism, gossiping, back-channeling, comparison, self-worth tied to productivity, harassment, discrimination, power over, bullying, blaming, teasing, cover-ups.
- More blatant indicators that shame is being used as a management tool include: people in leadership roles bullying others, criticizing subordinates in front of colleagues, delivering public reprimands, reward systems that intentionally embarrass, shame, or humiliate.

### ***Shame shields or Strategies of disconnection***

- Linda Hartling and colleagues at the Stone Center at Wellesley identified three strategies of disconnection (Brené calls them shame shields) that are our likely responses when we are experiencing shame. These strategies of disconnection include: moving away, moving toward, and moving against (explained below). Although we use these in an attempt to self-protect, the ultimate result is disconnection.
- **Moving away**
  - Withdrawing, hiding, silencing ourselves, and keeping secrets, in an attempt to escape the painful feeling of shame.
  - Example: We forget our spouse's birthday and they point it out right before bed. We feel ashamed, and we get up and go to the office early the next morning as a way to avoid facing them (and feeling more shame).
- **Moving toward**
  - Seeking to appease and please, in an attempt to escape the painful feeling of shame.
  - Example: Your school principal points out that you dropped the ball on an important project. You feel ashamed. At the faculty meeting the next day you bring the principal coffee. You volunteer to run the school talent show. You agree to help out after school to cover a staffing shortage in the library. You don't do this by way of apology; you do it to try to minimize your feelings of shame.
- **Moving against**
  - Trying to gain power over others by being aggressive, and by using shame to fight shame, all in an attempt to escape the painful feeling of shame.
  - Example: You show up late to take your elderly mother to a dentist appointment. She is waiting on the porch in the cold. You feel ashamed.

You immediately lash out at her, saying that she is always late when you come to pick her up, so there is no point in arriving on time.

- The strategies of disconnection are attributable to Linda Hartling and colleagues. Linda M. Hartling, Wendy Rosen, Maureen Walker, and Judith V. Jordan, “Shame and Humiliation: From Isolation to Relational Transformation (Work in Progress No. 88),” Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series, 2000.

### ***Shame resilience***

- **Shame resilience is the ability:**
  - **to practice authenticity when we experience shame,**
  - **to move through the experience without sacrificing our values,**
  - **to come out on the other side of the shame experience with more courage, compassion, and connection than we had going into it.**
- **Ultimately, shame resilience is about moving from shame to empathy—the real antidote to shame.**
- Shame resilience has four key components (described in detail in *Daring Greatly*):
  - Recognizing shame and understanding its triggers
  - Practicing critical awareness
  - Reaching out
  - Speaking shame

### ***Shame shows up at work***

- Shame can show up in organizations in many different ways. Some of the most common are:
  - Perfectionism
  - Favoritism
  - Gossiping
  - Back-channeling
  - Comparison
  - Self-worth tied to productivity
  - Harassment
  - Discrimination
  - Power over
  - Bullying
  - Blaming
  - Teasing
  - Cover-ups

### *Shitty first draft* or *SFD*

- **The first story we make up is what we call the “shitty first draft,” or the SFD.**
- Capturing your SFD means putting those initial thoughts on paper, so that we can better examine the story we are telling ourselves. This version includes all of our fears, insecurities, and worst-case scenarios.
- What we often discover by writing down our SFD is that we have filled in the story with false information—suppositions, confabulations, and conspiracy theories.
- We use the rumble process to figure out which parts of our story are true. This often involves fact-checking with other people.

### *Square Squad*

- Your square squad is the very short list of people whose opinions matter.
  - These are the people who care enough about you to be honest, rather than telling you what you want to hear. They should not be people who just blindly agree with you no matter what.
  - People on your list love you not despite your vulnerability and imperfections, but because of them.
  - They will point out when you are out of your integrity or when you have messed up, and they will support you to fix things.
- To get clear about who belongs on your square squad, use a one-inch by one-inch piece of paper, write down the names of the people in your life whose opinions really matter. The paper is small because it forces you to narrow the list to only those people who have earned the right to an opinion.
- Don't listen to criticism from people who aren't on your square squad. It is hurtful and unproductive.

### *Stealth intentions*

- A self-protective motivation that lurks beneath the surface and can drive us to behave outside our values.
- An example of a stealth intention is thinking “If I keep quiet, I can protect myself from rejection, shame, judgment, and people turning away from me and thinking I'm an idiot.”
- Be vigilant for stealth intentions in yourself and others. Normalize reality-checking your intentions with your team and with your colleagues by making it a practice. Intentions are powerful and can set things in motion that are almost impossible to reverse. In our work, we have a rule that the intentions for projects,

strategies, and even meetings must be named, agreed upon, and documented in meeting minutes.

### ***Stealth expectations***

- A desire or expectation that exists outside our awareness and typically includes a dangerous combination of fear and magical thinking.
- Stealth expectations almost always lead to disappointment, resentment, and (more) fear.
- Anne Lamott: “Expectations are resentments waiting to happen.”
- Look for stealth expectations in yourself and others. They fly under the radar and only surface after they have created disaster for individuals or teams.
- Normalize reality-checking of expectations, and their underlying explanations, with your team and colleagues. *OK, everyone. Do we think there are any stealth expectations we need to put on the table?*

### ***Story Rumble***

- Working together as a team or organization, the story rumble is a process to discover key learnings following a conflict, failure, or fall.
- A successful story rumble relies on gathering and using all the tools in your rumble toolbox: shared language, curiosity, grounded confidence, integrity, values, and trust. Don’t forget to use container-building and permission slips.
- After identifying the key learnings, be sure to integrate them into the culture and apply them to new projects.

### ***TASC***

- The accountability and success checklist.
  - 01.** T—Who owns the task?
  - 02.** A—Do they have the authority to be held accountable?
  - 03.** S—Do we agree that they are set up for success (time, resources, clarity)?
  - 04.** C—Do we have a checklist of what needs to happen to accomplish the task?
- Along with *paint* done, the TASC checklist provides clarity and cultivates commitment and contribution.

### ***The story I’m telling myself...***

### ***The story I make up...***

### ***I make up that...***

- We make up stories to try to make sense of things when we don’t have all of the relevant facts. In the absence of data, we will always make up stories.

---

## T

---

- The above sentence-starters are ways of digging into the stories we are making up, as a starting point for gathering the relevant information to understand the truth.
- When we are hooked by emotion because of fear, anxiety, or stress, the brain goes into protection mode. It searches for a story to make sense of what is happening and rewards us when we give it a story (even when that story is not true).
- Most of the stories we make up when we're feeling emotionally hooked magnify our fears and insecurities. *He doesn't trust me. She thinks my idea is terrible.*
- Using the phrase "The story I'm telling myself" creates the opportunity for some inner dialogue. It gives us a chance to pause and evaluate what we're thinking and feeling. In some cases, that is all we need to do.
- If we decide that we want to get clarity from another person, "The story I'm telling myself" gives us permission to speak honestly and candidly without the fear of generating a defensive response. Because the phrase comes from a place of curiosity, it almost always results in a productive conversation, rather than a heated debate.
- When you own a story and the underlying emotion, you get to simultaneously acknowledge that something was hard while taking control of how that hard thing is going to end.
- When you deny a story (or pretend you don't make up stories), the story owns you. This denial drives your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors until it completely takes control.
- In the absence of data, we will always make up stories because humans are hardwired for meaning-making. We can't stop people from making up stories, but we can create a culture where people feel safe asking for help in reality-checking their stories.
- When we want to help people dig into these false narratives, we get curious: *Is there a story you want to check out with me?* We don't make assumptions about people's stories – we ask. We don't assign their concerns to false stories – we ask.

### **Time-out**

- Taking a break when things get difficult during a rumble, meeting, or conversation; taking ten minutes for everyone to walk around outside or catch their breath.
- Everyone on the team should be empowered to call a time out.

### *True belonging*

- **True belonging is the spiritual practice of believing in and belonging to yourself so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world and find sacredness in both being a part of something and standing alone in the wilderness. True belonging doesn't require you to change who you are; it requires you to be who you are.**
- True belonging is in direct contrast with fitting in, which means changing who we are in order to seek approval or be accepted.
- Although people need to work on their own sense of true belonging, daring leaders can encourage belonging by creating cultural norms where diverse perspectives are included, respected, and valued.

### *Turn & Learn*

- Turn & Learn is a team meeting tool that allows everyone to share input simultaneously, without being influenced by others' opinions or answers.
- This strategy works well for coming up with time estimates and prioritizing projects.
- Here's how it works. Everyone writes down their input on a Post-it note. Once everyone has written an answer, count to three and everyone reveals their answers at the same time. Everyone's answers are used to come to consensus.
- Using this strategy protects against the halo effect (being overly influenced by the person with the most influence) and the bandwagon effect (going along with the consensus, even when you disagree).
- There are no right or wrong responses with the Turn & Learn. It's a method for understanding others' perspectives, giving everyone a voice, and clarifying expectations. It is also a meaningful connection tool—it sends the message that everyone's input matters.

### *Value*

- **A value is a way of being or believing that we hold most important.**
- **Living into our values means that we do more than profess our values, we practice them. We walk our talk—we are clear about what we believe and hold important, and we take care that our intentions, words, thoughts, and behaviors align with those beliefs.**
- Our values are what gives us strength when we are in the arena; often, they are what compels us to enter the arena in the first place.

- Establishing clarity of values, and living into those values, is one of the four essential skill sets of being a daring leader.

### ***Vault***

- You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.
- Part of the BRAVING acronym for Trust.

### ***Vulnerability***

- **The emotion that we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.** It's having the courage to show up, fully engage, and be seen when you can't control the outcome. Vulnerability minus boundaries is not vulnerability.
- We are not vulnerable for the sake of being vulnerable. We are open to uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure because that is the path to courage, trust, innovation, and many other daring leadership skills.
- Being vulnerable and self-management (showing up in a professional, respectful way) are not mutually exclusive – we should do both. We have to think about what we're sharing, why we're sharing, and, equally important, with whom. What is my role? What is their role? *Does sharing this make sense? Why is it important for me to share this? Am I doing personal work here or am I trying to move a process forward?*
- We don't measure vulnerability by how much someone discloses or shares. We don't overshare.
- Trust is the stacking and layering of small moments and reciprocal vulnerability over time. Trust and vulnerability grow together, and to betray one is to destroy both.

### ***What does support from me look like? or What does support look like?***

- Asking this question is a tool for clarifying roles and expectations and it helps set the stage for success.
- People can become resentful when they feel like they aren't getting the support they need. But at the same time, they often don't ask for needed support.
- Asking this question up front can help prevent resentment and also can get people to think about what type of support would be helpful—it holds them accountable for asking for what they need. It can also be important to clarify the behaviors that aren't considered helpful in a specific situation.

- The most useful answers to this question are specific and behavioral.
- This question is more authentic than saying, “Let me know if there’s something I can do,” where the expected answer is usually, “Nothing.” “Nothing” is not one of the available answers to the question, “What does support look like?”

### ***What’s my part? or Owing my part***

- Examining and owning your part should be an aspect of every rumble.
- If you’re not asking yourself this question and identifying how you participated in the instigation of an issue or problem, then you’re not rumbling or being brave in conversations or with yourself.
- While many of us struggle with taking too much ownership over things that are not ours to take (or our problems to solve), I can say with 99% certainty that if you are being brave at work, there is a part with your name on it.
- Sometimes your part might be as simple as not speaking up or staying curious; other times it might be a bigger cave to enter, like a tendency to shame or blame, a lack of accountability, an inability to hold information confidentially, or projecting perfectionism.

### ***Wholeheartedness***

- Wholehearted living is about engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness. It means cultivating the courage, compassion, and connection to wake up in the morning and think, no matter what gets done and how much is left undone, *I am enough*. It’s going to bed at night thinking, *Yes, I am imperfect and vulnerable and sometimes afraid, but that doesn’t change the truth that I am also brave and worthy of love and belonging*.
- Wholeheartedness is the courage to live with an unarmored heart, without security measures and protection schemes. Yes, our heart gives us life, but it also serves as the universal metaphor for our capacity to love and be loved, to be vulnerable to joy and pain. When our heart is shut down, it is impenetrable, to the bad stuff, sure, but also to all the good stuff that makes life worth living.
- To be wholehearted means to operate from a place of worthiness—that regardless of what might or might not happen during the course of the day, you are enough.
- Being wholehearted also requires integration. It requires being out in the world, not sequestered behind bulletproof glass. It requires integrating our thinking, feeling, and behaviors, and naming and identifying and processing all of it.



---

## W

---

- Wholeheartedness calls on us to put down the armor and bring out the more shadowy parts of ourselves and our history—the parts we’ve always been scared to own, and that we spend a lot of time and energy ignoring—and fold them into ourselves, to create a complex, messy, awesome whole.
- The ten guideposts for wholehearted living are described in detail in *The Gifts of Imperfection*.

