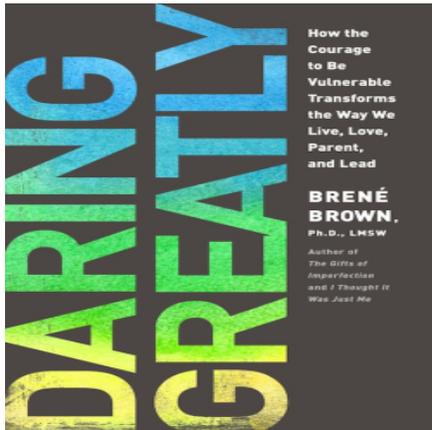


## Daring Greatly at Unity of Fort Lauderdale



Dear Friends,

The fall is the perfect time of year to take a leap in consciousness. The entire universe is encouraging us to dare greatly and create a better reality for ourselves and the world.

For five weeks beginning Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, Unity of Fort Lauderdale will embark on a small-group study and Sunday talk series based on the book *Daring Greatly* by Brené Brown, PhD. This New York Times #1 bestseller is based on the premise that the “courage to be vulnerable can transform the way we live, love, parent and lead.” The courage to be vulnerable will require us to shine light on our innermost thoughts and feelings. When we do, we will find ourselves lightening up in more ways than one! October is the ideal time for us to open our hearts and dare to experience living life more fully and brightly than ever before.

This study guide was provided by Rev. Russell Heiland from Unity of Fairfax. It was written by Rev. Robin Ferguson during her pastorate at Unity Church of Overland Park in Overland Park, KS. UCOP, as it is known in the Kansas City area, has made this guide available for use by other Unity ministries. We are grateful to Rev. Robin, UCOP, and Rev. Russell for their generosity.

Our conscious spiritual evolution requires us to dare greatly in almost every area of our lives. At this time in the evolution of humanity, we are called upon to step into our personal empowerment so that we can engage the challenges of our times with both confidence and compassion. I am certain that by utilizing the spiritual tools offered in *Daring Greatly* we will unleash an energy of healing and wholeness that will be a blessing to all.

Peace and Blessings,

Rev. Elizabeth Longo

## Invitation to Dare Greatly Prayer

I open myself to the unconditional love and support of the Universal Presence of peace and unity. I fully engage with my life and declare my willingness to be seen and celebrated just as I am. I am done playing small and I dare to express myself authentically and courageously. In doing so, I make an important contribution to the awakening of the planet. I am blessed and I am a blessing!

### Affirmations

- *I am enough.*
- *I bravely open myself to life and love.*
- *I allow myself to be seen and celebrate who I am.*
- *I invite every moment to reveal my good.*
- *I am fully engaged in my life and dare to live greatly.*

### Group Shared Agreements

- Listening – I listen deeply.
- Confidentiality – I hold in strictest confidence what is said in circle.
- Safety – I speak for myself. I use “I” statements. I am not here to “fix” myself or others.
- Okay to pass – I am not required to share. I may pass.
- Respect - I am open to different perspectives. I accept that others may not hold the same view.
- Presence – I understand that my presence is important and I contact the facilitator when I am not going to attend.
- Time - I am mindful of time in balanced sharing, in being on time and remaining until the circle is complete.
- Commitment - I commit to being current with my reading and any other preparation work that is mine to do.

With God as my guide, I \_\_\_\_\_ intend to uphold these agreements to the best of my ability.

## Week 1: Scarcity: Looking Inside Our Culture of “Never Enough”

Chapter 1 - (pgs 18-30)

### Read group shared agreements (pg. 2) and check-in:

*Check-in topic: Share briefly 3 things: Your name, your hometown, and a hobby or interesting thing about you that people might not know already. (Have fun sharing something about you!)*

**Theme:** Wholeheartedness

**Affirmation:** I am enough.

### Inspirational Writings:

*Where your heart is there is your treasure also.* - Jesus Christ, Matthew 6:21

*To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself.* - Thich Nhat Hanh

*Almost anybody can learn to think or believe or know, but not a single human being can be taught to be. Why? Because whenever you think or you believe or you know, you are a lot of other people: but the moment you are being, you're nobody-but-yourself. To be nobody-but-yourself-- in a world which is doing its best night and day to make you everybody else -- means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting... Does this sound dismal? It isn't. It's the most wonderful life on earth. – e.e. cummings.*

### Discussion & Questions:

1. What does “daring greatly” mean to you in your life right now or prior to starting the book?
2. Brené states on page 28 – “One way to think about the three components of scarcity and how they influence culture is to reflect upon the following questions. The opposite of scarcity is enough, or what I call Wholeheartedness.”
  - a. Shame: Is fear of ridicule and belittling used to manage people and/or keep people in line? Is self-worth tied to achievement, productivity, or compliance? Are blaming and finger-pointing norms? Are put-downs and name-calling rampant? What about favoritism? Is perfectionism an issue?
  - b. Comparison: Healthy competition can be beneficial, but is there constant overt or covert comparing and ranking? Has creativity been suffocated? Are people held to one narrow standard rather than acknowledged for their unique gifts and contributions? Is there an ideal way of being or one form of talent that is used as measurement of everyone else’s worth?

- c. Disengagement: Are people afraid to take risks or try new things? Is it easier to stay quiet than to share stories, experiences, and ideas? Does it feel as if no one is really paying attention or listening? Is everyone struggling to be seen and heard?

Share what you feel are the differences between shame, comparison and disengagement. How do they show up in your life?

3. What can you do in your family, community, at Unity of Fort Lauderdale, and/or at work to contribute to enough-ness, or wholeheartedness?

**Mastermind Prayer** (pg. 12 of this Study Guide )

**Journal exercises for inner reflection and personal discovery:**

1. Are your predominant thoughts upon waking and during your day of worthiness or ones of scarcity – shame, comparison, or disengagement?
2. What thoughts of wholeheartedness are you willing to replace thoughts of scarcity with upon waking and during your day?

**Taking action:**

From exercise #2 above, intentionally think thoughts of wholeheartedness 3 times a day: upon waking, in the middle of the day and before bed each day this week.

Examples of wholeheartedness thoughts: I am enough. I am worthy.

## Week 2: Debunking the Vulnerability Myths

Chapter 2 – (pgs 32-56)

### Read group shared agreements (pg. 2) and check-in:

*Journal reflection share: Share briefly one thought of wholeheartedness you affirmed this week.*

**Theme:** Courage

**Affirmation:** I bravely open myself to life and love.

### Inspirational Writings:

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*  
- 2 Timothy 1:7

*To love is to know Me, My innermost nature, the truth that I am.*  
- Hinduism. *Bhagavad Gita*, 18.55

*Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.* - Ambrose Redmoon

### Discussion & Questions:

1. What has vulnerability meant to you before reading this book? Have you seen it as a weakness? Why?
2. How has that definition changed?
3. Where have you been holding back in your life because of not being vulnerable?
4. How could you be experiencing an empowered life by being vulnerable?

**Mastermind Prayer** (pg. 12 of this Study Guide)

### Journal exercises for inner reflection and personal discovery:

Questions from page 44 in the book:

1. What do I do when I feel emotionally exposed?
2. How do I behave when I'm feeling very uncomfortable and uncertain?
3. How willing am I to take emotional risks with people at home? At work? At Unity of Fort Lauderdale?

**Taking action:** What step can you take in your life this week to be vulnerable? Make a commitment to take that step this week.

## Week 3: Understanding and Combating Shame

Chapter 3 – (pgs 58-111)

### Read group shared agreements (pg. 2) and check-in:

*Journal reflection share: Share briefly how you were vulnerable in your life in the last week and your experience with being vulnerable.*

**Theme:** Worthiness

**Affirmation:** I allow myself to be seen and celebrate who I am.

### Inspirational Writings:

*You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself.* - Swami Vivekananda

*I think everybody's weird. We should all celebrate our individuality and not be embarrassed or ashamed of it.* - Johnny Depp

*I wish I could show you, when you are lonely or in darkness, the astonishing light of your own being.* - Hafiz

*Wouldn't it be powerful if you fell in love with yourself so deeply that you would do just about anything if you knew it would make you happy? This is precisely how much Life loves you and wants you to nurture yourself. The deeper you love yourself, the more the Universe will affirm your worth. Then you can enjoy a lifelong love affair that brings you the richest fulfillment from inside out.* - Alan Cohen

### Discussion & Questions:

This week we are going deeper into exploring how shame impacts our lives. “Shame derives its power from being unspeakable. If we speak shame, it begins to wither.” *Brené Brown*

1. The book shares how women and men might experience shame differently.
  - a. Examples shared by women:
    - i. Look perfect. Do perfect. Be perfect. Anything less than that is shaming.
    - ii. Being judged by other mothers.
    - iii. Never enough at home. Never enough at work. Never enough in bed. Never enough with my parents. Shame is never enough.

- b. Examples shared by men:
  - i. Shame is failure. At work. On the football field. In your marriage. In bed. With money. With your children. It doesn't matter – shame is failure.
  - ii. Showing fear is shameful. You can't show fear. You can't be afraid – no matter what.
  - iii. Shame is being wrong. Not doing it wrong, but being wrong.

Complete this statement. To me shame is....

2. Shame and guilt are often used interchangeably and can often show up in our self-talk.
  - a. Guilt – I did something bad. I can't believe I did that. What a crappy thing to do.
  - b. Shame – I am bad. I am such an idiot. I am a terrible friend. I am a loser.

Is your predominant self-talk that of guilt or shame?

3. How has shame kept you small, resentful or afraid at home? At work? At Unity of Fort Lauderdale? How does it show up for you?
4. Brené states “A sense of worthiness inspires us to be vulnerable, share openly and persevere.” What thoughts can you tell yourself to nurture and cultivate shame resilience, in other words, a sense of worthiness?

**Mastermind Prayer** (pg. 12 of this Study Guide)

**Journal exercises for inner reflection and personal discovery:**

1. Complete this statement 5 to 10 times: To me shame is...
2. In what area(s) in your life do you wish to become more “real” or authentic?
3. Who in your life are you feeling disconnected from or disengaged with? How can you cultivate connection and engagement with that person by being vulnerable?

**Taking action:**

Cultivate connection this week by being vulnerable with someone you are feeling disconnected from or disengaged with.

## Week 4: The Vulnerability Armory

Chapter 4 – (pgs 112-171)

### Read group shared agreements (pg. 2) and check-in:

*Journal reflection share: Share briefly how you cultivated connection and engagement in your life last week and your experience with this.*

**Theme:** Gratitude

**Affirmation:** I invite every moment to reveal my good.

### Inspirational Writings:

*I searched for God and found only myself. I searched for myself and found only God.*

- Sufi Proverb

*In our imaginations we believe that love is apart from us. Actually there is nothing but love, once we are ready to accept it. When you truly find love, you find yourself.* - Deepak Chopra

*If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.*

- Meister Eckhart

### Discussion & Questions:

Brené outlines the 3 common vulnerability shields:

- Foreboding Joy – the paradoxical dread that clamps down on momentary joyfulness
- Perfectionism – believing that doing everything perfect means you'll never feel shame
- Numbing – the embrace of whatever deadens the pain or discomfort.

1. Explore how each of these shows up in your life.
2. Which vulnerability shield do you most relate to?
3. How does the vulnerability shield that you most relate to out-picture and keep you from fully experiencing an empowered life?

**Mastermind Prayer** (pg. 12 of this Study Guide)

**Journal exercises for inner reflection and personal discovery:**

1. Explore each of the 3 vulnerability shields. Identify how one or all of these shields impacts your life and has held you back from daring greatly.
2. Identify what areas of your life you are waiting for the other shoe to drop.
3. How can you allow more joy in your life by focusing on feeling safe, grateful and worthy?

**Taking action:**

Brené shares: “Perfectionism crushes creativity – which is why one of the most effective ways to start recovering from perfectionism is to start creating.” Commit to taking action on “creating” something this week.

## Week 5: Mind the Gap: Cultivating Change and Closing the Disengagement Divide

Chapter 5 – (pgs 172-182)

### Read group shared agreements (pg. 2) and check-in:

*Journal reflection share: Share briefly what you created or began creating in your life last week and your experience with letting go of perfectionism.*

**Theme:** Connection

**Affirmation:** I am fully engaged in my life and dare to live greatly.

### Inspirational Writings:

*All things splendid have been achieved by those who dared believe that something inside them was superior to circumstance.* - Bruce Barton

*There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?* - Robert Kennedy

*Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming – “WOW, what a Ride!”* - Unknown

### Discussion & Questions:

Brené shares: “The gap starts here: We can’t give people what we don’t have. Who we are matters immeasurably more than what we know or who we want to be. The space between our practiced values and our aspirational values is the value gap, or what I call ‘the disengagement divide.’”

1. Where do you see a gap between your aspirational values (what you want to do, think and feel) and your practiced values (what you’re actually doing, thinking and feeling)?
2. How would closing the gap between your aspirational values and your practiced values cultivate connection and engagement within your family? Within your work organization? Within our spiritual community?

**Mastermind Prayer** (pg. 12 of this Study Guide)

**Journal exercises for inner reflection and personal discovery:**

1. Make a list of your aspirational values.
2. For each aspirational value, list one way you can close the disengagement gap of your practiced value in your family, your work organization and our spiritual community.

**Taking action:**

Chose at least one gap-closing action you identified in the exercise #2 above and take action on it this week.

## MASTERMIND PRAYER

Together, read aloud through steps 1 – 4 slowly and with intention. Pause a few seconds between each step to truly absorb what it is that you are affirming.

### PRAYER REQUESTS

1. **I COMMIT.** I now make the commitment to place my life completely under the direction of the Christ within. I dedicate myself to be of maximum service to God and my fellow humanity and to remain an open channel of God's will of good.
2. **I ACCEPT.** I now accept that my personality is powerless to transform my life. It is the Christ within that does the work.
3. **I BELIEVE.** I believe in One Presence and One Power active in the universe. This Power is perfect life, love, intelligence, and wholeness expressing through me now. With God, all things are possible.
4. **I FORGIVE AND I UNDERSTAND.** I understand that erroneous self-defeating thoughts and fears are the cause of my problems and unhappiness. I now forgive all others and myself for any real or imagined mistakes. I am willing to be changed at depth.
5. **I ASK, BELIEVING.** In the awareness of the Christ Presence, I ask, believing that my heart's desire is fulfilled now.

(Each person takes a turn succinctly speaking his or her heart's desire into the circle by using the format: "My heart's desire is . . ." After the person has stated their heart's desire, the rest of the circle responds in unison: "Your heart's desire is now made manifest!" At that point, you move onto the next person. When you have gone around the circle, continue on with reading steps 6 & 7.)

6. **I GIVE THANKS.** I give thanks as I joyously and expectantly assume the very feelings I have as my heart's desire is made manifest.
7. **I LET GO.** I let go and let God express through me in perfect ways.

**AND SO IT IS! AMEN.**