

Dare to Lead...and Reap the Rewards

Review by Dina Wallin, MD

0196-0644/\$-see front matter

Copyright © 2019 by the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Dare to Lead...and Reap the Rewards

Brown B

Random House, 2018

298 pages, \$18.79

ISBN-13: 978-1-78504-214-0

ISBN-10: 1785042149

Whether they practice in an urban trauma center, a tertiary academic hospital, or a community emergency department, emergency physicians are leaders, rallying team members around a singular goal: exemplary patient care. Thus, although *Dare to Lead*, by Dr. Brené Brown, is not written explicitly for emergency physicians, there is much to be gained from this well-written summary. The content represents decades of Dr. Brown's research into effective communication, relationship building, empathy, and leadership.

In this book, Dr. Brown outlines how to achieve strong leadership, something within reach for *all* of us if we have the courage to embrace vulnerability in ourselves and the people we lead, to have the tough conversations we all avoid, and to treat others as the human beings they are. Dr. Brown defines vulnerability as "the emotion we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure." Emergency providers face near-constant uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure; thus, learning how to harness and corral those emotions into something productive for the team can significantly improve our effectiveness (and happiness) at work.

Dr. Brown advocates creating a more courageous workplace by focusing on the following 4 domains: rumbling with vulnerability, living into our values, braving trust, and learning to rise.

"Rumbling with Vulnerability" is the longest section and is based on 2 core concepts: courage is contagious, and clear is kind, unclear is unkind. Dr. Brown argues that we are so uncomfortable with conflict and difficult conversations that we hide in the shadows, hoping to avoid offering honest opinions; however, over time, this erodes the foundation of organizations, creating an aimless team and leaving members feeling isolated and devalued. By being courageous enough to offer explicit expectations and feedback, as well as elicit others' perspectives, we can cultivate an environment of collaboration and exceeded expectations.

The "Living Into Our Values" section allows the reader to home in on his or her core values, "simply a definition of who we are in our lives," in all settings, professional and otherwise. In "Braving Trust," Dr. Brown argues that "trust is the glue that holds teams and organizations together," and that having direct conversations about behaviors that erode trust can create a safe, productive environment in which the entire team can flourish. Last, the book concludes with "Learning to Rise," in which Dr. Brown arms the reader with strategies to convert inevitable failure into wholehearted success, mainly by reframing the way we approach obstacles and disappointments.

In June 2019, a diverse group of physicians from around the world read and asynchronously discussed *Dare to Lead* during 5 days, facilitated by leaders from Academic Life in Emergency Medicine. Some takeaways from this robust discussion were as follows:

1. We have faced shame and depersonalization in our clinical workplace and continue to be deeply affected by these encounters.
2. We gained massive insight into why we behave the way we do, as well as ideas on how to redirect ourselves when we believe we are out of control.
3. Empathy, seeing the humanity in and feeling the suffering of others, truly *is* the "antidote to shame," and allows us to overcome previous trauma to thrive in interactions with our patients and learners.

For a day-by-day breakdown of our conversation, along with tangible strategies and recommendations for further reading, please see the following post: <https://www.aliem.com/2019/06/leaders-library-dare-to-lead-curated-summary/>.

In summary, we are all leaders. It is our responsibility to figure out how to inspire greatness within ourselves and in our teams. *Dare to Lead* is an accessible, thought-provoking, and immensely helpful launch pad to a collaborative career full of meaning and connection.

*Dina Wallin, MD**Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine**Department of Emergency Medicine**University of California, San Francisco**San Francisco, CA*<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annemergmed.2019.07.008>