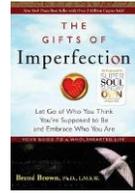


The Gifts of Imperfection

*Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and
Embrace Who You Are*

Guide



Introduction: "Wholehearted Living." Intro, Gifts of Imperfection, and Exploring... - (ix - 30)

Core ideas: *"When we can let go of what other people think and own our story, we gain access to our worthiness – the feeling that we are enough just as we are and that we are worthy of love and belonging."* (23)

1. BB defines wholehearted living as "engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness." After reading this section, how do you define it?
2. Are there parts of your story that are more difficult to own than others?
3. What would reclaiming those stories (retelling the story without blame, shame, or judgement) mean for you?

Tools for Wholehearted Living:

1. **Ordinary courage** is "speaking openly about who we are, about what we're feeling, and about our experiences (good and bad) ... Ordinary courage is about putting our vulnerability on the line." (12-13)
2. "The heart of **compassion** is really acceptance. The better we are at accepting ourselves and others, the more compassionate we become." (16-17)
3. "**Connection** the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship." (19)

Questions:

- Which of these three tool(s) are you actively using, if any?
- Which tool(s) do you want to develop more and why?

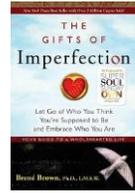
Next Steps:

1. Brené Brown writes, "our stories are not meant for everyone. Hearing them is a privilege, and we should always ask ourselves this before we share;
 - *Who has earned the right to hear Your story?' Start thinking about which person(s) in your life you can tell your complete story to. This is just a personal question for you to start to consider.*
2. Start thinking about a symbol that you can keep in a visible place at home or on your desk, or a tiny object to carry in your pocket, to remind yourself to practice courage, compassion, and connection.

The Gifts of Imperfection

Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are

Guide



Part 2: "You Are Enough!" The things that get in the way from cultivating authenticity. (pgs. 31 - 62)

Core Ideas: "If we want to live fully, without the constant fear of not being enough, we have to own our story." (46) "When we allow ourselves to become culturally conditioned to believe that we are not enough and that we don't make enough or have enough, it damages our soul."

Questions:

1. Shame Resilience begins with these questions:

- "Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging." Where do you feel shame?
- What do you hide or protect yourself out of a sense of shame? What's the most courageous thing you could do for yourself when you feel small and hurt?

2. "Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we're supposed to be and embracing who we are." (50)

- a. How have you cultivated the courage to be imperfect?
- b. Share what it means to you to, "be enough." "That you are enough." What comes up for you to describe this place of beingness?

3. "...self-compassion has three elements: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness." (59)

"Based on my data, I don't think that some people are perfectionists and others are not. I think perfectionism exists along a continuum. We all have some perfectionistic tendencies." (58)

- a. Where do I believe I stand on that continuum of perfectionism? How does perfectionism show up in my life?
- b. In what ways do you sacrifice who you are? When you sacrifice who you are, who are you trying to please? How can you catch yourself before you over commit?

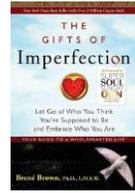
4. *"To overcome perfectionism, we need to be able to acknowledge our vulnerabilities to the universal experiences of shame, judgment, and blame; ... When we become more loving and compassionate with ourselves and we begin to practice shame resilience, we can embrace our imperfections." (57)*

- Brené has created a mantra, "Don't shrink. Don't puff up. Stand on your sacred ground," as a way to stay in her authenticity. What would help you to stay in your authenticity when faced with the choice to abandon it and play safe?
- "our stories are not meant for everyone. Hearing them is a privilege, and we should always ask ourselves this before we share; Who has earned the right to hear my story?"

The Gifts of Imperfection

Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are

Guide



Part 3: Cultivating Authenticity, Self-Compassion and a Resilient Spirit. (pgs. 63 - 85)

Core Ideas: BB believes that spiritual resilience is the combination of "Resilience—the ability to overcome adversity" and "spirituality—the belief in connection, a power greater than self, and interconnections grounded in love and compassion..." (63, 64)

Questions:

1. How has spiritual resilience shown up (or not shown up) in my life?
2. If hope is a mindset that is "a combination of setting goals, having the tenacity and perseverance to pursue them, and believing in our own abilities," which of these three aspects of hope are you most skilled in and which do you want to develop?
3. Practicing Critical Awareness (67-69)
 - a. What is on my "never good enough" list and where did I get those messages? When I "reality-check" the items on the list, are they "true" or are these items part of the "manufactured images being fed me? What is really true about me?
4. Letting go of numbing and taking the edge off vulnerability, discomfort and pain. (69-72)
 - a. Being resilient asks us to be open to "trying to feel the feelings, staying mindful about numbing behavior, and trying to lean into the discomfort of hard emotions." (69)
 - How do I accomplish this in my daily life?

Part 4: Cultivating Gratitude, Joy, Intuition and Creativity. (pgs.87 - 105)

Core Ideas: "Intuition is not a single way of knowing—it's our ability to hold space for uncertainty and our willingness to trust the many ways we've developed knowledge and insight, including instinct, experience, faith, and reason." (89)

How do you integrate intuition into your life?

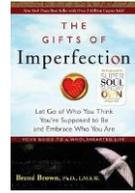
Questions:

1. To live a joyful life is to actively practice gratitude. "Both joy and gratitude spiritual practices that bound to a belief in human interconnectedness and a power greater than us.
2. "Joy is "... a spiritual way of engaging with the world that's connected to practicing gratitude." a. What are my gratitude practices?
- 3.. "Creativity, which is the expression of our originality, helps us stay mindful that what we bring to the world is completely original and cannot be compared." (97)
 - a. How have you expressed your creativity/originality in the past? Include examples from both childhood and adulthood.

The Gifts of Imperfection

Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are

Guide



3. What Gets in the Way: Our need for certainty is the thing that most often stops us from trusting our intuition and faith—"it's often because we don't trust our own knowing. It feels too shaky and uncertain. We want assurances." (88)

Part 5: Celebrating Play and Rest, and Cultivating Calm, Stillness and Meaningful Work. (pgs.105 - 124)

Core Ideas: "A critically important component of Wholehearted living is play!" (99) "True play that comes from our own inner needs and desires is the only path to finding lasting joy and satisfaction in our work." (101)

Questions:

1. Meaningful Work encompasses the following ideas:

"We all have gifts and talents; Squandering our gifts brings distress to our lives; Sharing our gifts and talents with the world is the most powerful source of connection with God; Using our gifts and talents to create meaningful work takes a tremendous amount of commitment; Like our gifts and talents, meaning is unique to each one of us." (112-113)

- a. What is play for you? Tell about a time when you played wholeheartedly.
- b. How can you consciously add play to your work?

2. "I define calm as creating perspective and mindfulness while managing emotional reactivity." (106)
"Stillness is not about focusing on nothingness; it's about creating a clearing. It's opening up an emotionally clutter-free space and allowing ourselves to feel and think and dream and question."