

AUTHOR OF THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLER *DARING GREATLY*

# RISING STRONG

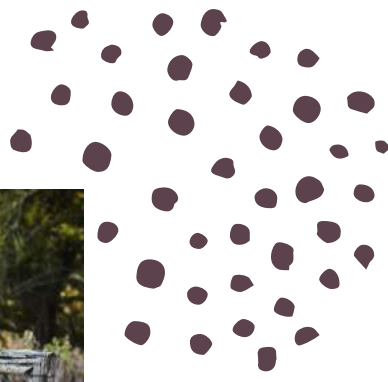
THE RECKONING. THE RUMBLE.  
THE REVOLUTION.

*If we are brave enough, often enough, we will fall.  
This is a book about what it takes to get back up.*

**BRENÉ BROWN, Ph.D.,  
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# About Brene'

## WHAT'S INSIDE

I'm a research professor at the University of Houston, where I hold the Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair. I am also a visiting professor in management at the University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business. I've spent the past two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. I'm the author of five #1 New York Times best sellers, and I'm the host of the weekly Spotify Original podcasts *Unlocking Us* and *Dare to Lead*.

The bottom line: I believe that you have to walk through vulnerability to get to courage, therefore...embrace the suck. I try to be grateful every day, and my motto right now is "Courage over comfort."

I do NOT believe that cussing and praying are mutually exclusive. And I absolutely believe that the passing lane is for passing only. I've been married to Steve for almost 25 years, and we have two amazing kids, Ellen and Charlie, and a weird bichon named Lucy.

As you read consider with me:

- Rising Strong includes a 3 step process, which of the steps seems most difficult?
- Which of Brown's strategies/tips for overcoming failures is most practical and effective?
- Self introspection is crucial, what prevents you from practicing that

### Introduction

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# EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

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The award winning *Rising Strong* authored by Brené Brown demonstrates that we are all recover from our mistakes/failures. Leaders, parents, educators we are all very vulnerable, however through a three (3) step process Brown (2017) encourages us to be brave. *Rising Strong* process includes the Reckoning, the Rumble, and the Revolution. She emphasizes not to allow our past failures to define us. As leaders it is okay to say to apologize to your team when you are wrong, which may result in the building of trust. The author allows us to see that we can try as often as we can to succeed, accepting that during the process there maybe challenges to maneuver. Essentially, Brown (2017) insists that we face our fears, indicating that doing that is okay. According to the author it is okay to be vulnerable and we must learn to embrace it and not deny it.



# *Introduction*

## *Rising Strong*

Walking into our stories of hurt can feel dangerous. But the process of regaining our footing in the midst of struggle is where our courage is tested and our values forged. Our stories of struggle can be big or small, but regardless of their magnitude or circumstance, the rising strong process is the same: We reckon with our emotions and get curious about what we're feeling; we rumble with our stories until we get to a place of truth; and we live this process, every day, until it becomes a practice and creates nothing short of a revolution in our lives. Rising strong after a fall is how we cultivate wholeheartedness. It's the process that teaches us the most about who we are.

*Brené*

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# THE PHYSICS OF VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability is not about winning, and it's not about losing. It's about having the courage to show up and be seen.

Brené Brown

## 10 Rules of Engagement

1. If we are brave enough often enough, we will fall, this is the physics of vulnerability.
2. Once we fall in the service of being brave, we can never go back.
3. This journey belongs to no one but you, however, no one successfully goes it alone.
4. We are wired for story.
5. Creativity embeds knowledge so that it can become practice. We move what we are learning from our heads to our hearts through our hands.
6. Rising strong is the same process whether you are navigating personal or professional struggles.
7. Comparative suffering is a function of fear and scarcity.
8. You cannot engineer an emotional, vulnerable, and courageous process into an easy, one-size-fits-all formula.
9. Courage is contagious.
10. Rising strong is a spiritual practice.



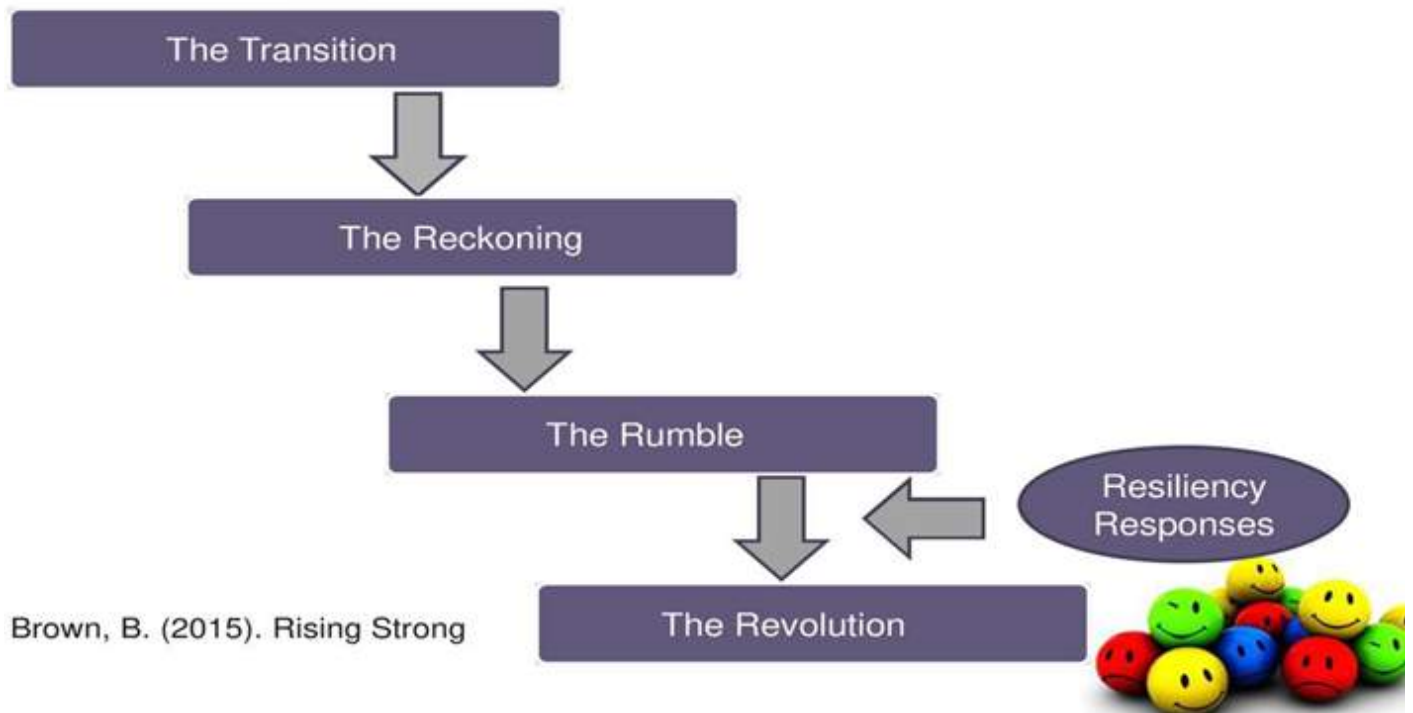
If you're not in the arena also getting your ass kicked, I'm not interested in your feedback.

— Brené Brown —

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# ***CIVILIZATION STOPS AT THE WATERFALL***

## **Transitions Can Be Transformational**



AT THEIR FAMILY VACATION, BROWN BECAME VERY ANNOYED WITH HER HUSBAND STEVE, WHO SHE THOUGHT DID NOT RECIPROCATE THE LEVEL OF EXCITEMENT SHE DID FOR BEING THERE. THIS LED TO A QUARREL, WHICH ALLOWED THEM TO RECOGNIZE JUST HOW VULNERABLE THEY WERE FEELING. STEVE WAS AFRAID OF NOT BEING ABLE TO SAVE HIS FAMILY IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY. AS WOMEN, WE APPEARANCE AND BODY IMAGE ARE A SHAME TRIGGER, WHILE FOR ME ANY SIGN OF WEAKNESS IS A COMMON SHAME TRIGGER. THIS ENCOUNTER LED TO A THREE-STEP PROCESS FOR RISING STRONG. BROWN LAYS OUT A THREE-PART PROCESS OF FACING CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES: THE RECKONING, THE RUMBLE, AND THE REVOLUTION



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# OWNING OUR STORIES

## INTEGRATING IS

the engine that moves us through the reckoning, the rumble, and the revolution, and the goal of these processes is to make ourselves whole (Brown, 41)



“Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we’ll ever do.”

© Brené Brown

# THE RECKONING

*Reckoning:  
Knowing you're  
emotionally  
hooked and  
getting curious  
about it.*

-Brené Brown

Reckoning is the process of evaluating where you are. Brené suggests that reckoning requires introspection, necessitating that you reflect on our past, examine the present and engage with your past. Our tendency as humans is to bury our feelings, rather than addressing them. These emotions accumulate and eventually leads to a “melt down”. Brown encourages us to begin off-loading barriers to reckoning with emotion.

YOU EITHER WALK  
INSIDE YOUR STORY AND  
OWN IT OR YOU  
STAND OUTSIDE YOUR  
STORY AND HUSTLE FOR YOUR  
WORTHINESS.

BRENÉ BROWN.





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# THE RUMBLE

## *Let's 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, and, as psychologist Harriet Lerner teaches, to listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard.

Brene' Brown

The second of three Rising Strong processes. Here we seek to honestly own our stories, by revisiting, challenging, and reality-checking the narratives as we dig into topics such as boundaries, shame, blame, resentment, heartbreak, generosity, and forgiveness. According to Brown, rumbling can help us to find ourselves again. This can be achieved by recording our stories. The most dangerous stories we make up are those that diminish our inherent worthiness. We must reclaim the truth about loyalty, divinity, and creativity (Brown, 82). When we have the courage to reckon with our emotions Brown is convinced, we are on the path to writing our brave new ending and the path that leads to wholeheartedness. This she concludes is also the beginning



**BE TRUE TO  
YOURSELF  
BRENE BROWN**

# SEWER RATS AND SCOFFLAWS

RUMBLING WITH BOUNDARIES, INTEGRITY, AND GENEROSITY



Self-righteousness starts with the belief that I'm better than other people and it always ends with me being my very worst self and thinking, I'm not good enough (Brown, 103). In this chapter Brown focuses on reckoning with your emotions. She went against her better judgement and accepted a speaking engagement which, ended with her being most frustrated and resentful. One of the main gems from this experience as Brown shared that because an individual may be doing their best it's no justification for that person to mistreat you. She insisted that we must establish a combination of boundaries, integrity, and generosity to deal with people whose "best" in some way harmful. An equally important lesson from this chapter is that we sometimes have to give person the benefit of the doubt as it helps us to treat ourselves more graciously.

# THE BRAVE AND BROKENHEARTED



**There is no greater threat to the critics and cynics and fearmonger than those of us who are willing to fall because we have learned how to rise.**

**With skinned knees and bruised hearts;  
we choose owning our stories of struggle, over hiding,  
over hustling, over pretending.**

**When we deny our stories, they define us. When we run from struggle, we are never free. So we turn toward truth and look it in the eye.**

**We will not be characters in our stories. Not villains, not victims, not even heroes.**

**We are the authors of our lives. We write our own daring endings. We craft love from heartbreak, compassion from shame, grace from disappointment, courage from failure.**

**Showing up is our power. Story is our way home. Truth is our song. We are the brave and brokenhearted.  
We are rising strong.**

**Brené Brown**



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# EASY MARK RUMBLING WITH NEED, CONNECTION, JUDGEMENT, SELF-WORTH, PRIVILEGE AND ASKING FOR HELP



There are times as a leader we may have to ask for help. Asking for help is NOT a sign of weakness. Rather it takes courage to rise up and even more courage and strength to ask for help. In this chapter Brown shared her experience at church where the pastor made a comment that impacted her greatly. He said, "When you look away from a homeless person you diminish their humanity, and you own". As she reflected on the comment, she realized that she was sometime guilty of looking away. She made the commitment to value what she had and to share more with others. Brown asserts that asking for help requires becoming vulnerable.



# COMPOSTING FAILURE RUMBLING WITH FEAR, SHAME, PERFECTIONISM, BLAME, ACCOUNTABILITY, TRUST FAILURE, AND REGRET

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IF YOU HAVE NO  
TOLERANCE FOR FAILURE,  
YOU WILL NOT  
CREATE ANYTHING NEW

— BRENE BROWN —

LASSALMEDIA



In this chapter Andrew, a senior executive was rumbling with accountability. He was revered by his peers, regrettably he neglected to fully disclose the risk involved. Regrettably, the project failed causing Andrew to lose the trust and confidence of his peers. He was obligated to apologize to everyone he offended which required great courage. Andrew's team recognized his remorse and willing to be honest. This created a work environment that valued honesty and respect. Failure can become nourishment if we are willing to get curious, show up, vulnerable and human, and put rising strong into practice (Brown, 214)

There is no innovation  
and  
creativity without failure

~ Brene Brown



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# YOU GOT TO DANCE WITH THEM THAT BRUNG YOU

## RUMBLING WITH SHAME, IDENTITY, CRITICISM, AND NOSTAGIA



I am slowly learning how to straddle the tension that comes with understanding that I am tough and tender, brave and afraid, strong and struggling - all of these things, all of the time. I am working on letting go of having to be one or the other and embracing the wholeness of wholeheartedness. The roles in my life - partner, mother, teacher, researcher, leader, entrepreneur - all require me to bring my whole self to the table. We can't be "all in" if only parts of us show up. If we are not living, loving, parenting, or leading with our whole, integrated hearts, we are doing it halfheartedly (Brown 250)



# THE REVOLUTION

## MOVING FROM PROCESS TO PRACTICE

### Question Time

1. How do we engage in this process with an open heart and an open mind?
2. What emotions are people experiencing?
3. How do we listen with empathy?
4. What do we need to get curious about?
5. What are the stories that people are making up?
6. What do our SFD tell us about our relationship? About our communication? About leadership? About the culture?
7. Where do we need to rumble? What lines of inquiry do we need to open to better understand what's really happening and to reality-check our conspiracy and confabulations?
8. What's the delta between those first SFDs and the new information we're gathering in the rumble?
9. What are the key learnings?
10. How do we act on the key learnings?
11. How do we integrate these key learnings into the culture and leverage them as we work on new strategies?



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# CRITICAL EVALUATION

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In her book *Rising Strong* Brené Brown (2017) included at least twenty years of her lived experiences along with those of hundreds of persons she interviewed. This approach was most effective, as it allowed me to trust the information and strategies outlined. I was inspired to face my fears and importantly accepted that I can recover after a fall or mistake. As former College Registrar I was able to reflect on an experience I had with a senior member of my team. I now recognize that had I put aside my fears and courageously shared the error I made and apologized, then perhaps our working relationship might not have deteriorated to the extent it did.

Notwithstanding, I questioned how practical, as the author suggested that we always try to give individuals who mistreat us the benefit of the doubt and consider that they may be doing their best under a difficult situation. *Rising Strong* is a motivational tool for leaders across all professions and allow us to accept that it is okay to be vulnerable. I appreciated that even as leaders we can ask for help. I agree with Brown that this does not mean that you are weak, in fact I am convinced it makes you very strong. Most profound for me is the author's insistence on valuing oneself and establishing boundaries.

This book was most enlightening, empowering, and inspiring as it prepares us to be overcomers despite adversity. I understand why it's a best seller and certainly has become one of the best books I have read.