

Companion Worksheet

Family, Friends and Parents Worksheet

Brené Brown, Ph.D., LMSW

FOR PARENTS:

It was clear from the data that we cannot give our children what we don't have. Where we are on our journey of living and loving with our whole hearts is a much stronger indicator of parenting success than anything we can learn from how-to books. (Preface, p. xi)

Do you see a relationship between where you are on your journey and parenting success? (p. xi)

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Brené gives examples of “unraveling journeys,” including becoming a parent and an empty nest. Did you experience an unraveling during these experiences in your life? How did you move through these experiences? (p. xiii)

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Brené shares about The Gun-for-Hire Shame Storm. Who do you relate to most in that story? Why? How would you have reacted in that situation? (pp. 7-9)

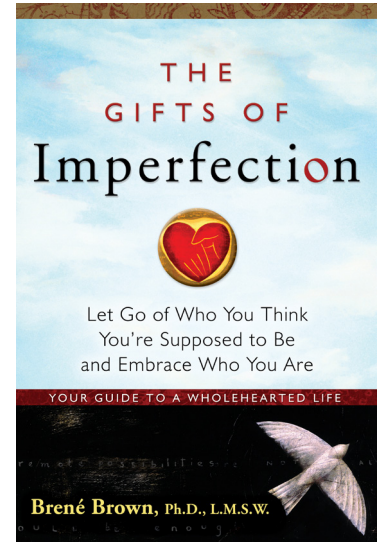
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Brené shares about picking her daughter Ellen up from a slumber party and commending her for practicing ordinary courage. Can you think of an example of a time when your child practiced ordinary courage? How did you respond? How could you encourage them? (p. 13)

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Brené shares about “the moms who stopped and shared their stories of imperfection and vulnerability” to the mother who ran late to her daughter’s holiday music presentation. Can you think of a time when another parent “took the time to stop and say, ‘Here’s my story. You’re not alone.’” How did it feel? Can you think of a time when you did the same for another parent? How did it feel? (p. 15)

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Brené writes, "This research has taught me that if we really want to practice compassion, we have to start by setting boundaries and holding people accountable for their behavior." **How do you feel this statement applies to parenting? What would your home life look like if you blamed less but had more respect for boundaries?** (p. 17)

If we ask our kids to keep their clothes off the floor and they know that the only consequence of not doing it is a few minutes of yelling, it's fair for them to believe that it's really not that important to us. (p. 18)

Brené poses the question, "Can we love others more than we love ourselves?" **How would you answer that question in the context of loving your children?** (pp. 28-30)

Perfectionism never happens in a vacuum. It touches everyone around us. We pass it down to our children... and it's suffocating for our friends and families. (p. 61)

How have you seen perfectionism being passed down to children? Do you feel perfectionism was passed down to you? (p. 61)

"Our children learn how to be self-compassionate by watching us, and the people around us feel free to be authentic and connected."
(p.61)

Brené writes that children most often learn hope from their parents. **Did you learn hope from your parents? Do you think you are teaching hope to your children?** (p. 66)

Brené discusses the difference between entitlement and agency. **How do you think parents, teachers and other influential figures in children's lives can shift from creating a sense of entitlement to agency?** (p. 67)

Brené shares about struggling to experience gratitude watching her children for fear. **How have you experienced this as a parent? How do you feel you can shift towards fully experiencing gratitude?** (p. 82)

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In writing about the decision to create more downtime for their family, Brené shares the questions that it provoked as a parent.

While this experience may sound great, it was terrifying for me as a parent. What if I'm wrong? What if busy and exhausted is what it takes? What if she doesn't get to go to the college of her choice because she doesn't play the violin and speak Mandarin and French and she doesn't play six sports?

What if we're normal and quiet and happy? Does that count?

What type of questions surface for you when you think about creating more space for downtime in your family. What are some of your fears? What are some of your hopes? (p. 103)

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FOR PARTNERS:

Brené gives examples of “unraveling journeys,” including marriage and divorce. **Did you experience an unraveling during these experiences in your life? How did you move through these experiences? How did they affect you?** (p. xiii)

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Brené writes, “Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It’s a relationship between equals.” **How do you think practicing genuine compassion would affect your relationship with your partner?** (p. 16)

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If we want to fully experience love and belonging, we must believe that we are worthy of love and belonging. (p. 23)

How has the inability to fully experience love and belonging affected your relationship to your partner, both in giving and receiving love? (p. 23)

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Joy is as thorny and sharp as any of the dark emotions. To love someone fiercely, to believe in something with your whole heart, to celebrate a fleeting moment in time, to fully engage in a life that doesn't come with guarantees - these are risks that involve vulnerability and often pain. (p. 73)

Brené shares about making an “ingredients for joy and meaning” list with her husband. **What would you and your partner have on your “ingredients for joy and meaning” list?** (p. 102)

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FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

For our own sake, we need to understand that it's dangerous to our relationships and our well-being to get mired in shame and blame, or to be full of self-righteous anger. (p. 19)

Brené shares about making the shift from being “the helper” to reaching out to her younger siblings for help and support. **In your family relationships and friendships do you view yourself as the person who offers help, or the person who needs help? How does that perception affect your relationships?** (p. 21)

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When we choose to be true to ourselves, the people around us will struggle to make sense of how and why we are changing. Partners and children might feel fearful and unsure about the changes they're seeing. Friends and family may worry about how our authenticity practice will affect them and our relationship with them. Some will find inspiration in our new commitment; others may perceive that we're changing too much - maybe even abandoning them or holding up an uncomfortable mirror. (p. 51)

How do your family and friends react when you choose to be true to yourself? How do you think your family and friends would react? (p. 51)

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“Courage is telling our story, not being immune to criticism. Staying vulnerable is a risk we have to take if we want to experience connection.” (p. 53)

How do you deal with criticism by family and friends when you tell your story? (p. 53)

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