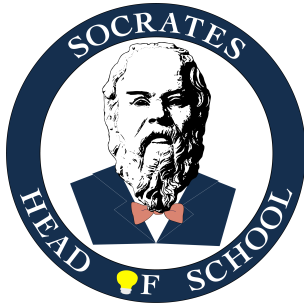# *Braving the Wilderness* by Brene Brown

Think you might want to read this book?
Do you desire true belonging? Are you courageous to the point that you always stay true to who you are? In <u>Braving the Wilderness</u>, Brene Brown breaks up the word B-R-A-V-I-N-G into a wilderness checklist because you are going to have to be brave enough to enter the unknown wilderness of vulnerability to achieve that sense of belonging. If you want to avoid reflection and conflict…choose another book. If you see value in grappling with who you are so you can become a better leader of others, there may not be a better book.

What would Socrates ask?
- What if true belonging was a foundation of your school?
- What programs does your school offer where belonging is emphasized?
- What if student anger sparked reflection and counseling first and foremost?
- What examples from history can we use to teach acceptance of others?
- What if we treated students lying as the symptom of a deeper issue?

Research
- Numerous studies confirm that it's not the quantity of friends but the quality of a few relationships that actually matters.
- Living with air pollution increases your odds of dying early by 5 percent. Living with obesity, 20 percent. Excessive drinking, 30 percent. And living with loneliness? It increases our odds of dying early by 45 percent.
- If we actually show up for each other and collective moments of joy and pain we will be able to bear witness to inextricable human connection.
- Over and over, participants talked about their concern that the only thing that binds us together now is shared fear and disdain, not common humanity, shared trust, respect, or love.
- In 1980 approximately 20 percent of Americans reported feeling lonely. Today, it's more than double that percentage. And this is not just a local issue. Rates of loneliness are rapidly increasing in countries around the world.

Concepts
- Dehumanization- the psychological process of demonizing the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of humane treatment.
- Enemy image- as we take sides, lose trust, and get angrier and angrier, we not only solidify an idea of our enemy, but also start to lose our ability to listen, communicate, and practice even a modicum of empathy
- Strong back, soft front- Buddhist approach that combines courage and vulnerability when we abandon the certainty and safety of our ideological bunkers
- B-R-A-V-I-N-G- an acronym designed to help us be vulnerable and courageous:
    - Boundaries- between each other; say "no"
    - Reliability- do what you say you'll do
    - Accountability- own mistakes, apologize, and make amends
    - Vault- don't spread information that isn't yours to spread

- - Integrity- choose courage over comfort
    - Nonjudgment- share and hear feelings without judgment
    - Generosity- assume positive intentions from all
  - Brandolini's law- the amount of energy needed to refute bullshit is an order of magnitude bigger than to produce it.

Quotes from the author
- "True belonging is not passive. It's not the belonging that comes with just joining a group. It's not fitting in or pretending or selling out because it's safer. It's a practice that requires us to be vulnerable, get uncomfortable, and learn how to be present with people without sacrificing who we are."
- "... if we can find a way to *feel* hurt rather than *spread* hurt, we can change."
- "It's easier to be pissed off than it is to be hurt or scared."
- "Internalizing anger will take away our joy and spirit; externalizing anger will make us less effective in our attempts to create change and forge connection. It's an emotion that we need to transform into something lifegiving: courage, love, change, compassion, justice."
- "The point is that we are all vulnerable to the slow and insidious practice of dehumanizing, therefore we are all responsible for recognizing it and stopping it."
- "Not enough of us know how to sit in pain with others. Worse, our discomfort shows up in ways that can hurt people and reinforce their own isolation. I have started to believe that crying with strangers in person could save the world."
- "... the more we're willing to seek out moments of collective joy and show up for experiences of collective pain- for real, in person, not online- the more difficult it becomes to deny our human connection, even with people we may disagree with."
- "In all my research's two-hundred-thousand-plus pieces of data, I can't find a single example of courage that didn't require vulnerability."
- "Even in the context of suffering- poverty, violence, human rights violations- not belonging in our families is still one of the most dangerous hurts."
- "At the same time sorting is on the rise, so is loneliness."
- "Internalizing anger will take away our joy and spirit; externalizing anger will make us less effective in our attempts to create change and forge connection. It's an emotion that we need to transform into something lifegiving: courage, love, change, compassion, justice."
- "When we reduce Muslim people to terrorists or Mexicans to "illegals" or police officers to pigs, it says nothing at all about the people we're attacking. It does, however, say volumes about who we are and the degree to which we're operating in our integrity."
- "We don't even bother being curious anymore because somewhere, someone on "our side" has a position. In a fitting-in culture- at home, at work, or in our larger community- curiosity is seen as a weakness and asking questions equates to antagonism rather than being valued as learning."

Quotes from others
- "If you can see your path laid out in front of you step by step, you know it's not your path. Your own path you make with every step you take. That's why it's your path." - Joseph Campbell

- "Research shows that playing cards once a week or meeting friends every Wednesday night at Starbucks adds as many years to our lives as taking beta blockers or quitting a pack-a-day smoking habit." - Susan Pinker
- "We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented." - Elie Wiesel
- "Music, uniquely among the arts, is both completely abstract and profoundly emotional…. Music can pierce the heart directly; it needs no mediation." - Neurologist Oliver Sacks
- "In a short evolutionary time, we have changed from group-living primates skilled at reading each other's every gesture and intention to a solitary species, each one of us preoccupied with our own screen." Susan Pinker

Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning in education

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Brown	*The Gifts of Imperfection*
Brown	*Rising Strong*
Bishop	*The Big Sort*
Smith	*Less than Human*
Frankfurth	*On Bullshit*
Pinker	*The Village Effect: How face-to-face contact can make us healthier and happier*

The applicability of this book to education is ….

Abstract ←————✕————→ Obvious