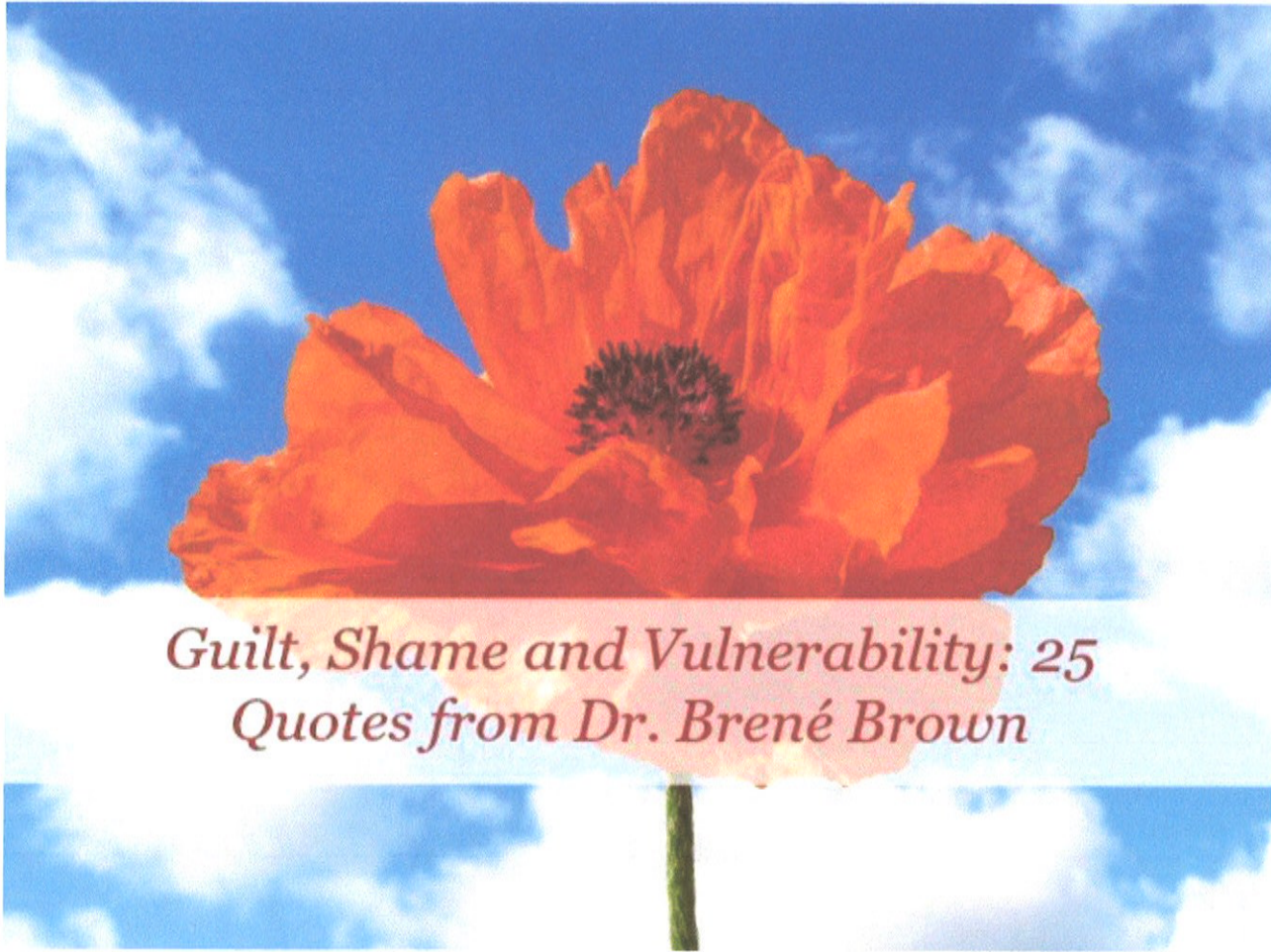


## Guilt, Shame and Vulnerability: 25 Quotes from Dr. Brené Brown



When our kids are abusing drugs or alcohol, shame and guilt can get in the way of our finding help and moving forward.

One well-known voice who has shed insight on shame and how it can affect your life is Dr. Brené Brown. Dr. Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work and has become well known for her research on vulnerability, courage, worthiness, and shame.

She has just finished her new book, *Rising Strong* which will come out in August. She has also given two Ted talks including Listening to Shame which was filmed in 2012. When things look bleak or when you feel like it's easier to hide than to come into the light, allow these quotes on guilt, shame and vulnerability to inspire you!

1. Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy—the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.

**2. Shame is the most powerful, master emotion. It's the fear that we're not good enough.**

3. I don't have to chase extraordinary moments to find happiness – it's right in front of me if I'm paying attention and practicing gratitude.

**4. A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.**

5. Through my research, I found that vulnerability is the glue that holds relationships together. It's the magic sauce.

**6. Shame, blame, disrespect, betrayal, and the withholding of affection damage the roots from which love grows. Love can only survive these injuries if they are acknowledged, healed and rare.**

7. We cannot selectively numb emotions, when we numb the painful emotions, we also numb the positive emotions.

**8. Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen.**

9. When you get to a place where you understand that love and belonging, your worthiness, is a birthright and not something you have to earn, anything is possible.

**10. If we can share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame can't survive.**

11. Normally, when someone we love is turning away from a struggle, we self-protect by also turning away. That's definitely my first response. I think change is more likely to happen if both partners have common language and a shared lens to see problems.

**12. As a shame researcher, I know that the very best thing to do in the midst of a shame attack is totally counterintuitive: Practice courage and reach out!**

13. Vulnerability is about showing up and being seen. It's tough to do that when we're terrified about what people might see or think.

**14. When the people we love stop paying attention, trust begins to slip away and hurt starts seeping in.**

15. First and foremost, we need to be the adults we want our children to be. We should watch our own gossiping and anger. We should model the kindness we want to see.

**16. Guilt is just as powerful, but its influence is positive, while shame's is destructive. Shame erodes our courage and fuels disengagement.**

17. Men walk this tightrope where any sign of weakness illicit shame, and so they're afraid to make themselves vulnerable for fear of looking weak.

**18. I'm just going to say it: I'm pro-guilt. Guilt is good. Guilt helps us stay on track because it's about our behavior. It occurs when we compare something we've done – or failed to do – with our personal values.**

19. Shame corrodes the very part of us that believes we are capable of change.

**20. I've learned that men and women who are living wholehearted lives really allow themselves to soften into joy and happiness. They allow themselves to experience it.**

21. The dark does not destroy the light; it defines it. It's our fear of the dark that casts our joy into the shadows.

**22. If we share our shame story with the wrong person, they can easily become one more piece of flying debris in an already dangerous storm.**

23. In my research, I've interviewed a lot of people who never fit in, who are what you might call 'different': scientists, artists, thinkers. And if you drop down deep into their work and who they are, there is a tremendous amount of self-acceptance.

**24. If you trade your authenticity for safety, you may experience the following: anxiety, depression, eating disorders, addiction, rage, blame, resentment, and inexplicable grief.**

25. Spirituality is recognizing and celebrating that we are all inextricably connected to each other by a power greater than all of us, and that our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion. Practicing spirituality brings a sense of perspective, meaning and purpose to our lives.

Let's push past what is holding us back and live a good life.