

# NAVIGATING MID-LIFE

WITH HELP FROM BRENÉ BROWN

*Alison Deutsch is a Certified Positive Psychology Practitioner and Certified Personal Development Coach who experienced the challenge of relocating with her young family – four times over a period of ten years, both domestically and overseas. Utilizing research-proven assessments, tools, and practices, that she’s personally road tested through her own life experiences, Alison helps women Move Out of the Stuck – that overwhelm, fear, and indecision that crop up around big life changes. Her clients gain peace of mind and newfound confidence in their ability to handle anything that comes their way.*



## Excerpt from Brené Brown's essay in *Prime: Reflections on Time and Beauty*

I've heard people say "we teach what we need to learn." I'm pretty sure they're on to something. As a vulnerability researcher, what I've learned and now write about uncertainty, risk and "showing up" has profoundly changed my life.

From the time I was a young child through my late thirties, I believed that growing up was about finding certainty and solving the mysteries of life. It seemed to me that the end game was answers and control – especially control over important outcomes and what people think. The formula was pretty clear: Vulnerability is weakness, self-worth is based on what you achieve, and accomplishments and acquisitions bring joy and meaning.

What's spectacular about my life today, at forty-seven, is finally realizing that the prime of our lives is not about answers – it starts when we finally allow ourselves to soften into the mysteries and live in the questions. For me, the softening came after a long, painful midlife unraveling; fueled by the exhaustion that comes from too much pretending, pleasing, and perfecting.

For me, midlife was not a crisis, it was an unraveling. By definition, you can't control or manage an unraveling. You can't cure it with control any more than the acquisitions, accomplishments, and alpha-parenting of our thirties cured our deep longing for permission to slow down and be imperfect.

I think midlife is when the universe gently places her hands upon your shoulders, pulls you close, and whispers in your ear:

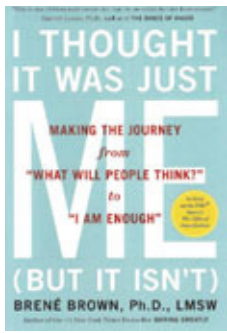
*I'm not screwing around. It's time. All of this pretending and performing – these coping mechanisms that you've developed to protect yourself from feeling inadequate and getting hurt – has to go.*

*Your armor is preventing you from growing into your gifts. I understand that you needed these protections when you were small. I understand that you believed your armor could help you secure all of the things you needed to feel worthy of love and belonging, but you're still searching and you're more lost than ever.*

*Time is growing short. There are unexplored adventures ahead of you. You can't live the rest of your life worried about what other people think. You were born worthy of love and belonging. Courage and daring are coursing through you. You were made to live and love with your whole heart. It's time to show up and be seen.*

Taking off the armor and putting down the weapons requires us to find the courage to be vulnerable and imperfect. It means showing up even when I'm not comfortable or sure. It means trying new things even though I feel awkward and uncool.

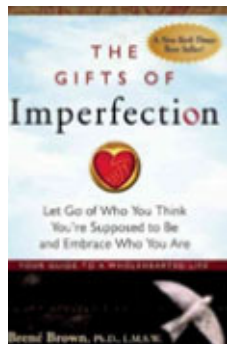
Re-engaging with the world from a place of worthiness – from a place of "I am enough" – has meant owning all of my stories. Even the ones I orphaned along the way because they didn't fit with who I thought I was supposed to be. Studying topics like shame, courage, and vulnerability has taught me that if we are brave enough to explore the darkness, we are certain to discover the infinite power of our light. And for me, being in my prime is all about love and light.



### You're Enough. As is.

*I Thought It Was Just Me* helps you understand and manage the complicated and painful feelings around shame.

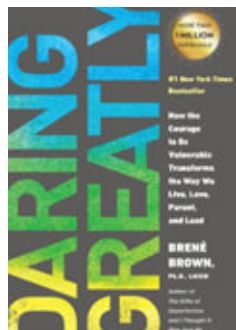
*This book is for you if you're wondering why you keep beating yourself up.*



### Be You.

*The Gifts of Imperfection* describes 10 Guideposts to live a wholehearted life – letting go who you think you're supposed to be and embracing who you truly are.

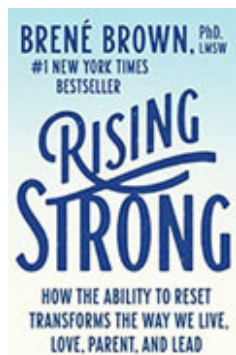
*This book is for you if you're tired of hustling for acceptance from others.*



### Be All In.

*Daring Greatly* is about having the courage to be vulnerable in a world where everyone wants to appear strong, confident and like they know what they're doing,

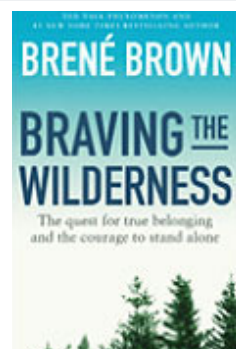
*This book is for you if you want the courage to make big changes in your life.*



### Fall. Get up. Try again.

*Rising Strong* describes a 3-phase process to bounce back from failures by embracing setbacks, managing emotions, confronting fears, and ultimately rising stronger each time.

*This book is for you if you don't think you can make it - you can, you will, this shows you how.*



### A Quest for True Belonging.

*Braving The Wilderness* redefines what it means to truly belong in an age of increased polarization; a choice between doing what is expected to “fit in” or opting to be oneself and following one’s own values.

*This book is for you if you're trying to figure out how to be and what to do in a world gone seemingly mad.*

# Personal Notes

Use this space below to jot down what resonates so you can reflect on it later

# Cheat Sheet

## **Shame**

Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging. It's the fear we're not good enough. The culture of shame is driven by fear, blame, and disconnection, and it is a powerful incubator for perfectionism, stereotyping, gossiping, and addiction. The difference between shame and guilt is the difference between I am bad and I did something bad. When share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame can't survive.

## **Authenticity**

Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It's the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen. If you trade your authenticity for safety, you may experience anxiety, depression, eating disorders, addiction, rage, blame, resentment, and inexplicable grief.

## **Vulnerability**

Vulnerability is uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure; it's having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome. Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our greatest measure of courage.

## **Courage**

Courage is a habit - you get it by courageous acts. It's like you learn to swim by swimming. You learn to courage by couraging. Courage is speaking honestly and openly about how we are, about what we're feeling, and about our experiences (good and bad). We can choose courage or we can choose comfort, but we can't have both, not at the same time.

## **Perfectionism**

Many people think of perfectionism as striving to be your best, but it is not about self-improvement; it's about earning approval and acceptance. Healthy striving is self-focused: "How can I improve?" Perfectionism is other-focused: "What will they think?" Perfectionism is a self-destructive and addictive belief system that fuels the primary thought: if I look perfect, and do everything perfectly, I can avoid or minimize the painful feelings of shame, judgment, and blame.

## **Wholeheartedness**

There are many tenets of Wholeheartedness, but at its very core is vulnerability and worthiness; facing uncertainty, exposure, and emotional risks, and knowing that I am enough.

## **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.

## **Belonging**

Belonging starts with self-acceptance. Your level of belonging can never be greater than your level of self-acceptance, because believing that you're enough is what gives you the courage to be authentic, vulnerable and imperfect. True Belonging is the spiritual practice of belonging to yourself so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world.

# Inspiration

“Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we’re supposed to be and embracing who we are.”

“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.”

“To love ourselves and support each other in the process of becoming real is the greatest single act of daring greatly.”

“Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen.”

“True belonging doesn’t require you to change how you are; it requires you to be who you are.”

“The universe is not short on wake-up calls. We’re just quick to hit the snooze button.”

“How much we know and understand ourselves is critically important, but there is one thing that is even more essential to living a wholehearted life: loving ourselves.”

“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.”