

# Connections & Reflections

by Amanda Vestal

Welcome to a season full of change!

Our ability to hit the reset button countless times over the past eighteen months provided us with the grace we all needed in order to foster compassion toward ourselves and others. Although our hopes for a return to normalcy will have to be recognized throughout fleeting glimpses in our day to day work, we should continue to celebrate our rise from a situation immune to any form of preparation and existing insight.

As we return to our routines, committed to interdependence, let us also consider the idea of self-compassion. Through self-compassion we can accept ourselves in all our human imperfection (Neff, 2021). When we are willing to cultivate an attitude open to personal growth we must also be willing to (a) honor and accept our humanness, (b) recognize that being vulnerable and imperfect is what makes us human, and (c) do the hard work that allows us to observe and act with openness and clarity – frequently putting our own situation into a larger perspective (Maxwell, 2006; Neff, 2021).

Let's ponder on this.

If self-compassion supports our personal growth, is it reasonable to assume that it also supports our professional growth?

Does being open to personal growth support our quest for an interdependent team?

Would accepting our own humanness and imperfections make us more willing to do the same for others?

By being vulnerable are you able to share your perspective in a healthy way and are you then opening up space for others to do the same?

I have a chalk board that sits on my office floor, propped up against the wall next to my desk. Its purpose is to remind me to be kind to myself (i.e., self-compassion). When I first got it, I would change the quotes about every two weeks or so.



About three years ago now, I wrote this Brene Brown quote in chalk-

“Daring greatly means the courage to be vulnerable. It means to show up and be seen. To ask for what you need. To talk about how you're feeling. To have the hard conversations.”

The board hasn't been erased since.

This is my regular reminder that my authentic, imperfect, human self is okay, is enough. This is my regular reminder that showing up and being seen as my authentic, imperfect, human self takes courage. Yes, it takes a level of courage that isn't always easy, but is always better than choosing comfort. Comfort simply doesn't get us far in regards to doing the hard work and having the hard conversations, but courage opens the door to all kinds of clarity and growth.

Let's ponder on this a little more. What does vulnerability look and sound like when you give feedback to your colleagues? What about courage? What does vulnerability look and sound like when you receive feedback from your colleagues? What about courage? If we all are committed to stepping into the arena (more greatness from Brene Brown) then doesn't knowing that make it easier to do?

~Amanda

Courage is like a muscle, it is strengthened by use.  
–Ruth Gordon