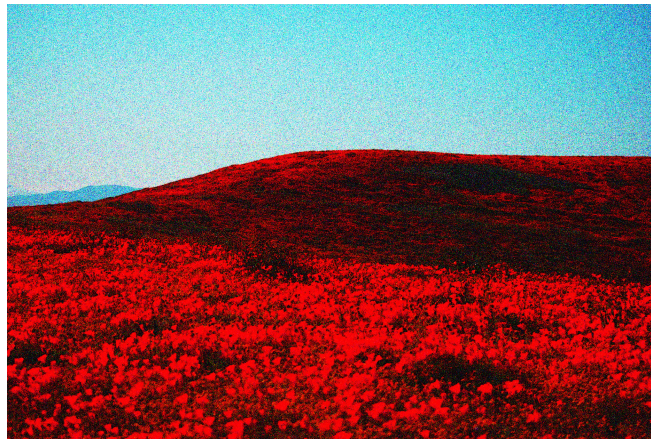


### **Filling your Cup: Wisdom from Brene Brown**



“Let your courage be kinder than your fear.” Brene Brown, bestselling author, researcher, podcaster, and lecturer, brings a form of authenticity to her writing and speaking, making it easy to connect to her. She has shared many findings of her research on shame and vulnerability. I came across this quote recently, which hit close to home. Letting our courage be kinder than our fear is a process.

We are all confident people, because everyone who is reading these words has a wealth of accomplishments. Through repeated cycles of education, training, and real-life experience, we earn trust of the public and ourselves. Physicians have origin stories that are saturated with moments of courage. Many of us have parents who immigrated to the United States at a time when civil rights for people of color was a slow adjustment. My parents immigrated from India in 1970, soon after they were married. They had some clinical experience, but they began their residencies in a country familiar only through movies and books. In a new country, learning a new culture, they

established a very successful and fulfilling life for themselves and my younger brother and I.

Medical school creates a stage for overcoming fears. When we intubate our first patient or insert our first central line, the initial trepidation and anxiety about making a mistake can be suffocating. The resident, fellow, and attending physician as well as the nurses are watching like hawks, and the fear of being reprimanded for a mistake further closes in. When we receive the validation that we successfully performed the necessary procedure, our breath resumes and our thoughts shift to happiness and confidence.

As I advance in age, I have become more intentional to lead with courage. I am guilty of choosing paths of least resistance. I would avoid any experience that could bring me sadness, disappointment, and anxiety. However, when we stay in that comfort zone, we don't allow ourselves the space to evolve. As the great Sufi poet Rumi said, "It is through the darkness that we find our light". When we approach novel events with courage, we recognize value in the process so as not to attach ourselves to the outcome.

I recently read that the root of the word "courage" is "*coeur*" which is French for heart. Courage originates in our hearts, guiding us to continue on our destined path, without any fear of where it takes us. Courage is kind to us, and comforts us in times of uncertainty or distress. Fear is loud, attempting to convince us that we are incapable of expanding outside of familiar territory. It is courage that helps our heart quiet thoughts of fear, to show us that we are, in fact, limitless.

**Let your courage be kinder than your  
fear.**

Brené Brown