

# **B R A V E E N O U G H**

*Getting over our fears, flaws, and failures to live BOLD and FREE*

NICOLE UNICE

CHAPTER 1

# Brave Enough

*You will never do anything in this world without courage.*

ARISTOTLE



## **Brave-Enough Pause**

### ***Our Daily Brave***

Growth starts with honesty. Take an inventory of your life this week. What scares, worries, or concerns you? Do any patterns or themes emerge as you list them (e.g., worries about the future, about money, about what others think of you, etc.)?

When you consider the stories of Jesus-courage, do you relate most to the way Christ forgave sin, healed, or offered his presence? Why is that?

### ***Pray***

God, knowing you starts with honesty. I want to tell you how I really am, the places I feel like I'm too worried (or fearful, or needy, or simply too much) and the places where I feel I'm lacking. I don't want to keep acting as if it's on me to make my life work. I want to invite you to be the Lord of my life and have an honest, daily, real relationship with you. Would you show me how to do that every day? I want to trust you..

CHAPTER 2

# Brave-Enough Women Get in the Race

*A feeble, nominal Christianity is the great  
obstacle to the conversion of the world.*

HENRY VENN



## **Brave-Enough Pause**

### ***Our Daily Brave***

Whether you've been following Jesus for years or are just getting started, clarifying questions are a helpful diagnostic to become braver. Think about your past week. How was your relationship with Jesus part (or not part) of your everyday life? What are you scared to let Jesus have control of in your life?

### ***Pray***

In Luke 9:20, Jesus asked his disciples, "What about you? . . . Who do you say I am?" If Jesus posed that very same question to you, what would you tell him? You can start by saying, *Jesus, I want to be honest with you about who you are to me . . .*

CHAPTER 3

# Brave-Enough Women Embrace Spiritual Survival Skills

*Disciplines . . . are not the answer; they  
only lead us to the Answer.*

RICHARD FOSTER, *CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE*



## **Brave-Enough Pause**

### *Our Daily Brave*

When you consider the spiritual survival skills of Word, worship, prayer, and partnership, which one are you most drawn toward? Which one is hardest for you?

What's something that can spur you on this week? Which survival skill would you like to hone?

If the Word: Commit to read something in your Bible every day this week. You could start by reading Psalms 1-7.

If worship: Add a Pandora station of worship music, or sing a worship song on your way to work each day. See what it does for your mood!

If prayer: Consider writing down your prayer requests. If you begin to journal the things you are seeking God in, you'll also be able to go back and record when God answers those prayers. You'll likely to be encouraged at all the expected—and unexpected—ways God responds to you.

If partnership: Are there a few women in your life with whom you can start a deeper conversation? Challenge yourself to ask a “heart question” of someone in your life this week. Could you be brave enough to even start a book club?

### ***Pray***

*Father, I do want to take my life with you seriously. You promise that when I seek you I will find you, if I seek you with all of my heart (Jeremiah 29:13). Show me ways that I can allow you to have full control of my heart in all things, whether in joyful times or in challenging seasons.*



CHAPTER 4

# Brave-Enough Women Love Grace

*How few there are who have courage enough to own  
their faults, or resolution enough to mend them.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



## **Brave-Enough Pause**

### ***Our Daily Brave***

Hebrews 12:1 says, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” Imagine yourself right now. (Looking at a picture of yourself might help!) Take a moment to ask God to give you the courage to see yourself as he sees you. Now, imagine the hindrances and entanglements in your life. What are they? What wraps around your heart and binds you? What twists around your legs and trips you up? Take ten minutes to make a list.

Once you have your list, look over what you’ve written. Then tear the paper up into little bits. Hear the sound of the paper ripping; feel the strength of your hands easily tearing it up. Watch the words become letters and the letters become lines and the whole list become confetti. Throw it away. Now you have a living, real reminder of what God has done with the sin and entanglements in your life. You’ve taken one step toward freedom. Dealing with your sin isn’t as easy as ripping up a piece of paper—but ripping up that paper is a way to acknowledge that God can and will set you free.

### ***Pray***

*Holy Spirit, you know my list because you are in my heart. You know the entanglements that I wasn’t even brave enough to write down. Heal me, comfort me, set me on a right path. Jesus Christ, you came and offered your life for mine so that I could be set free. Help me live in that freedom; enable me to embrace and taste that freedom even in this moment.*

CHAPTER 5

# Brave-Enough Women Give Grace

*I don't have time to maintain these regrets,  
when I think about the way he loves us.*

JOHN MARK MCMILLAN, "HOW HE LOVES"



## **Brave-Enough Pause**

### ***Our Daily Brave***

Reflect on this passage from Ephesians 4:30-32 (MSG):

*Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted. Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.*

Read this passage several times. What words or phrases stand out to you?

### ***Pray***

*Father, you have given me life. You know my weaknesses. You know where I haven't forgiven and where I feel disappointed and stuck. Holy Spirit, breathe life into me. Breathe joy into me. Help me walk into today with power and with purpose.*

CHAPTER 6

# Brave-Enough Women Don't Fear a Fight

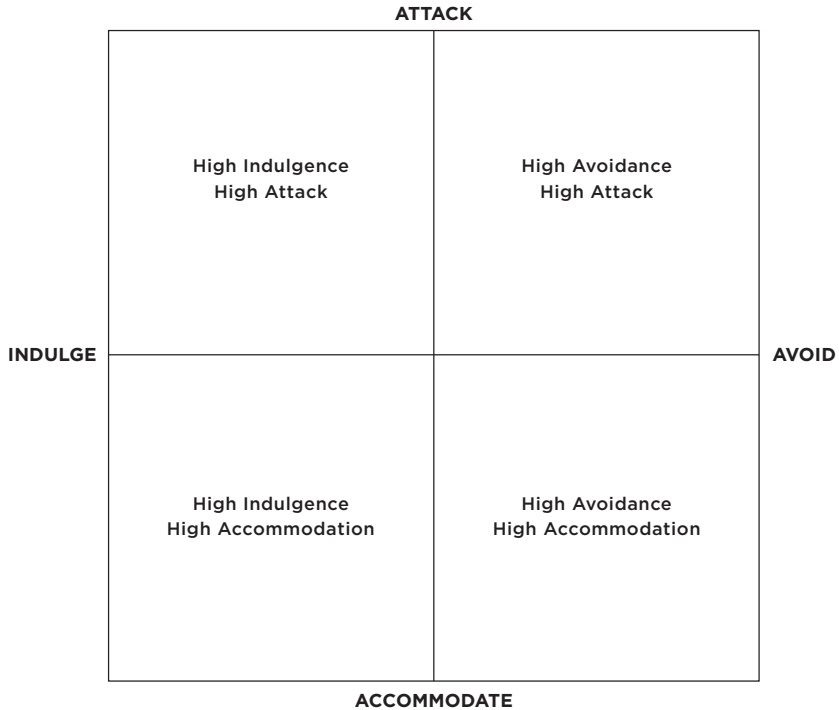
*It's worth fighting for. / Baby, sometimes love is war.*

AMERICAN YOUNG, "LOVE IS WAR"



## Approaches to Conflict

*What quadrant do you arc toward?*



**The Avider** hates conflict, so her initial approach is to try stopping it before it even starts by ignoring, deflecting, or stuffing her feelings.

**The Indulger** promptly engages with the person or force that opposes her; she is less likely to let go or compromise easily.

**The Accommodator** readily gives up her side of the argument in conflict, even when it's to her detriment. She prefers "keeping the peace" to holding her ground.

**The Attacker** rejects any compromise during conflict. She may turn conflict against the other person and use it as an opportunity to "gain ground" or dominate in a relationship.

## **Brave-Enough Pause**

Look at the conflict grid on page 107. Consider a few of your closest relationships. Where would you plot yourself on the grid when considering the way you handle conflict with each person? If you are feeling particularly brave, ask your spouse or a close friend how he or she sees you handling conflict.

## ***Our Daily Brave***

In what ways do your patterns in conflict feel unhealthy? What's one thing you'd like to do differently in one of those close relationships?

Consider the following statements of Jesus:

*God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.*

**Matthew 5:9, NLT**

*Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!*

**Matthew 5:44, NLT**

Are you willing to commit to pray for an adversary for a period of time? Can you find a partner to be accountable to during this time?

## ***Pray***

*Father, I feel the tension and emotion of conflict in my life. Would you unknot the cords of conflict from my soul and give me the courage to follow your gentle pull toward a life of true peace? I open my heart to your guidance, your conviction, and the ways you want to change me through the conflicts I'm experiencing right now.*

CHAPTER 7

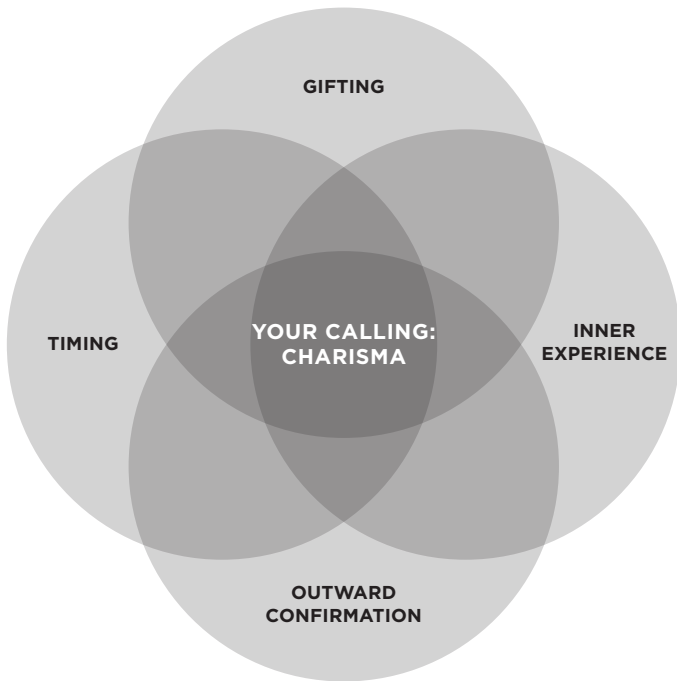
# Brave-Enough Women Explore Their Territory

*I always wanted to be somebody, but now I  
realize I should have been more specific.*

LILY TOMLIN







***Giftng:*** What is my contribution to the Kingdom of God? What do I love to do?

***Inner Experience:*** What experiences have I had of God calling me into my gifts? Does my will align with my call—not for my own glory, but for God's glory?

***Outward Confirmation:*** What do others confirm that they see in me?

***Timing:*** Am I in a season where I've been presented opportunities to live out my gifts?

## **Brave-Enough Pause**

Parker Palmer says, “People take copious notes on what retreat leaders say, or what certain wise people in a group say, but rarely, if ever, do they take notes on what they themselves say.”<sup>8</sup>

In exploring our territory, we must let our lives speak to us. We must quiet down enough to let our souls come out from the underbrush of the hurried and loud patterns of our days and actually tell us about who we are truly made to be.

## ***Our Daily Brave***

Take ten minutes with only a journal and pen. Write a one-sentence life mission statement. It may start with “I exist to . . .” or “My life mission statement is to . . .” A couple of rules: You can start with something general, but it should also contain something specific. You may want to say, “I exist to serve God,” but try to finish the sentence “I exist to serve God through . . .”

This is meant to be a little scary and hard. But try it. See what comes forth. Scribble and scratch out and erase but put some words on paper. This is a beginning.

Come back to your sentence this week. Read it again, and share it with a friend or your small group. Ask others if it rings true for you.

## ***Pray***

We began this chapter with the question, “Who am I?” So now I ask you to pray bravely and boldly with me:

*Heavenly Father, will you give me the courage to believe that you've given me gifts? I ask you to help me look fearlessly into my own life and heart and believe you. Give me the boldness to say yes to this great strength you've gifted me with.*

CHAPTER 8

# Brave-Enough Women Know Their Limits

*I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that  
the power of Christ can work through me.*

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9, NLT



## LEARNING LIMITS

Do you struggle to accept limits and make choices? If so, here are some techniques that might help:

### ***Ponder:*** Know who you want to be.

Imagine a week of your life that feels healthy and balanced. What do you envision? Are you making dinners? Working out? Spending time for God? Now choose the top three things that feel important to you. Write them down somewhere prominent so they are in front of you. It's important not to choose too many at once—that would overwhelm you.

### ***Prioritize:*** Know your yeses and nos.

Now that you have a sense of what's most important to you, you can create a yes/no meter. The next time you face a scheduling decision, use this default sentence: "When I say yes to \_\_\_\_\_, I am saying no to \_\_\_\_\_."

For instance, during a busy season of writing for this book, I had to choose between early morning workouts or quiet time to write. I said to myself: *I feel called to write this book as a priority for this season. In order to say yes to writing, I've said no to running with a friend for the next three weeks.* Prioritizing your yeses makes you more aware of the choices you are making and reminds you of your limits. It places the responsibility for your schedule back where it belongs—on you. It empowers you to also say no to

something when you realize the impact it would have on your priorities.

***Prepare:* Create a default statement.**

In order to stick to your priorities, you need an escape method for decisions that want to break through your boundaries. Have a sentence at the ready that allows you to default a decision. When asked to take on a new responsibility, don't say yes right away. Instead say something like, "I'll have to check my schedule and get back to you." This allows you time to think before you act.

***Practice:* Form the letters n-o.**

If you struggle with your no, start small. The next time a salesperson asks you to consider buying more, simply say, "No, thank you." Don't make an excuse or give the person any room to continue the conversation. That will make it easier to say no the next time an acquaintance or even a friend asks you to do something that would exceed your limits. Again, politely say no. Don't make excuses, tell a story, or make it emotional. All of those answers sound like "no, but maybe" instead of "no, not ever." Once you've practiced in small ways, step it up and try it with a bigger decision.

## **Brave-Enough Pause**

### ***Our Daily Brave***

Reflect on the following verse:

*He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

**2 Corinthians 12:9**

Now read it again but insert your name and your weaknesses into the verse:

*He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ [your name], for my power is made perfect  
in \_\_\_\_\_ [your specific weaknesses]."*

*Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

**2 Corinthians 12:9**

What would it look like to "boast about your weaknesses" this week?

### ***Pray***

*Father, you've made me a mighty treasure in a fragile vessel. Help me to embrace both the power and the fragility of my life, placing myself under your authority. God, today I claim that "apart from you I have no good thing," and I claim that my boundary lines are pleasant and good. Meet me with your presence and peace as I submit myself to your limits.*

CHAPTER 9

# Our Daily Brave

*People have no idea what one saint can do: for  
sanctity is stronger than the whole of hell.*

THOMAS MERTON



## **Brave-Enough Pause**

### ***Our Daily Brave***

As you worked through this book, what one or two key takeaways did you discover?

Based on your own study of Scripture or review of the “Word on Courage” appendix that begins on page 199, what phrase or Scripture passage best captures how you are growing in Christ in this season? What has God been teaching you about yourself and about him?

Finish this sentence: Because God makes me brave enough, I can \_\_\_\_\_. Make it as specific as you can for whatever you are facing right now. You might want to record it in your journal as a marker of your relationship with God in this season.

### ***Pray***

*Father in heaven, I come before your throne of grace with confidence. I am brave enough because you provide for me in my weaknesses, you strengthen me for your work, and you love me with an everlasting love. I want to live that as my deepest truth in every day that you give me, until I meet you face-to-face.  
Amen.*



# ENDNOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. I found this definition at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courage> which cites John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson, “The Republic” in *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 2061–2075.

## CHAPTER 1: BRAVE ENOUGH

1. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “courage.”
2. “Maya Angelou on Facing Evil,” Caged Bird Legacy, LLC, <http://www.mayaangelou.com/media/bill-moyers/>.

## CHAPTER 3: BRAVE-ENOUGH WOMEN EMBRACE SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL SKILLS

1. See John 6:35 and John 7:37-38.
2. Peter Kreeft, *You Can Understand the Bible* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), xvi.
3. See Matthew 16:24 and Luke 9:23, 59.
4. Kreeft, *You Can Understand the Bible*, xv.
5. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 328.
6. Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, trans. John J. Delaney (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 51.
7. Michael Comins, “Elijah and the ‘Still, Small Voice,’” *Torah Trek: The Center for Jewish Wilderness Spirituality*, <http://www.torahtrek.org/app-writings/writing-2>.
8. Alicia Britt Chole, *Intimate Conversations: Devotions to Nurture a Woman’s Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2009), 178.

## CHAPTER 4: BRAVE-ENOUGH WOMEN LOVE GRACE

1. Matthew 9:20-22
2. Acts 7:57–8:3
3. Read the story of Paul (also known as Saul) in Acts 9.

4. *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, NIV edition (1996), ed. Spiros Zodhiates, s.v. “charis.”

#### **CHAPTER 5: BRAVE-ENOUGH WOMEN GIVE GRACE**

1. As quoted in *Spirituality and Liberation: Overcoming the Great Fallacy* by Robert McAfee Brown (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1988), 136.
2. Dana Crowley Jack, “Understanding Women’s Anger: A Description of Relational Patterns,” 2001, [http://faculty.wvu.edu/djack/publications/Understanding\\_Women’s\\_Anger.pdf](http://faculty.wvu.edu/djack/publications/Understanding_Women’s_Anger.pdf).
3. Ibid.
4. Findings attributed to S. P. Thomas, *Women and Anger*, mentioned in Melissa Dittmann, “Anger Across the Gender Divide,” *Monitor on Psychology*, vol. 34, no. 3 (March 2003): 52, <http://www.apa.org/monitor/mar03/angeracross.aspx>.
5. John Mark McMillan, “How He Loves,” copyright © 2009. This song has been covered by several Christian artists, including the David Crowder Band.

#### **CHAPTER 6: BRAVE-ENOUGH WOMEN DON’T FEAR A FIGHT**

1. See, for example, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”
2. See John 18:10.
3. The phrase “tender and mild” to describe Jesus is from the Christmas carol “Silent Night”—not from Scripture.

#### **CHAPTER 7: BRAVE-ENOUGH WOMEN EXPLORE THEIR TERRITORY**

1. Scripture often speaks to us as individual members of the body of Christ, designed to bring God’s message to the world. See Romans 7:4; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:12.
2. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “serendipity.”
3. Dictionary.com, s.v. “vocation,” <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vocation>.
4. Although this is my own definition, I am indebted to a variety of Christian thinkers who have helped me understand calling. Please see Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000) and Os Guinness, *The Call* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003) for further reading.
5. Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 58.
6. David and I cohost a podcast every week called *Becoming*, which is a free download on iTunes. To hear more about this topic, download the episode entitled “The Kingdom of Self.”
7. Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 4.
8. Ibid., 5.

## ENDNOTES

### CHAPTER 8: BRAVE-ENOUGH WOMEN KNOW THEIR LIMITS

1. Galatians 5:25
2. “Antiaging Products and Services: The Global Market,” press release, *MarketWatch*, August 19, 2013, <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/antiaging-products-and-services-the-global-market-2013-08-19>.
3. Meredith Lepore, “15 Facts about Starbucks That Will Blow Your Mind,” *Business Insider*, March 25, 2011, <http://www.businessinsider.com/15-facts-about-starbucks-that-will-blow-your-mind-2011-3?op=1>.
4. *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, NIV edition (1996), ed. Spiros Zodhiates, s.v. “sabbat.”
5. Dasee Berkowitz, “In Experiencing Real Freedom, the Importance of Boundaries,” *JTA*, March 11, 2013, <http://www.jta.org/2013/03/11/life-religion/in-experiencing-real-freedom-the-importance-of-boundaries#ixzz3DTG0wPrN>.
6. Ian Morgan Cron, “Prayer,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYHLwAIDxtM>.
7. A Hasidic proverb quoted in Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 110.

### CHAPTER 9: OUR DAILY BRAVE

1. *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, NIV edition (1996), ed. Spiros Zodhiates, s.v. “hagios.”
2. Elisabeth Elliot, *Let Me Be a Woman* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1976), 43.
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:23, *Phillips*