

Brene Brown is an American Scholar and speaker. She has several books and is inspiring to many. She says: **“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.”** Ok, I'll give you one more quote by her: **“Vulnerability is the core of shame and fear and our struggle for worthiness but it is also the birthplace of joy and creativity, of belonging, and of love.”**

I quote Brene because her honesty about vulnerability caught my eye and heart. Some writing is easy. My daughter asks me how to write and I'd say “It's easy.” She questions further “Don't you ever get writers block?” I replied “No, not really.” It seems to come easy for me while it is a struggle for others. This is not a self-boasting moment. Some people like Brene Brown seem to know what to say. Maybe that's why she is motivational in her writing and speaking. Her insights might mean she is just really smart or insightful. Either way she tugged at my heart strings by the words she uses.

There are others; however, that also know what to say in a different way. They probe and probe for the right spot to hit. When they have found your insecurity or weakness, they strike like a cat: clawing away at your wall of protection. Brene Brown mentioned “Vulnerability is the core of shame and fear and our struggle for worthiness.” We all desire to be worthy. Nobody is completely humble. A good back rub is self-indulging. There are those who prey on our vulnerability. They chose words wisely to crush our soul. I suppose they are the anti-motivational speakers.

I have often (always) wondered if I was born as a punching bag. I'm tough, but people love to bash me. I don't break but I seem to always be in a good spot to be hit. I don't mean hit

literally but my heart has taken a beating. I have had the closest people too me find it important and justified to tell me that I'm less than stellar. Are they justified? Only God can answer that one. I have analyzed myself to death on whether I'm a broken piece of trash that needs to be discarded. The tough part is that as I said in the first chapter: my Parents and first wife discarded me. I have been told who I should be. To them I am trash.

This is not a pity party but we can have one if you like. To me this is more of a reflection of my life and my heart condition. My heart has bruises and scars. Not many of those were my fault. I want to leave myself vulnerable to others and that is the hook. My love for people has put me in an open place to be hit. Do I make mistakes and do and say things I shouldn't have? Yes, we all do, but I am not evil or vindictive. I mess up like we all do. That does not give those around me the right to bash me whenever they feel like it. I may not measure up to them but this is me they're hitting.

Why do people do that to those they love? What went on in their lives that have caused them to lash out? I'm the person who loved them, why hit my heart till it bleeds? There has been a lot of blood spilt on my bathroom floor as I have stared in the mirror asking why. I have tried to give them the benefit of the doubt. There are lists of excuses I have devised for them to use. I love them, why won't they love me? Oh they said they do love me, but their actions hit harder than their words.

In many ways I have lived my life alone. When everyone close to you dislikes you: you're alone. Who do you confide in? Who knows your hopes and dreams? Who makes your day? For me it has been the mirror. A good friend of mine told me I am a great self-talker: the perfect motivational speaker to myself. The problem is that famous saying: **“Preaching to the choir.”** It means **“Often used to imply that a speaker is addressing the wrong audience or is**

**deliberately addressing a compliant, non-challenging audience.”** I’m my own worst enemy most of the time.

I called this chapter “The Belief Bomb.” What it means is that (in my mind) we believe in two things in life “People” and “God.” Sure we can believe in a great many things, but two things are dear to us: those around us and the spiritual. An atheist says he believes in nothing. Dumb ass you believe in something: nothing. Other people believe in something called the spiritual. If the spiritual was not that big a deal then why are wars fought, arguments started, and friendships lost over the spiritual? It means something.

The other side is: believing in people. I am including myself as a people. John Donne wrote Meditation VII “Devotions upon Emergent Occasions.” Here it is: “No man is an Island”

**No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.**

Nobody deserves to be alone. Nobody should be alone. Donne is right; we are part of the bigger humanity. Well you might not believe me and that’s too bad. You affect others and they affect you. I have been altered (I like that word) by the people around me. I guess I have altered myself as well. We are the sum of our experiences.

The “Belief Bomb” is when we are hit with someone’s negativity. Yes, a negative reaction can be healthy, but that’s not the kind I’m talking about. We believe in someone and they cheat on us. You just got negatively bombed. A Minister lies to you at church. You just got negatively bombed. These nuclear explosions alter our view of life. We can begin to hate

someone or an entity like a church. If these bombs continue we can hate people, humanity, and God. When does the bleeding stop, when we're dead?

Like I said, I wonder if I'm a K-Tel punching bag. I'm cheap and worthless to throw away when used too much. I don't believe that about myself anymore, but for a time I did. Sometimes my old feelings come back. Taylor Swift has a song called "Clean." She says

**"10 months sober, I must admit, just because you're clean don't mean you miss it. 10 months older I won't give in, now that I'm clean I'm never gonna risk it. The drought was the very worst. When the flowers that we'd grown together died of thirst."**

To me, it means, I miss beating myself up over accusations and observations. Sometimes I like to visit them. In the end though, I don't like going there anymore, I can't risk it. The drought or time spent fixing my heart cost me too much. I've invested in me, so I hope the flowers grown together in misery have died a horrible death: I am clean now. Witty I suppose, but I'm serious. I never want to berate or be berated by anyone, and that includes me. There is that self-talk thing again. See I am good at it.

You can call me a bomb shelter. I guard myself from mean people. I just want you to know that I look at God that way too. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says **"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."** I believe that because God is my bomb shelter. I find safety and love in his arms.

It's like this: **"Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me."** I believe in God. Romans 8:31 says **"What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"** I believe it. If I am willing to defend me, then why can't I be defended

by God? He said he would. Bombs from people will fall. They will be smart bombs intended to damage my heart precisely, but I will prevail. One way or the other I and God are my bomb shelters.

It seems I am talking in third person about myself. Maybe over the years I have become mental. No, I just have watched me in the mirror for a long time, and I have seen myself hurt and happy in the mirror. I have seen changes throughout time. Someone has changed me. Events have changed me. Not only am I seeing gray hairs and wrinkles, but I have begun to see me. I have been encouraged by God: to be me. That has in-turn, encouraged me to fight for the guy in the mirror.

There have been people that don't want that for me. I know many people who would love nothing more than for me to see their picture of me in the mirror. It's not that I think all people are bad. I have been touched by human angels, yet certainly there is credence in **"once bitten twice shy."** We all have had those who seem to want us firmly in their jaws. I have the bite marks to prove it.

People like me could and do from time to time perish under the weight of condemnation. I feel it's my job to help those on the edge. Hurt people need love too. They say a hurtful comment takes ten positives ones to erase just one evil statement. Still, abusers know the game. They say one really bad thing and then give you hope with several "Sorry." This game plays on over and over manipulating our hope in people.

Hurt people also need hope. In the last chapter I touched on this word 'Hope.' Where is it when people hurt you? I think it can get crushed. Where is the hope for people in prison? Is there hope for little children in Cambodia picking batteries out of the garbage in exchange for food? When I looked in the mirror, where did I find hope?

Bad people love to go after the one thing that can strengthen us: our hope. I believe we want to hope in humanity. We want the best for the human race. There are people out there that have a pessimistic view of people on this earth. They say we need to be armed, have more police, and live in compounds. It's smart and safe, but it is also dwelling on retreating from loving the world. We need love to give us hope.

Some people want it all. We know the Hitler's, Stalin's, and many other small time leaders tried to own this world. One leader of an army in Chad has possibly 7 to 10 thousand child soldiers. This man wants to lead at any cost. He has crushed the dreams of many a child in order to fulfill his own agenda. There are bad people out there trying to take hope away from our hearts.

You see hope is life. We all desire to live. Our lives become a disaster when hope is ruined. I don't believe anyone can take our hope away, but they can mess with it. One of the cool things about God is that he loves hope. Earlier I quoted in scripture that God gives us hope. We have it in us like a computer has a program. There are those in this world that have tried to bomb that hope. Without hope, we are weak and manageable. Brene Brown said "Without love, we get sick." I connect that to hope. Strengthening and solidifying our hope brings us healing and healthy lives.

God gives love and it grows our faith and hope. People give love and we appreciate it. The relationships we have will grow when love is present. When the love stops and bombs start falling, our hope retreats back into the bunker. This is tough stuff to talk about but we must. To "Reset" we have to understand what happened. There is a sick feeling inside when our hope is played with.

During one Green Bay Packer football game the (then coach Lombardi) famously said on the side lines “What the hell is going on around here.” That is what we must do too. Life has hit us and things need a reset. We need to evaluate what the hell went on before now. A reset is about recuing our hope. We must stick up for love. Something has gone wrong but there is hope. Someone said “Things are not as bad as they seem and not as good as they could be.” There is hope in that people get sick but they also get better.

There are people in our lives that have bombed us. They unabashedly chose to hurt us. I was sent to a psychiatrist by my Pastor. He said I had issues. In the first session the analyst finally stopped and said “look, why are you here, there is nothing wrong with you.” His conclusion was that the Pastor and I were not a good fit, yet the man representing God told me I was nuts. That guy bombed me. I thought we could work together as individuals on a team. No, it was his way or your nuts. I lost a friend that day. I lost confidence in me too.

My ex-wife told me I am not good relationship material. She said I was the problem in the marriage. Within the first week of our split up I went to the Distress Centre for counselling. I thought if I could fix me then maybe I could save my marriage. At one point the counsellor said “Look, why are you here, there is nothing wrong with you.” Her conclusion was that my Ex and I were not a great fit. That was a true story. She felt all I needed was a strong confident me and I’d be just fine.

My father is a sports guy. My brother and I used to hit baseballs in the park. My bro, one day was boasting to my dad about how good I am at hitting baseballs. My dad turned around and told me that the boy across the road could crush me with a single pitch. What he really said was that I wasn’t as good as the other boys he adored. Ya, that hurt. I know I’m better than that but

it's a scar. We know that scars fade but they never leave. It's possible my confidence (Hope) took a hit that day.

I guess there are two kinds of people when it comes to being mean (why must I label everything). There are the "Crushers" and the "Crushee's." I don't want to be a "Crusher." I never have. Yet, I have applied several times to be the President of the "Crushee" club. I know people that have never been hurt by another person, but they have crushed many. One lady had influenced others to leave their relationships for less than stellar reasons. Later those same people realized they were duped into believing a lie. She is a "Crusher" and they were all crushed.

We have faith and hope in people. I don't walk around hoping people are evil. In the past I tried to work with "Crushers." I tried to have compassion for them. I made excuses for them. I know a very nice Christian lady who always works with the best intentions. The church she attended had several toxic Pastors (and still does). These Pastors hurt a tremendous number of people. So many have left that I swear two new churches of at-least a hundred people could be formed. My lady friend won't leave because she says she is dedicated no matter what. It's noble but I guess she has no problem ignoring all the spilt blood in the church pews. "Crushers" need to be confronted and dealt with or blood will flow.

"Crushee's" have compassion. They are not gullible, but heart felt people looking for the best in others. They are vulnerable because they care. The "Crusher" has no compassion. Their agenda and delight is to run over others like a monster truck. They do it in the name of God. They do it to feel secure. I think in many cases "Crushers" love to crush. Most of these "Crushers", I have known, are good at it like they are perfecting an art form. You cannot reason



with evil. We don't like saying someone is evil, and that is our downfall. There are evil people and they are all around us. They are the "Crushers."

Don't tell me you have never met an evil person. Evil is not just Hitler. Evil is anyone who cares more about themselves than others. On the other side we have all heard or met wonderful people like Sister Teresa, Billy Graham, and your Doctor. They just might be the nicest people in this world. They help others. I know a lady at our food bank that ranks up there as a nice person. Yes, she has been treated badly at times. Still, she feeds the poor and cares for others more than herself. She is a "Crushee" with an amazing heart even after the bombs have fallen.

There have been events in our lives that have changed us. One day I was married and the next I was living in my dad's empty basement. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger is an US Airlines pilot. You might remember him landing his doomed Airplane on the Hudson River on 2009? He had been a US marine Pilot in his younger years. In those days, could he see himself standing on his aircraft on the Hudson River? One day were doing one thing and another day something completely different. "Sully" is now a war hero and an aviation hero. Events change our lives and the lives of those around us. Sully's actions made a difference.

Our belief in ourselves is constantly being changed. One person tears you down while another builds you up. Your friend is killed and you change. A spouse cheats and you are changed. Alanis Morsette wrote a song called "You learn." Here is the chorus:

**You live you learn. You love you learn.**

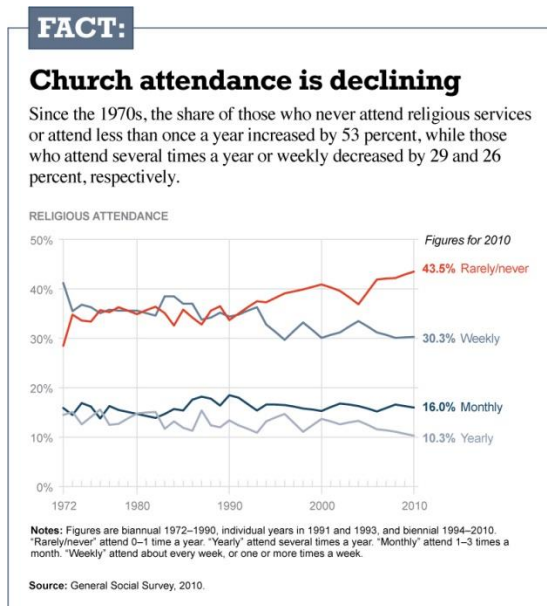
**You cry you learn. You lose you learn.**

**You bleed you learn. You scream you learn.**

We are not an Island as I said earlier. People affect us daily. We affect them too. “We learn” is all we do. People try and bomb us and that is just reality. I just want to make it clear that people love us too. Yet, it’s the bombs that hurt. They leave scars.

Our belief in people can be damaged by the blows we take. The woman I talked about earlier won’t open her door because she is cautious: she has been scarred I bet. Something has forced her to be overly nervous with people. If you go to a restaurant and get sick from the food will you go back? Maybe but what if it happened twice? I know people that after divorce never married again. They just couldn’t chance it: couldn’t chance the pain and embarrassment of accusations and failure for a second time. My Wife has a hard time going to certain places back home. She can’t risk her heart again.

People bomb us and it crushes our hope in people and ourselves. What happens when that is a church? How come so many people refuse to attend a church? Some people can only stomach it once or twice a year. Look at this chart.



The most amazing thing is that church keeps on doing church the same way. They have a controlled leadership, bent on money, and ignoring the spiritual. I was stunned and amazed when I became a Christian. They told me to read the Bible and follow it. That is most certainly not what's going on in a church these days. Why then do churches not follow the Bible? Even more amazing is that they say they do, but stats don't lie. The reason people don't go to church anymore is twofold. One is that they say it's not relevant in our lives anymore and secondly that those in attendance are hypocrites.

If I had a dime for every non believer I've met telling me about hypocrite Christians I'd be a very very rich man. Yet again the leadership in the church says I need Jesus because I'm ringing the alarm bells. Basically the chart points out a twenty percent drop in attendance in twenty five years. Still, they do church the same way. Oh sure they changed the Bible to be word friendly (nice). They leave out any mention of current sin to appease (nice). They became consumer friendly so we can shop there (nice). If that is change: then why the hypocrite status and why the drop in attendance?

It's because church has become toxic. I have seen the blood run down the aisles and out the doors. Pastors have no problem crushing the hope of Christians. The message is that God does not change. Read and follow the Bible. We love and are compassionate like Jesus. Yet everyone I talk to laughs at those statements outside the church. The church is an ostrich. It thinks it's safe and ok as long as its head is (I'll be nice) in the sand. "Crushers" flourish in the church. The current corporate leadership style lends itself to be dominant heartless people.

This could be a bitter man telling you lies. Maybe, but I have counselled far too many crying people who have had hope bombed away by the church. The reason I wanted to add this to "Reset" is because the Spiritual matters. I told you that in the last chapter. We are flesh and

the spiritual. God designed the church for a reason. That is where our spiritual side should get a boost. We listen to Gods word; receive fellowship, and experience community wrapped in the Holy Spirit. Does this sound like an unhopeful bitter man?

I want church to work. I need church to work. Yet time and time again the people within the church have bombed me. Sinners are in and outside the church. Sin is not exclusive to the unsaved. They say Jesus is the head of the church. If Jesus saves then why doesn't the church? Why have they become hope crushers? My next chapter will go through the problems with the church. We need to discuss this topic. To bash the church: no, heavens no. There are people like you and me outside the church who still believe. We are those who say "I believe" but won't go to church anymore.

There are millions of people who do believe in God. They are stuck right where they are: just believing in their own way. The problem is that the truth is getting distorted. We are beginning to believe God is ok with sin. Reading the Bible is not important anymore. Fellowship in church is worthless. I don't want that. God is worth it. Church is worth it. You are worth it. Many people will be surprised when they go to heaven. The door will say "Hell": they went the wrong way.

You can believe the saying: "Your belief in God is good enough for eternal life", but one day you will know you're wrong. You can stop now and say I'm wrong but the Bible is God's word and it says I'm right. The stats say I'm right too. I have rarely met people who don't believe. They just refuse to say they are Christian. That term to them means hypocrite. In church I have heard jokes said by Pastors about other denominations. The people laugh but I bet Jesus is not laughing. We are supposed to be unity yet that is far from the truth. There is a book out there called "The McDonaldization of the church" by John Drane. This is what Amazon says about it.

**“John believes that the Churches have become stereotyped structures offering uninventive pre-packaged worship to a dwindling minority. But there are exciting opportunities for growth, he argues - if only they can rediscover their creativity and flexibility.”**

Ok, I need to bring this back to “Reset.” don’t throw out the Baby Jesus with the bath water. Just because church is broken (and it is) does not mean you should not believe. Dr. Laura said we need the spiritual. The ancient Greek philosophers did too. God always said to the Israelites “Come back to me and I will be your God and you will be my people.” People crush us in our daily lives. They crush us in faith circles as well. A “Reset” means to start with belief that what God started as good is still good, it’s just some evil people that make it bad.

We need to believe in people. We need to believe in God. I talked in the first three chapters about how people bomb our hope. We bomb it ourselves. Still we wake up every day with a choice: to live or die. Are you a “Survivor” or the “Walking Dead?” Do you want to be a “Liver”? God is still loving and good no matter what people think. People change and people are hypocrites, but God is not. How do I know God never changes? Well you see it’s like this “The remnant.”

Genesis 45:7 says **“God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.”**

2 Kings 19:30 **“The surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.”**

Isaiah 10:20 **“On that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on the one who struck them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.”**

The “Remnant” are the survivors. The Bible is somewhat vague on who the aggressors are. It would be easy to say it was the Romans or other nations in the time each verse was written. Still, there are tons of references to a remnant in the Old Testament, but few in the New Testament. Except this one **Romans 11:5 “So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.”** Paul mentions several times we are under grace now. One person said this about grace **“It is Gods allowances for our sin.”** Grace means many things to many people. Take a look at two more verses.

**Romans 11:25 “So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.”**

**Titus 3:7 “So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”**

My conclusions about people and spirituality are this: those that want to believe are a remnant in this day. Just because church has gone sour does not mean God is sour. If you hate church then why do you still want to believe? It’s because God has taken you out of a bad Christian environment for your protection. He wants you to grow in hope and faith. He wants you to believe.

God does not change and when people change God, he pulls out a remnant to keep Christianity safe. You are not the bombed or rejected. You are those who will make the church well again. We are the people who make the work place a better environment to work in. We say thank you and tip well. We are the good people in this world. Sorry, but you are the few. The remnant has always been a few. In Romans 11:25 it says Israel has been hardened. The church is in that same place today. Love, compassion, grace, and understanding have been replaced by

programs, forms, boards, and expectations. The real Hope in God has been removed from the church. They are like Samson in Judges 16.

This man wakes up and finds himself ready to die. A chilling verse in Judges 16:20 said **“But he did not know that the Lord had left him.”** That is where the church is at today. They are so absorbed in this corporate culture they don’t even know, but you know. I have talked to you. You have said you believe but you hate the hypocrites. The time is now not to hate but to build: a time to reset your belief. You can believe in yourself. You can also once again believe in the Christian community. We need to Reset and set things back to the basics.

I still need you to stick with the modern church. There is a place for it in your life. To understand where we should go, we need to get a grip on what has happened. To believe in yourself is to understand who you are and your spiritual connection to God. Wounds have been built by people. Some of those people are in the church. Don’t put God and those people together. God has left the building and gone into the community through his remnant.

I believe in what I have said to you. I know a woman who runs a food bank. Church ministry has bombed her from all angles. She does not attend church regularly anymore. Her son is a Pastor, yet she is not an active member on the inside, why? I have been pushed away from church circles. I am writing and working on Christians things outside church walls. Each of us and many others are doing great work. Our numbers are increasing while the church numbers are falling, why? God is active within the church, but the new movement of God is increasingly outside the church. Ironically many church leaders will not see this until they close their doors, turn out the lights, and it’s too late. The scary part is that they don’t believe it’s coming, but its already here.

I knew a woman who loved to be generous. At times she could be harsh. She believed in the physical but rejected the spiritual. Her daughter is now a tyrant that told me once “I’m a bitch, live with it.” Really? I have watched bosses hurt people because they can. We hope in places like church. we hope our workplace is safe. In reality people run these things we hope in. They change and they have agendas. We get bombed by the fallout of their actions.

God is still good and still the same. His love is all that matters. In the Christian community God appears to get a bad rap. The world looks at God in a negative light. I don’t believe in that. People and institutions have let me down but God has always picked me up. Our hope is still there and still alive. The belief in ourselves and God have been bombed, but we are survivors hoping to be alive in Jesus. We need to repair the damage. Let’s fix that in the next chapter.