



# Leadership Development

*Anywhere, Anytime*

## Practical Tips for School Leaders – #23

June 19, 2020

### Excerpt from Commencement Address – Dr. Brene Brown, University of Texas, May 2020

Brene Brown addressed the graduates of The University of Texas in May of 2020 where she is an alum and visiting Professor. She spoke to the graduates from her home office as graduation was virtual. Brene Brown is a well-respected therapist, she speaks from the heart and offers real-life guidance.

Dr. Brown began by telling the Class of 2020 that they were embarking on a life journey where they will travel a tough, wonderful, winding path. She reminded them that their goals may be interrupted by things they cannot control. When barriers arise, they must have the courage to make new paths. The class of 2020 expected to have face-to-face graduation celebrations. She acknowledged their disappointment and stated that this experience was something to learn from.

She said that over the next few months they would be interviewing for jobs. During the interview she anticipates they will be asked to reflect on recent challenges and share how they overcame them.

“What does it mean when we struggle? When face-to-face Commencement was cancelled for the class of 2020, how did you handle it, what did you do? I know it was tough and disappointing, how did you deal with it?”

Why is it important for human beings to try to make meaning out of disappointment and adversity? Taking time to critically reflect enables us to connect the dots of experiences. Changing actions following reflection develops the skills of resiliency and perseverance.

She retold many personal and professional disappointments she has had throughout her life. Dr. Brown said some of them caught her totally unprepared. Each obstacle required her to self-reflect to determine strategies to use to overcome adversity. Each time she fell down, she got up, did what she needed to do and persevered through the hardship.

Dr. Brown recommends the graduates continue to set goals knowing their timeline will be disrupted. When their plan is interrupted, they must be willing to get up and begin again. Getting up necessitates vulnerability and grit. Making a new path is risky and requires emotional exposure to face uncertainty. There is no courage without vulnerability. If you want to face the unknown, you must acknowledge doubt and face your fear. Self-awareness is power. If emotions are left unexposed, humans are unable to make forward progress. Seek trusted friends, professionals and family members to support, encourage and benefit you as you grow. The plan you have today may not be realized on your timeline, however, if you persevere, you will be able to reach your goals.

The rhythm of life is exciting and interesting. If you learn to reflect and use grit to enjoy each season of life, the rewards will be immeasurable. Across the country the graduates from the class of 2020 are in a unique position to change the world by thinking critically, connecting experiences and determining meaning from each situation.