



CREW Chicago Book Club is a Success

by Lisa Mullaney & Cathy Stephenson

CREW Chicago hosted its first ever Book Club for CREW members on July 16th, 2014. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*, by Brené Brown, was the featured book. Informal discussions were held in four locations: Downtown Chicago on the roof deck of Norcon's office, and CREW members' homes in Lincoln Park, Hinsdale, and Glencoe, with each location hosting 7-12 CREW members. Participants enjoyed the intimacy of meeting in small groups and the options of various locations in both the city and suburbs. A facilitator led the discussion at each location with a focused discussion guide, to help bring out key points and move the discussion forward. Each host set a warm, collegial tone for the event, providing wine, soft drinks and creative, tasty food offerings, often enhanced by additional dishes brought by members.

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead is a highly acclaimed book and particularly relevant to professional women. Brené Brown also conveyed her research on vulnerability into one of the most highly viewed TED talks, to which members also listened, prior to the event. The book discusses many different times in our lives where vulnerability may be an issue, including relationships, marriage, and parenting. The CREW discussions focused primarily on how members can recognize vulnerability and then channel it positively for one's own benefit in our careers and leadership roles.

A summary of the collective thoughts on the discussion is below.

Key Insights:

1. Everyone has weaknesses, or areas where they don't feel sufficient or proud of their aptitude or performance.
2. People that are comfortable showing their own faults and insecurities are typically seen as brave and courageous, not as weak. Everyone has their own vulnerabilities.
3. Keeping something, "a secret," tends to exacerbate the problem.

Key Takeaways:

1. Use your core values to help you center on what you really want in life and in work. These values may change over time and that's okay.
2. Openly showing your vulnerabilities helps you make strong human connections. Vulnerability does not have to be a negative quality, but an opportunity to connect.
3. Risk-taking can lead to great rewards and strengthen you as a person.



The goal of the event was to provide a low-cost interactive event, which included networking opportunities as well as professional growth activities. The low-key nature of the event, along with knowledgeable facilitators, kept the event both fun and informative.

Overall feedback on this initial Book Club event has been positive. Many thanks to hosts Kim Enders, Cindy Malone, Robin Rieck and Diana Peterson for the wonderful settings that yielded such a supportive and enjoyable evening. CREW members who attended would like to make the book club an annual event continuing the small discussion group format. For the next book, participants suggested the following: *Lean In* by Sheryl Sandberg and *Respect* by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot. Additional suggestions and are welcomed.

The summary write ups from each of the four groups are below. For more information regarding the event, please contact Cathy Stephenson.