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Daring to belong

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

— Theodore Roosevelt

Recently, I read the book, "Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead." The author, Brené Brown, used the meaningful quote above in the introduction to her book, a book that I found enlightening and intriguing. My goal is to draw a connection between the author's perspectives and the value they can have for the golf course industry.

An accomplished author and speaker, Brown is often approached by businesses to speak on topics such as innovation, creativity and change — three things almost all businesses, including GCSAA and its affiliated chapters, can benefit from. Rarely, though, is she asked to speak on less conventional topics such as vulnerability and its impact on our lives. To Brown, though, vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change.

As I read the book, it ignited memories of conversations with peers and being told that they did not feel a sense of belonging with their chapter or with GCSAA. When we talked more about why they felt this way, why they chose to not attend meetings or why they didn't volunteer for committees or board service, two main reasons surfaced — they didn't feel they had the time, and they did not feel a connection to their chapter.

As far as not having the time, one of Brown's premises is, if we go through life hesitant, waiting until a situation is perfect before we engage, we miss out on opportunities and the chance to make unique contributions only we can make. I strongly believe this to be the case for many in the golf industry. A reluctance to engage in a way that is outside of our comfort zone is another sign of vulnerability. But in my view, there is no better time than the present to over-

come those concerns and become an engaged member in your chapter and in GCSAA.

Another of Brown's premises is that people who have a sense of worth also have a strong sense of belonging. And people who have a strong sense of belonging simply believe they are worthy of belonging. Golf course superintendents, assistants and others in the industry should believe they are worthy of belonging to their affiliated chapter and to GCSAA, worthy of becoming engaged, active members in those organizations. When colleagues of mine have taken the initiative to go beyond just belonging, to try to make an impact in the industry, the results have almost always been an increased sense of worth, with both the individual and the group benefiting from that.

If committee, task group or local board service isn't possible for you, there are other options to engage. You can write a story for *Golf Course Management* or host a First Green tour at your facility. If nothing else, you can attend chapter meetings. I can tell you, what I have gained by being an engaged GCSAA member has far outweighed any sacrifices I have made.

Having served in leadership roles, I admit it can create vulnerability and make one a target for questions or criticism. However, if one is serving for the right reason and is passionate and devoted to their cause, the occasional "shot" one might take becomes an opportunity for growth. One example in my time on the GCSAA board happened about a year ago, when a colleague made a derogatory remark about the industry on social media. Instead of resenting the individual, or becoming overly frustrated, I reached out to discuss his feelings and concerns. After our lengthy phone conversation, that person is now active in GCSAA and attends almost every chapter meeting. Sometimes it just takes being asked to belong.

This brings me full circle to the quote that opened this column. I urge you to not be the critic, or the individual who points out how others stumble, or could have done things better. Rather, be the person who, through adversity, strives valiantly. If you show effort and have enthusiasm, even if you have small failures, you will ultimately triumph, and both you and the golf course industry will benefit.

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