



Wellbeing Tips

Brené Brown - Wholehearted living



Wholehearted living in the veteran family community

Brené Brown's concept of wholehearted living means to engage with life from a place of worthiness, courage, and connection. This idea resonates deeply within the veteran family community. For example, Defence life shapes families in unique ways; long periods of uncertainty, sudden change, emotional sacrifice, or profound loss. Therefore, wholehearted living offers a framework that honours these realities while also supporting resilience and wellbeing.

1. Authenticity - letting yourself be seen

There is often pressure to stay strong, cope independently, or avoid burdening others. Wholehearted living invites family members to show up authentically sharing fears, fatigue, grief, pride, or hope without shame. Authenticity creates deeper trust within families and communities.

2. Self-compassion - being gentle with yourself

Veteran families frequently carry high expectations managing households alone during deployments, supporting a partner's transition from service, or navigating grief after loss. Self-criticism and resentment can grow quickly. Brown's call for self-compassion reminds families that being human, imperfect, and emotional is not weakness it is normal and healthy.

3. Resilient spirit - rising strong after hardship

Resilience is woven into the fabric of veteran family life. Wholehearted living emphasises resilience not as pushing through but as acknowledging difficult experiences, learning from them, and reconnecting with hope. It validates the reality that healing from trauma, transition, or grief is a journey, not a timeline.

4. Gratitude and joy in the everyday

Defence life often teaches people to appreciate the small things such as a partner's safe return, a child's laughter, shared meals, or community support. Wholehearted living reinforces that gratitude is a stabilising force especially in stressful or uncertain periods.

YOU
ARE
ENOUGH



Wellbeing Tips

Sharing wisdom through mentoring



5. Trusting intuition in times of uncertainty

Veteran families frequently navigate the unknown, such as relocations, health impacts, emotional shifts, or the sudden demands or impacts of service. Brown's emphasis on trusting intuition supports families in making grounded decisions, even when life feels unpredictable and uncertain.

6. Play, rest and permission to pause

The veteran community often carries a culture of endurance to keep going, don't complain, just get it done. Wholehearted living reframes rest and play as essential for wellbeing.

Laughter, downtime, and connection help families recover from constant vigilance and emotional intensity.

7. Meaningful work and shared purpose

Many veteran families find purpose through service supporting others, volunteering, raising children, honouring their loved one's legacy.

Wholehearted living recognises that meaningful work isn't about status or productivity; it's about living in alignment with values such as compassion, loyalty, and community.

8. Laughter, song and dance - permission to feel joy again

For families carrying grief or long-term stress, joy can feel complicated or even undeserved. Brown emphasises that joy is a form of courage. Reclaiming moments of lightness celebrating milestones, sharing stories, dancing in the kitchen can help to rebuild emotional strength.

Wholehearted living validates the full spectrum of the veteran family experience including courage, fear, pride, grief, strength, uncertainty, and love. It offers a framework that helps families to;

- Reconnect with themselves after challenges
- Build healthier relationships
- Support each other without burning out
- Support transitions
- Heal from trauma
- Find belonging and purpose within the community.

It reminds every member of the veteran family that you are enough, that your experiences matter, and that living with vulnerability and compassion is an act of strength not weakness.