

Is Reading Brene Brown an act of political, social, and cultural resistance to traditional intellectuals?

Abstract

This research is an act of social and cultural resistance against the demeriting of educative literature as read and used by the masses. Resisting peer reviewed texts, the research locates books important to individuals in recovery from a life changing mental wellbeing challenge. Investigating the work of Social Work Professor, Brene Brown's bestselling popular psychology, the research breaks from traditional research designs and authors by utilising a framework used by the public and made popular by influential celebrities: book clubs. Despite extensive cross-cultural research informing her Shame Resilience Theory, Professor Brown remains derided in some academic circles. Within Mental Health, the impact of her work as a form of psychoeducation, remains untested - despite the juxtaposition of its popularity and derision. There is no peer-reviewed literature that links Brown to the Focused Psychological Strategies (FPS). There is no work identifying her as an organic intellectual who disseminates research to non-academic readers. This study juxtaposes Professor Brown's Theory with two other theorists, Gramsci and Byrne, to locate Brown as an organic intellectual that uses her research to reduce stigma by placing it into the hands of individuals in recovery and who are helping others. It is this psychoeducative modality with a bibliotherapeutic intervention of helping that forms a measure of Brown's books as suitable for the FPS. Using online book clubs for method and methodology, adults who have experienced a life-changing well-being experience and who have read a Brene Brown title during recovery, discuss their thoughts on the book, including who else they read, why, and who they share knowledge with. To create richer data, book clubs are videoed and held for one month on a private platform so participants can add written feedback and interact with each other's entries. This reconfiguration of evidence enables the intersection of shame resilience theory, psychoeducation, bibliotherapy and Gramscian theory as lived experience tools/theory. This provides Mental Health practitioners with an evidence base for using Brown's work as a psychoeducative and bibliotherapeutic recovery tool.