

"Wild Heart".....The Story Behind the Song

I first became aware of Brené Brown because of her You Tube videos on Vulnerability, Courage, and Wholeheartedness. Brené is a down-to-earth straight-talking Texan, a research professor at the University of Houston, and a great storyteller.

In her books and speaking engagements, Brené talks at length about the difference between True Belonging and just "fitting in." In an age of increased polarization, she says that it's easy to fall into a kind of false intimacy with other people when we join together against a common enemy. (Sound familiar?)

But what we are actually longing for is the internal strength and courage to know who we really are, and to find sacredness both in being a part of something, and in standing alone when necessary.

Brown's extensive research has found that we human beings are hard-wired for connection. In order to be hateful and violent to one another, we must first de-humanize our "enemies." The four practices of True Belonging require us to be vulnerable, get uncomfortable, and learn how to be with people without sacrificing who we are and what we value. Here you go:

- People are hard to hate close up. Move in.**
- Speak truth to BS. Be civil.**
- Hold hands. With strangers.**
- Strong back, soft front, wild heart.**

In her book, "Braving the Wilderness," Brené speaks soulfully of True Belonging and Wholeheartedness in the wilds of our psyche. She says, "The internal wilderness is an untamed, unpredictable place of solitude and searching. It is a place as dangerous as it is breathtaking, a place as sought after as it is feared. But it turns out to be the place of True Belonging, and it's the bravest and most sacred place you will ever stand."

JD and I have long been wilderness vision questors, immersing ourselves inside and out in rites of passage inspired by indigenous cultures. So, I resonate deeply with Brené's words from my own experiences here in the mountains of Colorado, and beyond.

Karen Drucker and I got together to co-write this song in the winter of 2018, right after I had heard a brilliant interview between Brené Brown and Krista Tippett, host of the radio show, "On Being." Their ideas were so strong and so beautifully expressed that I had taken precise and voluminous notes of the conversation. And that's what I brought to our writing session that day.

As Karen and I began to find a simple chord structure, we discovered that many of Brené's words were already so lyrical and poetic that they translated quite naturally into song lyrics. We added our own perspective, found a melody for the verses, and then came up with the beautiful and haunting chorus: Strong back, Soft front, Wild Heart.

We use these words with permission from Brené's copyright team. If you ever have a chance to meet her in person, please play this song for her.