

## **PRE-CONFERENCE SCHEDULE – ATHENIAN DIALOGUES\***

### **Saturday, May 16, 2026**

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                    “That Librarian: The Fight Against Book Banning in America” by  
Amanda Jones  
Facilitator: Jannette Goodall, MMC

### **Sunday, May 17, 2026**

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                    “Strong Ground: The Lessons of Daring Leadership, the Tenacity of  
Paradox, and the Wisdom of the Human Spirit” by Brené Brown, Ph.D.  
Facilitator: Jennifer Woodworth, MMC

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                    “Tricky Times” by Jitske Kramer  
Facilitator: Eelco Groenenboom, MMC

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                    “Conquering Crisis, Ten Lessons to learn before you need them” by  
Admiral William H. McRaven  
Facilitator: Camilla Pitman, MMC

**Required:** Participants are required to purchase their own books and arrive prepared to discuss and participate in exercises.

**Points:** Athenian Dialogue participants can earn three (3) points for each Dialogue attended and completed (including required assessment) for a possible total number of six (6) points.

**Cost:** \$110/session

\* Speakers, session details, and exact times are subject to change.

## **PRE-CONFERENCE PROGRAM – ATHENIAN DIALOGUES**

After successful registration of an Athenian Dialogue, participants are required to purchase and read the book prior to the session.

### **Saturday, May 16, 2026**

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                      **“That Librarian: The Fight Against Book Banning in America”** by Amanda Jones

**Facilitator:** Jannette Goodall, MMC

**Session Description:** One of the things small town librarian Amanda Jones values most about books is how they can affirm a young person's sense of self. So in 2022, when she caught wind of a local public hearing that would discuss “book content,” she knew what was at stake. Schools and libraries nationwide have been bombarded by demands for books with LGBTQ+ references, discussions of racism, and more to be purged from the shelves. Amanda would be damned if her community were to ban stories representing minority groups. She spoke out that night at the meeting. Days later, she woke up to a nightmare that is still ongoing.

Amanda Jones has been called a groomer, a pedo, and a porn-pusher; she has faced death threats and attacks from strangers and friends alike. Her decision to support a collection of books with diverse perspectives made her a target for extremists using book banning campaigns-funded by dark money organizations and advanced by hard right politicians-in a crusade to make America more white, straight, and "Christian." But Amanda Jones wouldn't give up without a fight: she sued her harassers for defamation and urged others to join her in the resistance.

Mapping the book banning crisis occurring all across the nation, *That Librarian* draws the battle lines in the war against equity and inclusion, calling book lovers everywhere to rise in defense of our readers.

### **Sunday, May 17, 2026**

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                      **“Strong Ground: The Lessons of Daring Leadership, the Tenacity of Paradox, and the Wisdom of the Human Spirit”** by Brené Brown, Ph.D.

**Facilitator:** Jennifer Woodworth, MMC

**Session Description:** Over the past six years, Brené Brown, along with a global community of coaches and facilitators, has taken more than 150,000 leaders in 45 countries through her Dare to Lead courage-building work. In Strong Ground, Brown shares the lessons from these experiences along with wisdom from other thinkers. This is a vital playbook for everyone from senior leaders developing and executing complex strategies to Gen Z-ers entering and navigating turbulent work environments. It is also an unflinching assessment of what happens when we continue to perpetuate the falsehood that performance and wholeheartedness are mutually exclusive.

With equal amounts of optimism and caution about AI, Brown writes, “I hear a lot of experts trying to soothe people’s anxiety about the pace of technological change by offering platitudes like, What makes us human will ensure our relevance. This is dangerous simply because, right now, we’re not especially good at what makes us human. We’re not hardwired for this level of uncertainty, and many of us feel as

if the constant need to self-protect is driving the humanity right out of us. This is why organizational transformation today must foster deep connection, deep thinking, and deep collaboration. We need the courage to lead people in a way that honors and protects the wisdom of the human spirit.”

Brown offers a broad assessment of the skill sets and mindsets we need moving forward, including the capacity for respectful and difficult conversations, increased productive urgency and smart prioritization rather than reactivity, and strategic risk-taking, paradoxical thinking, and situational and anticipatory awareness skills. She identifies the toughest skill set as the discipline, humility, and confidence to unlearn and relearn.

Brown writes, “Individuals and organizations are building new muscles. Finding our strong ground—that athletic stance—is the only thing that can provide both unwavering stability in a maelstrom of uncertainty and a platform for the fast, explosive change that the world is demanding.”

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                      **“Tricky Times”** by Jitske Kramer

**Facilitator:** Eelco Groenenboom, MMC

**Session Description:** In this groundbreaking work, leading corporate anthropologist Jitske Kramer masterfully deciphers the complexities of transition and transformation. Drawing on global cultural insights, she reveals why societies across the world are experiencing unprecedented turbulence. Established truths are dissolving and traditional power structures are shifting. Kramer offers invaluable wisdom and practical tools to help people, organizations and societies navigate the ‘messy middle’ of change, where the familiar no longer works and the new is not yet clear. A 2025 Management Book of the Year finalist, *Tricky Times* equips readers to recognize the patterns, face the challenges and lead the way through the uncertainty of liminal change.

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM                      **“Conquering Crisis, Ten Lessons to learn before you need them”** by Admiral William H. McRaven

**Facilitator:** Camilla Pitman, MMC

**Session Description:** Throughout his 40-year career, Admiral McRaven has experienced every manner of calamity imaginable. From managing failed hostage rescues to responding to student unrest, McRaven has learned how to successfully navigate crises—those moments that push the limits of your experience and challenge your confidence, when leadership skills alone may not be enough.

*Conquering Crisis* provides a new set of tools for facing these stressful moments with poise. It breaks crises down into five phases assess, report, contain, shape, and manage—and provides concrete steps to come out the other side stronger. With incredible personal stories, thought-provoking parables, and memorable lessons, Admiral McRaven sheds light on the ways we can rise to the occasion in times of crisis and act as leaders, no matter the situation.

Details are subject to change. For the most updated pre-conference information, please visit <https://www.iimc.com/495/Pre-Conference-Education-Programs>.