# Creating Meaningful Relationships: A Shift From Self-Focus to Self-Awareness

# We live in a world with an all-time high level of anxiety, stress, depression, and suicide rates, especially among our youth where mental wellness issues, drugs, and overdoses are the unspoken pandemic in many communities. The divorce rate is over 50% and our relationships are suffering.

We are also in a time where life balance, self-care, and self-focus our top priority, but the results are not adding up. Why? It could be the difference between self-*focus and* self*-awareness.*

Self-focus has become an obsession with one’s own feelings, concerns, and struggles. Self-focus motivates us to strive for achievements, success, praise, and happiness. There are countless books, podcasts, life coaches, and therapists to help improve our self-focused lives, yet there’s still such a decline in societal mental and emotional well-being.

Self-awareness is a shift that requires introspection and reflection and ultimately leads to conviction. It’s a tweak in mindset towards understanding the effect that our own internal emotions and belief systems translate into behaviors that impact others. Self-awareness requires us to be accountable for our actions and behaviors; self-focus gives us a hall pass.

Many of us have documented our goals, dreams, desires, and needs, especially starting the new year. But how often do we document how we have influenced, helped, or hurt someone on our mission to achieve our wants and desires? We tend to spend the most time focusing on who hurt us, wronged us, or did something to set us back. We tend to look at the gap in what we want verses what we have. The mind shift is focusing on where we have helped *others*, where we can do better to serve in some capacity, and where we can continue enhancing areas where we are thriving.

3 Quick Shifts:

Self-Focus Self-Awareness

Desiring happiness Helping others

Image creation and control Acceptance of self

Striving for success Living with purpose

Self-focus is insatiable – we have one success and we crave another; we have a house and then we desire a bigger house; we have one amazing vacation and we dream of another; we have one career advancement and then we prepare for another; etc. The shift from self-focus to self-awareness is the difference between short lived episodes of happiness to experiencing the state of joy; creating an image verses the peace that comes accepting ourselves for who we are; and ultimately a “successful” life verses a life of substance, meaning, and purpose with the people we love.

How do we make this shift?

List what you perceive as your top 5 roles in life (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest): For example, parent, sibling, employee, leader, etc.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now list in order (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest) by where you have grown the most over the past year:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The second list shows your priorities; your priorities show which relationships you value the most because where you put your time is where you put your value. Now evaluate if this list is in line with your values and how this is having an impact on your relationships. Take the time to reflect and acknowledge where there needs to be a shift in focus. When you are struggling in your relationships, go back to this list and re-arrange your priorities. Look at your growth areas again in one year and see the difference!

\*\* Keep in mind that helping others is not co-dependency. Co-dependency hurts others and comes from a place of selfishness. Ignoring your needs to help someone else who should be helping themselves is not a healthy expression of serving others. \*\*