



Open Heart

STORIES TO EDUCATE, INSPIRE AND EMPOWER YOU TO LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE.

IN THIS ISSUE

- SPECIAL FEATURE -

The Fine Art of **Self Love & Compassion**

Navigating the Workplace:
**Success At Work
Through Being
Self-Aware**

*Tools to help you
increase your confidence
and express your vulnerabilities*

**PARENTING TIPS
For The Modern World**

PLUS MORE!



Open your mind and heart to discovering your ideal state of balance



Do you fear conflict?

Are you feeling stressed about having a difficult conversation with the ones closest to you?

Do you require support with relationship building and effective communication?

Services include:

- Couples Counselling
- Women’s Counselling
- Anxiety and Depression
- Grief and Loss
- Trauma

Build confidence, manage stress and reclaim your life.



For a complimentary chat, contact Shawn via



0483 361 279

or book online via calendly.com/shawnmatthews/reclaim-you

Visit shawnmatthewsoah.com.au



OUR COMMITMENT

This magazine is a free publication supported by our advertisers. We believe that people should have access to the support and stories that resonate and validate to ensure they can live their best life.

Our magazine is made possible thanks to our partners, advertisers and generous sponsors.

Please support these businesses, community organisations and charities so we can continue to share these stories with the people who really need to hear them.

THANK YOU FOR KEEPING AN OPEN HEART.

OPEN HEART MAGAZINE

CONTACT DETAILS

EDITORIAL

Shawn Matthews
OPEN ARMS HEALTH
Counselling & Mental Health
Web: www.shawnmatthewsoah.com.au
Email: shawnmatthews@outlook.com

Amanda Hargreaves
OLE CREATIVE
Graphic Design Agency
Web: www.olecreative.com.au
Email: hello@olecreative.com.au
Stock images: Shutterstock

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
hello@olecreative.com.au

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

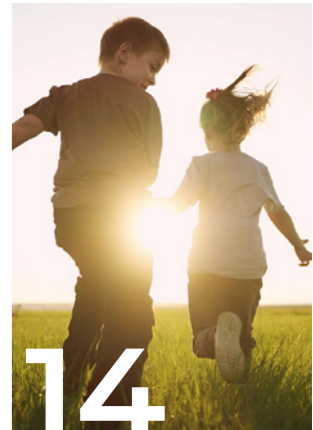
Articles, reports, reviews, news releases, letters to the Editor, and content suggestions are welcomed by the Editor, whose contact details are above.

COPYRIGHT & REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL

Copyright in articles contained in Open Heart is vested in their authors and sources. Most editorial material which appears in Open Heart may have appeared in other publications and sources and references have been provided. Repurpose of any original material is approved once permission is gained through Open Heart’ Editors.

DISCLAIMER: Acceptance of contributions and advertisements including inserts does not imply endorsement by Open Heart or the publishers. Unless otherwise stated, views and opinions expressed in Open Heart are those of individual contributors, and are not the views or opinions of the Editor.

Contents



Welcome..... 4

LATEST NEWS

A Dozen Self-Care Strategies for Caregivers.....5

FEATURE STORY

The Fine Art of Self Compassion..... 6

ARTICLES

Case Study: Vulnerability Cycle 8

Self Awareness in Relationships..... 10

Navigating the Workplace:
Success Through Being Self-Aware.....12

Parenting in the Modern World 14

CHARITIES IN FOCUS

Destiny Rescue16

Lifeline.....17

Mindfulness Moment: Find a Word 18

Welcome to Open Heart

Meet our founders who discovered solidarity in sharing their stories with an open heart and want to inspire others to do the same.

Hola! My name is Amanda and I am graphic designer and passionate social justice advocate born on the sunny shores of Ibiza, Spain, to my English mother and Spanish Father. My family decided to settle on the other side of the world when I was three, in another tourist capital, the Gold Coast, Australia. Ever since, I have been lucky enough to call this amazing country, my home.

Art has always been my muse. Even in high school, I loved drawing, writing and painting, earning various arts awards with one piece that proudly hung in the Gold Coast Arts Centre gallery. As I looked forward to my career, I decided to train in the skill of graphic design, where I've spent a solid 25 years shaping ideas into visual narratives.

A decade into my corporate career, life shook me to my core when my beloved uncle took his own life. Fuelled by a drive to make a difference, I started working as a designer within non-profits specialising in areas like mental health, disability, homelessness. During this time, I completed courses in Community Services and Human Rights seeking a deeper understanding of the world's complexities and our humanity alongside it.

In 2017, my world was rocked again, as love entered my life in the form of my amazing wife and her two beautiful children, adding a welcomed and new layer of joy to my journey.

In 2020 when COVID hit, I saw an opportunity to launch my own design agency, focusing on servicing non-profits, where my heart truly belongs.

It was during this time that I met Shawn. We discovered an immediate connection—our values and our work ethic aligned, and we shared stories of our own life experiences. We quickly learnt that we shared drive to make a difference through our work. Together, we are building a magazine that hopes to do just that.

This magazine is about all of us, together, finding our voice, our story, and living our best life.

My favourite quote:

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi

Amanda Hargreaves
Co-Founder

Hi my name is Shawn Matthews and I am a Registered Counsellor/ Psychotherapist in Australia. I was born in Australia; however, I was raised in Canada. I left home at 19 years old because I wanted more for my life. I felt trapped and thought that the town I grew up in wasn't enough for me anymore. I wanted to travel, see the world, discover myself and other cultures.

I took the leap of faith and said to my mom, I wanted to move to Australia and get to know my dad and study over here. The one great thing about my mom was she was a traveller too and she understood I needed to go, and she wished me all the best!

Over the years, I have lived in Sydney, London, England, travelled all through Europe and South America. In 2012, my mom passed away and my adventures of travel felt like a lifetime ago.

In 2012, I started my degree in Counselling and Psychotherapy, which I put on hold as I left to go to Canada to be with my Family through that very difficult time.

In 2013, I moved back to Sydney, went back to work and study. Through this time, I found myself wanting to start my own practice/business and move to the Gold Coast, where it is a slower pace.

In 2018 when almost finishing my degree, I felt the courage and packed my car up and drove to the Gold Coast and within a few months I had started my Open Arms Health Business. (Counselling and Coaching)

Through public speaking, I found the love of my life and best friend, who I have been with for the last 4 years. Now he is my husband and I have gained some great stepsons. We instantly became a blended family.

I met Amanda through a Women's Networking Group I co-host. Our experiences, our love for relationships and blended families, is what brought us to this passion project. It's our intention to educate, inspire and contribute to our wider community.

My favourite quote:

"The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are" - Carl Jung

Shawn Matthews
Co-Founder

Photo Credit
Yokos Photography | yokosphotography.com

A Dozen Self-Care Strategies for Helpers and Caregivers

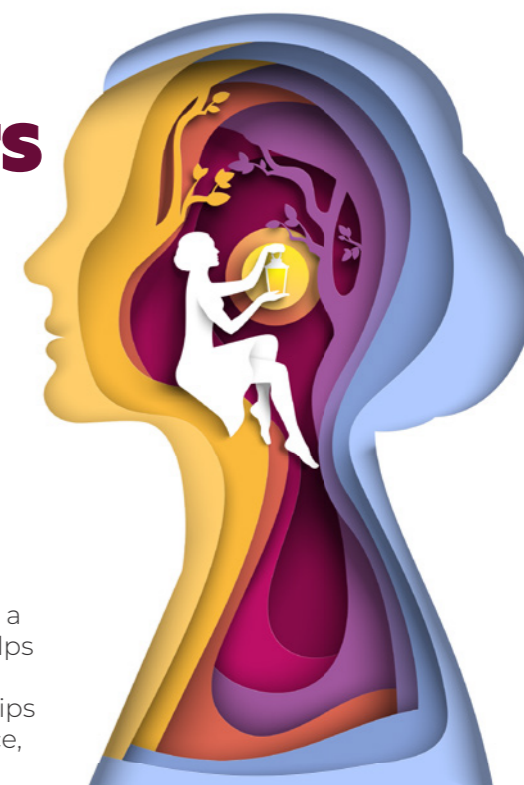
You can't take care of someone else unless you take care of yourself first.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE HAS BEEN ADAPTED - ARTICLE FEATURED ON PSYCHOLOGY TODAY - POSTED JANUARY 19, 2024

Chances are, that you've served in a helping or caregiving role for someone else at some point in your life. My definition of "helper or caregiver" is pretty broad. It includes not only those who work professionally in a helping role (health care workers, counselors, therapists, teachers, clergy, first responders) but also family and friends who provide care for loved ones with health issues, disabilities, and other limitations or challenges.

Without proper self-care, many negative physical and emotional consequences can occur, variously labeled "burnout," "compassion fatigue," and "secondary or vicarious traumatization." Let's take a quick look at these 12 strategies for helpers and caregivers to improve their overall self-care.

- 1. Handling emotions:** Foster self-compassion, which includes being kind toward yourself and not being overly self-critical, as well as accepting your flaws and forgiving yourself for your shortcomings.
- 2. Financial management:** Practicing basic financial wellness strategies such as budgeting, sensible investing, and not falling prey to cultural messages that career or personal success be equated with financial wealth.
- 3. Humor:** It's important to actively look for jokes, funny stories, and humorous media that can bring a smile or a laugh to help break some of the everyday tension.
- 4. Love:** Having loving and supportive relationships is a tremendous asset that helps one cope and manage life stressors. These relationships increase personal resilience, coping, and overall health.
- 5. Nutrition:** Not skipping meals, staying hydrated, keeping healthy snacks at hand, and understanding how to read and interpret nutritional labels on foods.
- 6. Physical activity:** It's important to plan for several periods of concentrated physical activity each week and to include a variety of aerobic and strength-building exercises.
- 7. Play:** To combat the overwhelming stresses of helping and caregiving, activities that incorporate deliberate playfulness should be part of one's overall self-care plan.
- 8. Setting priorities:** Take time to set priorities to separate work from home and to manage our time that's consistent with our personal values.
- 9. Recreation:** Having active interests and hobbies can promote self-care. Or take up a new hobby to bring a renewed sense of personal satisfaction to your life.



10. Relaxation: While caregivers can be great teachers of stress management and relaxation techniques, they sometimes forget to use these practices on themselves.

11. Solitude: Build in some alone time each day or at least a few times per week. Periods of solitude can be used for reflection, planning, or to incorporate strategies, such as exercise, hobbies, relaxation, or play.

12. Spirituality: Including faith-based activities can help one connect with one's own spiritual beliefs and provide avenues for social connection and support with like-minded others.

Collectively, these 12 strategies encompass the four key dimensions of emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual health. While I have characterised these strategies as important for the well-being and self-care of helpers and caregivers, it's probably no surprise that they can help almost anyone cope better with personal challenges and stress. Give them a try and see.

Copyright David Susman 2024

The Fine Art of Self Love & Compassion

ARTICLE SOURCED AND ADAPTED FROM MENTAL HEALTH ACADEMY | 18 SEPTEMBER, 2023

Imagine this: You're gunning for a job, putting in all the prep work for the interview. You're hopeful, but when the big day arrives, it feels like things go south. The interviewers aren't vibing with you, and deep down, you know it's a no-go. A week later, the rejection letter confirms your gut feeling.

How do you react? More importantly, how good are you at cutting yourself some slack, showing yourself some compassion for falling short in a goal that means the world to you?

Now, let's flip the script. What if the struggling job candidate isn't you, but your partner? You're both in a tight spot with financial and relationship stress from unemployment, and you really need your partner to snag this job.

The catch? Your partner battles self-esteem issues and tends to fumble interviews, missing out on gigs they're totally capable of handling. Frustration is at its peak. Do you find it in yourself to extend compassion to your partner for this stumble?

It's a common scenario to find yourself ruminating over interview outcomes, whether it's your own or your partner's. But here's the thing: you don't have to torture yourself or your loved ones over it. Enter the art of compassion, starting with yourself and then radiating it outwards.

So, what's this self-compassion thing? It's about acknowledging your own pain, understanding that struggle is part of being human, and creating a kind, judgment-free space within yourself.

Dr. Kristin Neff, a researcher on the topic, breaks it down into three parts: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness.

But hold up, barriers exist. We often tell ourselves, "Showing myself compassion is just being indulgent," or "I won't be motivated without criticising myself." We even buy into the idea that it's selfish. The Dalai Lama throws a truth bomb: "If you don't love yourself, you cannot love others." Toughing it out, a societal favorite, lacks the gentleness that compassion brings.

"It's about acknowledging your own pain, understanding that struggle is part of being human, and creating a kind, judgment-free space within yourself"

Let's delve into those three self-compassion components:

1. Self-kindness: Imagine your friend didn't get that dream job. Would you tell them, "You probably didn't get it because you're terrible at interviews"? Probably not. You'd console them, empathise with their disappointment, and maybe suggest grabbing lunch to process. Extend that soothing attitude to yourself. Instead of beating yourself up, recognise that failure is part of the human journey. Embrace it and grow from the experience.

2. Common humanity: We're all imperfect beings, each grappling with our unique flaws. That one thing you're harshly judging yourself for. Trust me, you're not alone. Understanding our shared imperfections connects us, fostering a sense of belonging. Your setbacks and weaknesses? They're not liabilities but gifts, helping you understand yourself better.

3. Mindfulness: In the thick of pain, we often dodge it, trying to wish it away. Enter mindfulness. It's about being present without judgment, allowing you to sit with the pain. Pain + Resistance = Suffering, says Shinzen Young. The more we resist, the more we suffer. Mindfulness lets you reflect on struggles without the harsh self-judgment that hinders learning.

Dr. Neff throws in a twist: two types of self-compassion - tender and fierce. Tender self-compassion offers emotional support, helping you survive and navigate tough times.

But life's messy, and we can't just be complacent. That's where fierce self-compassion steps in. It's about fighting for justice, setting boundaries, and driving change. Balance the two, and you've got a winning combo.

How do you put all this compassion into action?

1. Practice forgiveness: Stop punishing yourself for past mistakes. You're not expected to be flawless. Create mantras that remind you to forgive and move forward.

2. Adopt a growth mindset: Challenges and criticism aren't roadblocks; they're opportunities to learn and grow. Embrace them with an open mindset.

3. Express gratitude: Focus on what you have, not what you lack. Gratitude shifts your perspective, steering away from self-criticism.

4. Be generous (at the right level): Giving is vital, but it shouldn't come at the expense of your well-being. Balance generosity toward others with self-compassion, especially the fierce kind.

5. Practice mindfulness: Stay present without judgment. It eases self-judgment and boosts self-compassion.

Compassion for others follows the same principles. Act kindly, acknowledge shared humanity, and be present without judgment. If you're working with clients, unlocking their natural compassion, transforming present and past suffering, and understanding their self-criticism are key. Modeling self-compassion sets the stage for positive change.

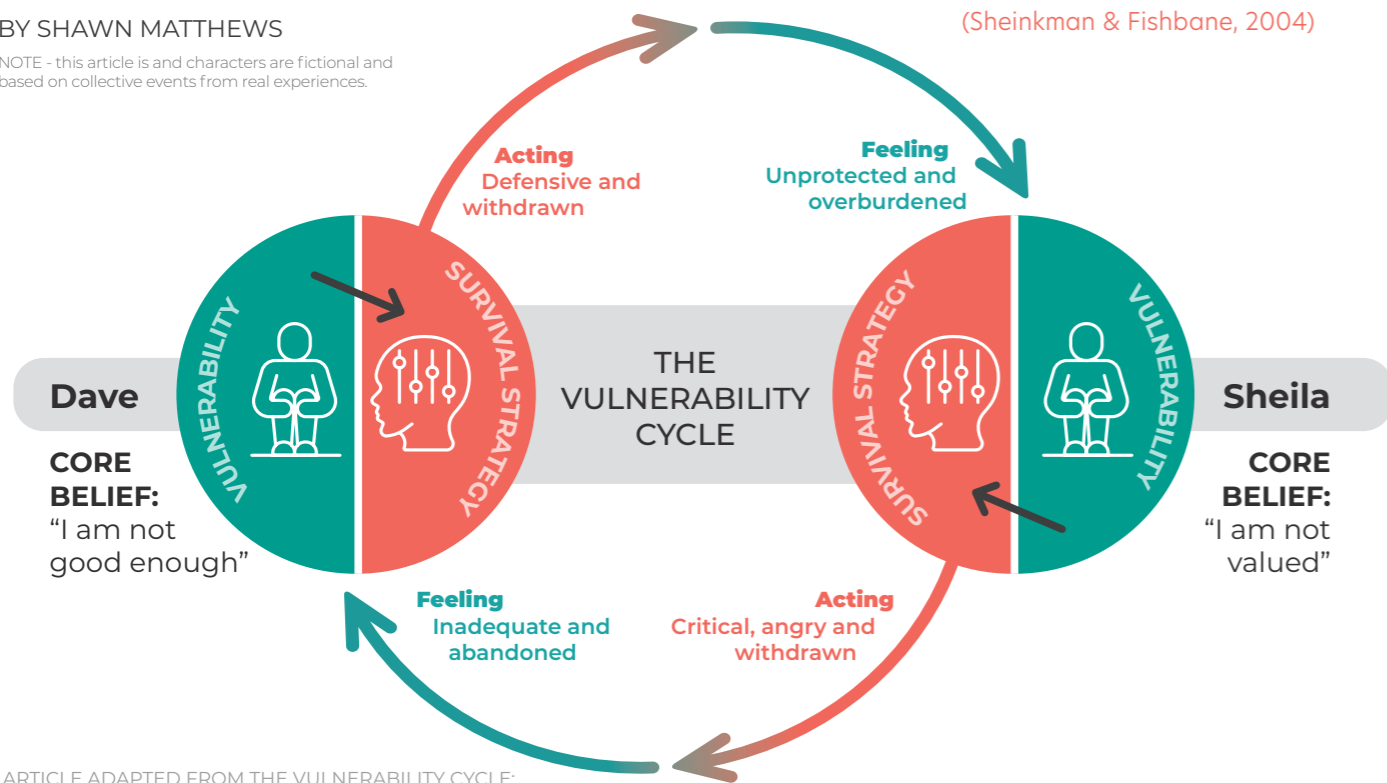
In a nutshell, compassion, both for yourself and others, is an art backed by science. Overcoming barriers and practicing self-compassion not only makes you happier and healthier but also inspires positive change in those around you. It's a win-win.

FROM THE COUNSELLOR'S DESK:

The Vulnerability Cycle

BY SHAWN MATTHEWS

NOTE - this article is and characters are fictional and based on collective events from real experiences.



ARTICLE ADAPTED FROM THE VULNERABILITY CYCLE: WORKING WITH IMPASSES IN COUPLE THERAPY

Diagramming the vulnerability cycle:

The therapist helps Dave and Sheila see how each one's survival position stimulates the other's vulnerability and survival position, and how, in a reciprocal way, the couple becomes drawn into a pattern of reactivity.

When in therapy, the focus can be on untangling the intricate dance of a couple's emotional dynamics. Let's dive into the story of Sheila and Dave, a couple stuck in a tumultuous marriage for a decade.

Sheila resented Dave for not contributing enough to housework, while Dave, feeling unable to please her, withdrew to avoid her displeasure. Unraveling their patterns, the therapist identified each partner's survival position, revealing how they triggered each other.

Sheila, shaped by a physically abusive family, survived by being responsible and counterattacking. Dave, growing up in a critical, emotionally distant environment, protected himself by withdrawing. In the honeymoon phase, they felt understood, but as reality set in, old survival positions resurfaced.

The therapy process involves naming these survival positions as they activate. The therapist guides the couple to recognise when they feel threatened, prompting them to think about the vulnerabilities triggering their defensiveness. Sheila and

Dave learned to identify when their protective shields went up, fostering communication about their survival positions instead of instinctively reacting.

Enter The Vulnerability Cycle Diagram — a visual aid used in therapy. It helps organise information and, when shared with the couple, serves as a tool to spotlight their reciprocal patterns. For Sheila and Dave, this diagram became a key to understanding their internal and interactive processes. It provided a tangible anchor for their journey, encouraging open discussions about their survival positions, vulnerabilities, and hidden needs.

In essence, therapy becomes a roadmap for couples to navigate their emotional terrain. It's about recognising the patterns, understanding the triggers, and finding a shared language to break the cycle. Sheila and Dave's story showcases how, through this process, couples can transform conflict into understanding, fostering a more profound connection.

SOURCE: <https://www.kfr.nu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/SouVulnerability-Cycle.pdf>

The Elements of the Vulnerability Cycle

Core Beliefs:

Relational Organising Principles (Thoughts)

- Motto, theme, schema
- Inherited from relational experiences (past and current)

Examples of core beliefs:

- Put others first
- Emotions = weakness
- Women aren't to be trusted
- Men only want one thing

Vulnerabilities:

Unique Relational Sensitivities (Emotions)

- Past history, traumatic events, patterns from past relationships, or social context.
- Injuries within relationship.
- Current context, major stress, crisis.
- Gender socialisation, power inequities, poverty, marginalisation.

Survival Strategies:

The Armor (Behaviours)

- Strategies to protect and manage vulnerabilities
- Knee-jerk, reactive
- Fight / Flight / Freeze / Fawn

A Closer Look

DAVE'S ELEMENTS

Core Belief – I'm not good enough.

Vulnerability – Feeling inadequate and abandoned

Survival Strategy – Acting defensive and withdrawn

SHEILA'S ELEMENTS

Core Belief – I am not valued or appreciated

Vulnerability – Feeling unprotected and overburdened

Survival Strategy – Acting critical, angry and withdrawn

What if you changed the Core Belief to, 'I am good enough', or 'I am valued and appreciated', the vulnerability is kindness and compassion for oneself, and the survival strategy would be asking curious questions to find out what the other person is thinking. What then?

REFLECTION: How can you change your negative thought about yourself to a positive thought? How would that change your Survival Strategy to take constructive/positive action?

Tools to help you express your vulnerabilities

BY SHAWN MATTHEWS

1. Discuss your vulnerabilities with your partner or a close friend that you trust or a mental health practitioner?

2. Name a fear. What is the worst that can happen?

3. Discuss a recent experience. (How did you manage it?)

4. Share a goal you would like to accomplish to move through this vulnerability.

Did you know sharing your vulnerabilities with a trusted person can increase your confidence? How, you may ask?

Firstly it can deepen compassion and empathy for accepting and embracing different aspects of yourself. By doing this, you can understand yourself and others better than you did before.

Maybe some of you reading this, could be thinking, "I don't want to be vulnerable", or "I fear vulnerability as I have been hurt once or twice before" and you don't want to be hurt again.

This is true for most of the population, however what if you asked yourself, 'what if I wasn't vulnerable? What then? What would my life look like? How could I build authentic real and genuine connections with others?' How could I build a relationship with others without shared experience, knowledge, and belief systems?

From my personal and professional experience, there are other ways to connect with people. This is just one aspect that most people avoid. It is important one as it increases self-awareness and facilitates healthy relationships.

Have you heard the saying "Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway..." – Susan Jeffers PHD. Most things in life can be scary until you go after them and work through them. Building Confidence through sharing your vulnerabilities is no different.

1. Deeply sharing increases connectivity with yourself and others.

2. Sharing what's going on for you in the moment increases your awareness and allows others to do the same.

RELATIONAL SELF AWARENESS

Transform problematic patterns of the past and **create healthy intimate relationships today**

CREDIT - ALEXANDRA H. SOLOMON, PHD

What is Relational Self Awareness?

Having an ongoing curiosity and a compassionate relationship with yourself, serves as a strong foundation for you to have happy and healthy intimate relationships.

It starts with locating and conceptualising. For example, first you need to validate your own thoughts and feelings. This creates empathy for yourself, and therefore, empathy for others. An interpersonal relationship with yourself includes acknowledging what is happening within you, and the relationship you have with others.

Many people are conscious of an inner voice that provides a running monologue on their lives throughout the day. This inner voice, or self-talk, combines conscious thoughts and unconscious beliefs and biases, and provides a way for the brain to interpret and process daily experiences.

Our self-talk can be cheerful and supportive, or it can be negative and self-defeating. Self-talk can be beneficial when it's positive, calming fears and bolstering confidence. Unfortunately, human nature, is more prone to negative self-talk, including sweeping assertions like "I can't do anything right" or "I'm a complete failure."

Fortunately, even harsh self-talk can be effectively challenged and sidelined. Becoming consciously aware of its role is the first step. Secondly, some simple and straightforward self-help techniques can be useful, such as rehearsing a more constructive inner voice with more positive tones and learning to address oneself in the third person.

An interpersonal relationship with yourself includes acknowledging what is happening within you and the relationship you have with others.

Research has found that using your own name instead of "I" during moments of self talk, can help create distance from the emotional intensity of the your feelings, enabling you to avoid rumination and move forward with greater perspective, calm, and confidence. (Psychology Today, 2023).



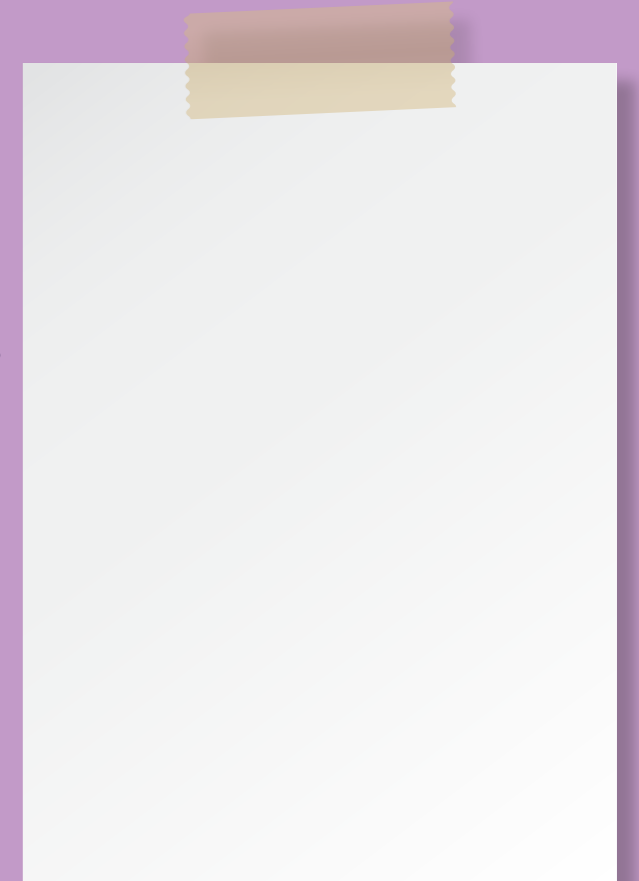
Here are some self-reflection questions to help you get started!

Self-Reflection Questions

1. What am I afraid will happen if I speak my truth?
2. What does that fear remind me of?
3. Who am I afraid of becoming in this relationship?
4. When I have feedback (i.e. when I want/ need to speak up), what do I hope my partner/friend/ family will remember (about themselves, about me, about us)?

Learning to Love Self

1. What observations did you have as a child?
2. What experience shaped your views and opinions?



- A space for you to reflect

Here is a Love acronym to help you find the space and time for yourself.

BY SHAWN MATTHEWS

L **Lessons** or learnings from the week (could include books or articles you read, events attended, etc)

O **Obstacles** or opportunities you encountered

V **Value** or vulnerability you discovered

E **Entertaining** - something funny or frustrating that happened during the week

Navigating the Workplace: Success Through Being Self-Aware

BY AMANDA HARGREAVES

In the bustling world of corporate hustle, where climbing the corporate ladder is a blend of skills and social savvy, one under-appreciated secret weapon stands out: self-awareness. Let's dive into how understanding yourself can be a massive game-changer for your career in the professional arena.



Alex's (not her real name) worked in the IT field and her career trajectory seemed poised for the stars. However, an unforeseen roadblock emerged – a gap in interpersonal finesse. Alex's communication style, characterised by succinct directives and an absence of emotional nuance, was unknowingly alienating colleagues.

It all came to a head during a team project that, despite its technical success, left the team feeling disconnected and undervalued.

The wake-up call was a blunt one. Anonymous feedback from a team survey highlighted a palpable strain rooted in Alex's communication approach. The revelation hit hard: professional success required more than just technical prowess; it necessitated the ability to foster positive relationships.

Faced with this revelation, Alex embarked on a path of self-discovery and improvement. Seeking feedback from colleagues and mentors, Alex uncovered insights into the unintended impact of her communication style. It was an eye-opening experience, recognising that directives, though well-intentioned, often came off as curt and impersonal.

Equipped with this newfound self-awareness, Alex delved into the realms of emotional intelligence and enrolled in workshops for effective communication techniques. The transformation wasn't instant, but the commitment to personal and professional growth became the catalyst for a shift in workplace dynamics.

With this, Alex began incorporating empathy, active listening, and constructive feedback into daily interactions. The workplace, once characterised by tension, started to transform into a space of collaboration and mutual support.

Recognising that self-awareness extended beyond her communication style, Alex embraced a holistic approach. Seeking additional training on emotional intelligence, leadership development, and

"...professional success required more than just technical prowess; it necessitated the ability to foster positive relationships."

stress management, Alex was committed to evolving not only as a professional but as a leader and team member.

Team members responded positively to the newfound openness and approachability. Collaborative efforts flourished, and project outcomes not only met expectations but often surpassed them. The ripple effect of this shift from Alex, extended beyond interpersonal dynamics, and fostered a more inclusive and supportive team culture.

Recognition from higher-ups was the natural next step. A promotion swiftly followed, bringing with it increased responsibilities and leadership opportunities.

The Strategic Benefits of Self-Awareness in Professional Growth

Effective Communication:

Self-awareness enhances the ability to recognise and regulate communication styles. This leads to more authentic, empathetic, and effective interactions, contributing to a positive workplace culture.

Elevated Emotional Intelligence:

Understanding one's own emotions is the foundation for understanding others. A heightened sense of emotional intelligence allows professionals to navigate complex interpersonal relationships with finesse.

Adaptability and Continuous Learning:

Self-aware individuals are more open to feedback and personal development. This adaptability becomes a powerful tool for navigating the ever-evolving landscape of the professional world.

Leadership Effectiveness:

Leaders who are self-aware inspire trust and confidence. They are attuned to the needs of their team, leading to more effective decision-making and greater team cohesion.

Career Advancement:

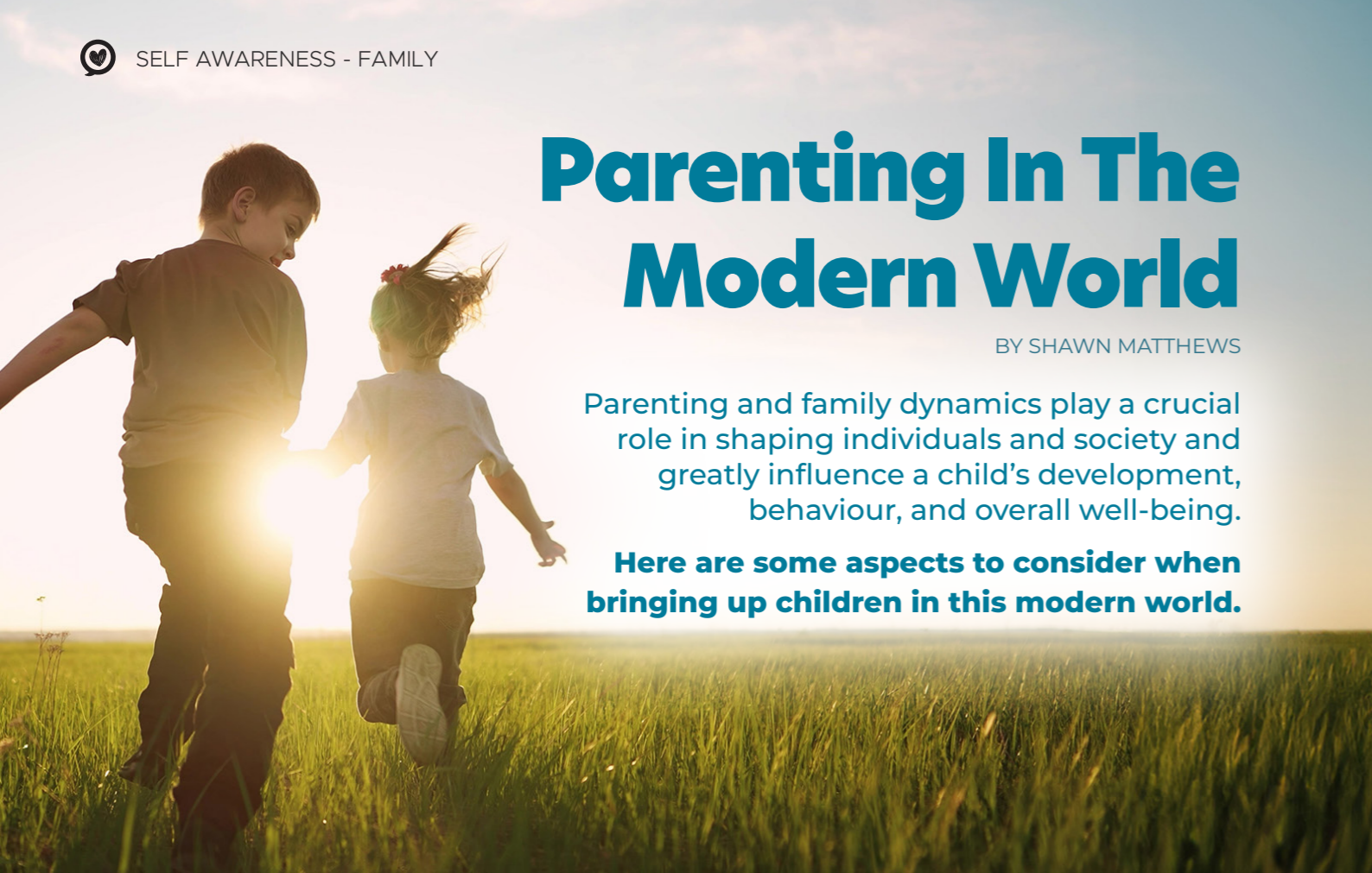
The transformation experienced by Alex is a common outcome of heightened self-awareness. As professionals become attuned to their strengths and areas for improvement, they position themselves for career progression and leadership roles.

Now firmly ensconced in a leadership role, Alex reflects on the journey. "In your 30s, you start realising that professional success is not just about what you know but also about who you are. It's about relationships, adaptability, and continuous growth. Self-awareness isn't a buzzword; it's a strategic advantage in a world that values authenticity and collaboration."

Closing Thoughts: The Evolution of Professional Identity

In the grand tapestry of professional success, self-awareness emerges as the golden thread weaving skills, relationships, and leadership. Alex's story serves as a compelling testament to the transformative power of recognising and addressing one's blind spots. In the journey towards career progression, the mirror of self-awareness reflects not only our actions but also the limitless potential for growth and success. As we navigate the complex terrain of professional growth, let us embrace the wisdom of self-awareness, fostering a workplace culture that thrives on authenticity, collaboration, and continuous evolution.

NOTE - this article is and characters are fictional and based on collective events from real experiences.



Parenting In The Modern World

BY SHAWN MATTHEWS

Parenting and family dynamics play a crucial role in shaping individuals and society and greatly influence a child's development, behaviour, and overall well-being.

Here are some aspects to consider when bringing up children in this modern world.

Four Basic Parenting Styles:

- 1. Authoritative Parenting:** This style combines warmth and responsiveness with reasonable rules and expectations. It often leads to positive outcomes, as children raised in authoritative households tend to be more self-reliant and socially competent. Authoritative households tend to be more self-reliant and socially competent.
- 2. Authoritarian Parenting:** This style is characterised by strict rules and high expectations but with low emotional responsiveness. It may result in children who are obedient but lack self-esteem and struggle with decision-making.
- 3. Permissive Parenting:** Permissive parents are lenient and indulgent, setting few demands. While this approach may foster creativity and independence, it can also lead to issues like impulsivity and lack of self-control.
- 4. Uninvolved Parenting:** This style is characterised by a lack of responsiveness and involvement in a child's life. Children from uninvolved households may struggle with emotional attachment and face various developmental challenges.

Parenting Considerations

Technology and Parenting:

The digital age has brought new challenges for parents, such as managing screen time, ensuring online safety, and promoting a healthy balance between virtual and real-world activities. It's important for parents to stay informed about the latest technologies, apps, and social media platforms to guide their children effectively.

Work-Life Balance:

Many parents face the challenge of balancing their professional and family lives. Striking the right balance is crucial for maintaining a healthy family dynamic and ensuring that children receive the attention and support they need.

Diversity and Inclusion:

Families today come in diverse forms, reflecting various cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds. Embracing diversity within the family and teaching children about inclusivity and acceptance is essential in the modern world.

Mental Health and Well-being:

Recognising and addressing mental health issues within the family is crucial. Creating an open and supportive environment allows family members to discuss their feelings and seek help when needed.

Education and Achievement:

Parents play a significant role in their children's education. Involvement in a child's academic life, fostering a love for learning, and setting high but achievable expectations contribute to educational success.

Communication:

Open and effective communication is key to a healthy family dynamic. Encouraging dialogue, active listening, and expressing emotions constructively help build strong connections among family members.

Crisis Management:

Families may face crises such as illness, financial difficulties, or loss. The ability to navigate challenges together, offering support and resilience, is vital for family well-being.

In today's rapidly changing world, staying attuned to evolving societal norms and adapting parenting styles accordingly is essential for fostering healthy family dynamics and nurturing well-rounded individuals. It's crucial to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and each family is unique, requiring a tailored and flexible approach to parenting.

Overall, mediation offers a constructive alternative to adversarial approaches, allowing families to address conflicts in a cooperative manner. While it may not be suitable for all situations, it can be a valuable tool for families seeking a more amicable and efficient resolution to their disputes.

When all else fails - should I consider therapy or mediation?

Therapy and mediation share some similarities, as both are processes designed to help individuals and groups navigate challenges, conflicts, and personal growth. However, they also have distinct purposes and approaches. Here's a comparison between therapy and mediation:

Similarities:

- 1. Facilitated Communication:** Both therapy and mediation involve facilitated communication. In therapy, a mental health professional helps individuals explore and express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In mediation, a neutral third party facilitates communication to resolve conflicts and reach agreements.
- 2. Confidentiality:** Both therapy and mediation prioritise confidentiality. Sessions are private, creating a safe space for individuals to share sensitive information without fear of it being disclosed to others.
- 3. Goal-Oriented:** Both processes are goal-oriented. In therapy, goals may include personal growth, emotional well-being, or overcoming specific challenges. In mediation, the goal is typically to resolve conflicts, reach agreements, and improve relationships.

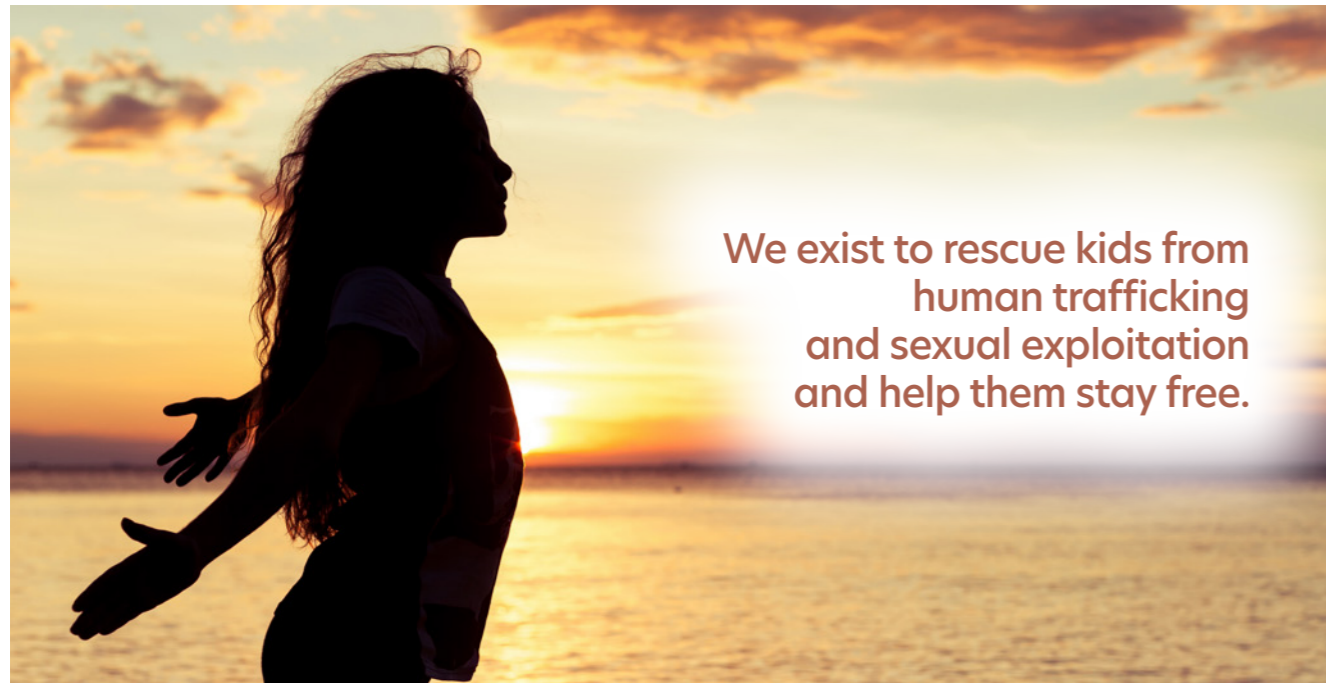
4. Empowerment: Therapy and mediation aim to empower individuals. In therapy, individuals gain insights into their thoughts and behaviors, empowering them to make positive changes. In mediation, participants actively contribute to the resolution of their conflicts, empowering them to find mutually acceptable solutions.

Differences:

- 1. Purpose:** The primary purpose of therapy is to promote personal growth, mental health, and emotional well-being. Therapy addresses individual or interpersonal issues and may involve exploring past experiences and emotions. In contrast, mediation focuses on resolving conflicts and reaching agreements between parties.
- 2. Professional Background:** Therapists typically have a background in psychology, counseling, or social work and are trained to address mental health concerns. Mediators, on the other hand, often come from various professional backgrounds, including law, social work, or psychology, and specialise in conflict resolution and negotiation.
- 3. Time Frame:** Therapy is often an ongoing process that may last for weeks, months, or even years, depending on the individual's needs. Mediation is usually a shorter-term process, with the goal of resolving specific conflicts within a limited time frame.
- 4. Focus on Emotions vs. Resolution:** Therapy places a strong emphasis on understanding and processing emotions. Therapists help individuals explore and make sense of their feelings. In contrast, mediation focuses on practical problem-solving and reaching agreements, with less emphasis on exploring deep emotional issues.
- 5. Legal Context:** Mediation is often used in legal contexts, such as family law or civil disputes, to facilitate negotiations and reach legally binding agreements. While therapy may inform legal proceedings, its primary focus is on the individual's mental and emotional well-being.

Conclusion

In summary, while therapy and mediation share some common elements, they serve distinct purposes. Therapy is more focused on personal growth and emotional well-being, while mediation is centred around resolving conflicts and reaching agreements between parties. Both can be valuable tools, and individuals may choose one or both depending on their specific needs and goals.



We exist to rescue kids from human trafficking and sexual exploitation and help them stay free.

Destiny Rescue is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and is dedicated to raising awareness, funds, expertise and support to make the international work of Destiny Rescue possible.

Destiny Rescue's mission is to rescue children from sexual exploitation and human trafficking and help them stay free.

Today, Destiny Rescue's work has grown into a worldwide organisation dedicated to rescuing children from sexual exploitation and trafficking and helping them stay free. We serve to help amplify the voices of both those who are enslaved and have been freed from abuse.

We operate rescue, reintegration and prevention programs in multiple countries, and raise funds and awareness in the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

We do this through our rescue operations, reintegration programs, and prevention efforts. We are active in countries where the need to save is great. Because of our committed supporters, our rescue and reintegration staff are bringing freedom, hope and healing to children around the clock – day and night!

Destiny Rescue ensures children have access to quality aftercare opportunities after rescue. We provide them with safe accommodations ensuring their daily needs are met, quality mentoring and regular interaction with a caseworker, training and education opportunities in addition to intentional discipleship and the support of a local church. Caseworkers build relationships and help children through restoration and, when they're ready, reintegration.

Our staff across the world are the heartbeat of Destiny Rescue. Our frontline staff such as rescue agents, border agents and social workers are on the ground in seven countries. They are involved in rescue, reintegration and prevention initiatives, helping free more than 12,000 people since 2011.

In Australia, New Zealand and the United States, we also have staff raising awareness and funds to fuel the frontline staff.

Our head office is in Sunshine Coast, Queensland with representation in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. Together, our nationwide family of speakers, staff, volunteers, church and business partners, and supporters fight tirelessly to bring the world one step closer to our vision.

For more information on how you can support Destiny Rescue and their work, visit www.destinyrescue.org.au

Source: www.destinyrescue.org.au



Lifeline is Australia's largest suicide prevention service provider

We provide all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Why we exist

Lifeline exists to ensure that no person in Australia has to face their darkest moments alone. Our experience has shown us that it is through connection that we can find hope. We are available 24 hours a day to listen, without judgement to any person in Australia who is feeling overwhelmed, experiencing crisis or longs to be heard.

- Each year, over 1 million Australians reach out to Lifeline for support.
- Lifeline's 13 11 14 crisis support line receives a call every 30 seconds.
- Lifeline's network of 41 centres, 10,000 volunteers, and 1,000 employees provide a lifesaving national infrastructure for those experiencing immense pain and anguish.
- There are 3,500 Crisis Supporters working with Lifeline so that no person in Australia has to face their darkest moments alone.

We do this by...

Providing opportunities for connection through digital and face to face suicide prevention crisis support services. Our network of 41 centres includes 10,000 volunteers, including 3,500 Crisis Supporters and 1,000 employees, all dedicated to ensuring no person in Australia has to face their darkest moments alone.

Our telephone, text, and online crisis support services receive over 1 million contacts a year. Our training programs build community skills and educate thousands of people to be suicide safe, while our Research Foundation creates new knowledge, as well as engaging in public education, awareness building and advocacy in relation to suicide prevention.

Increasingly, our crisis support is taking place across a diverse array of platforms. The 13 11 14 phoneline remains a crucial way for help-seekers to contact us, but at Lifeline, we are passionate about giving everyone a chance to speak and be heard, in whatever form works best for them.

Our confidential crisis support is now available via phone, text, or online chat 24 hours / 7 days.

- Phone 13 11 14
- Lifeline Text 0477 13 11 14
- Online chat - lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat

Source: www.lifeline.org.au

MINDFUL MOMENTS: FIND A WORD



COMPASSION
MINDFULNESS
PATIENCE
LOVE
FAMILY
FORGIVENESS
PROGRESS

VULNERABLE
KINDNESS
HUMANITY
GENTLENESS
COMMUNICATION
GRATITUDE
CONNECTION

SELF CARE
SELF AWARENESS
BELIEFS
VALUE
PROGRESS.

Designed for **impact.**



Ole Creative are proud to be the graphic design partner for various non-profit and health services across Australia.

With over 25 years experience, we are passionate about creating compelling and engaging designs that resonate with your mission.

Talk to us today to learn how we elevate your brand and leave a lasting impact.



0412 169 327
hello@olecreative.com.au
olecreative.com.au

**Is your business
changing
people's lives?**

**YOUR AD
COULD BE HERE!**

Our readers are actively seeking
businesses like yours!

Connect with a vibrant community
passionate about wellness, mindfulness,
and personal development.

**Contact us to secure
your ad now!**

Shawn - 0483 361 279 | Amanda - 0412 169 327

#AdvertiseWithPurpose