



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 how 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:

<u>Self-Focus</u>	<u>Self-Awareness</u>
Desiring happiness	Elevating and 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 own a house and then we desire a bigger one; 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.

How do we make this shift?

List 1: What you perceive to be your top 5 roles in life, for example, parent, sibling, employee, leader, etc.

(1 being the highest and 5 the lowest):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List 2: Re-arrange that list by where you have grown in each role the most over the past year

(1 being the highest and 5 the lowest):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The second list shows your priorities; your priorities show where you put your focus; where you put your focus is where you put your value.

Now evaluate if where you grew the most from List 2 and compare it with List 1. Then reflect on the time and efforts dedicated for each role in List 2 to determine if they are ensuring the desired outcomes from what you perceive to be your top roles and priorities from List 1.

Where do you need to be a shift in focus? When we struggle in our roles, our personal and professional relationships tend to suffer. Periodically it’s helpful to go back to this list and adjust priorities as needed. This exercise will help illuminate where you may not be showing up in the capacity *for others*. Most of us live in the gaps, so there’s no blame game, just an awareness and an opportunity for growth!

** 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. **

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