

Expert Interview I with Amanda Rue, Founder of The Shift Work Shop
Including | thoughts on being a pleurist, an energy worker, and helping
individuals develop healthy values and open communication.

>> *Amanda Rue guest curated Strands on October 20, 2022 . [Read it here.](#)*

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what keeps you busy. How did you end up doing what you're doing today?

These days I am constantly seeking deeper alignment and clarity as I have been a self-employed, entrepreneur, and hustler for the last four years. I founded The Shift Work Shop, an HR consultancy specializing in anti-sexism work and sexual harassment prevention after making the decision to speak out about my former employer with the New York Times during the height of the #MeToo Movement. I had an unwavering conviction. I knew if I was going to be a part of unveiling the problem that I also wanted to be a part of the solution by working with others to help create a safer, more inclusive and equitable future for everyone.

In my path to create new solutions, I found myself as a weaver of worlds. I started working with Habit Advisors, another HR consultancy founded by leaders of the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, continuing to freelance in advertising, and somehow fell into a gig as "Director of Partnerships" at a "members only social club for the adventurous," (ahem...a sex club in NYC). All this, in addition to building my own private reiki healing practice. It was in this space of trusting the infinite wisdom of life that I learned invaluable skills, techniques and communication methods that would lay the groundwork for where I am today.

I now identify as a pleurist, energy worker, and facilitator helping individuals, companies and organizations to develop healthy values and open communication that foster cultures of safety, care and inclusivity. It is through this work that we can cultivate our sense of inner security and trust and expand this to our networks, communities and workplaces.

What excites you most about what you do?

The joy of helping others have the tools, techniques and language to advocate for their own needs and desires.

What beliefs define your approach to work? How would you define your leadership style?

First and foremost, I believe that all humans are inherently good and I try to expect the best of intentions. In my line of work there is a lot of fear and uncertainty about what is acceptable and what is not, and how best to navigate these situations, especially in the workplace. My belief is that people are not intentionally out to hurt people, but instead may be unaware of how what they deem acceptable may be harmful or negatively impact another.

I also believe that everyone has the capacity to change. Change is the only constant in Life and it is through change that we evolve, grow and expand. We have changed and evolved our entire existence, and I believe that with "will" anybody has the capacity to repair relationships, offer forgiveness, and change for the better.

Lastly, I believe that we all deserve pleasure through all aspects of our life from the boardroom to the bedroom. Work can be enjoyable, even pleasurable, when we are able to feel supported, respected and valued for our contributions. Life is not meant to be miserable. We are meant to live it vibrantly and abundantly and my hope is that we all live more pleurably.

My leadership style hopefully is one of support and care that leads by demonstration. I try to show what is possible and help others along their journey, but ultimately, they must take the steps for their own success. I aim to provide tools and insight with clear vision so that others can confidently offer their gifts and perspective to support their own growth and understanding of the world and role within it.

What has been the most rewarding project you've worked on and why?

Over the summer, I was asked to offer consent and harm-reduction practices for Sentientfest, a nudist and naturist festival in upstate New York. In the year leading up to the festival, I advised the team and developed Community Guidelines & Agreements as well as safety protocol for the entire festival of 300+ attendees.

Throughout this process I was able to listen and learn from their past mistakes, and completely reframed their consent and safety dialogue to cultivate a culture of personal accountability and community care. What was once convoluted and controlling now felt open, expansive and supportive. Festival attendees were informed of our new practices via a video that was shared before they even arrived at the festival, supporting the recommendation of ensuring all attendees were aware of social consent and Community Agreements prior to even arriving on festival grounds.

I also attended the festival as the consent & safety lead, and offered my first topless keynote (hey, it's all about assimilating to the culture, right?!). As I shared and led my first exercise, I could see a few faces light up. For many, this was their first time learning about social consent and they thanked me afterward for the new language and insight around setting their own boundaries and protecting their personal space.

Over the course of four days there was only one incident that was reported to our team, and it was handled immediately with open dialogue and a path of repair, helping all parties to learn, grow and come into deeper understanding of themselves.

I am so proud of this work, and hope to bring the same thoughtfulness and care to conferences, workshops and festivals across the globe.

We are big believers in diversity -- Not only because we believe in equality, but because we also think it's better for business. The

Black Lives Matter movement has shaped industry conversations around both global injustice, and also lack of representation in our industry. How do you frame these kinds of conversations, both internally and with clients? Is there an emphasis on action, or are the conversations really more about communication?

We do our best to acknowledge existing privileges while speaking openly and honestly about vitally important topics such as racism, sexism and global injustices in our workplaces. We try to frame these conversations with care and with a disclaimer that states that we will necessarily be engaging with topics that may be difficult to discuss or process. We affirm that we will do our best to hold this space with empathy and care, honoring that others may have experiences that are different from our own. In this space, we ask only for people to speak from their lived experience if they feel comfortable doing so. We also empower and pay leaders and advocates within the space to tell their own stories, so that we all may learn with empathy and grace.

Switching gears a bit, how do you find time to balance personal interests with your career? Do you believe work/life balance is possible? Anything you've implemented that you recommend that others try?

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that I don't really believe in a work/life balance. All moments are interconnected and support the movement to the next tether of our lives, be it in our personal or professional lives. Ten years ago my entire identity was my workplace and my job. My life was all about what opportunity was coming next and how quickly I could rise in the ranks. I needed a work/life balance because all that I was was tied to my job.

Now I am more focused on being of service and living a fully integrated life inclusive of work and play. I do this through honoring the importance of rest, being in nature and connecting with other humans. These are parts of life that help me show up fully in both life and work.



I recommend scheduling time to play, or just connect with pleasure in your life. When you do so, you affirm that you deserve pleasure and this feeling and sensation begins to expand through all aspects of your life. Take time to go on that walk, call that old friend, or simply enjoy a cup of tea looking out the window doing nothing at all.

What's your media diet? Where do you find inspiration?

My main source of inspiration are journalist request lists such as Haro that provide a glimpse of what topics are top of mind for the current news cycle and what publications are writing about each topic. I rarely read the articles, but this keeps me informed of what's top of mind in culture.

As you know, we believe there is so much value in having a wide range of teachers. What's the best piece of advice/knowledge you've stolen, and who/where'd you steal it from?

In reference to getting paid your worth, the advice that sticks with me comes from Cindy Gallop. She says, "throw out the biggest number you can say without bursting out laughing." Try it and get paid your worth. You deserve it.