

OCTOBER 10-11, 2009

The Cairns
Weekend Post

WEEKENDER



'It's not all about YOU'

Andrew Griffiths' lessons in life have led to one inescapable conclusion

Heart in art

LOCKHART RIVER GANG ARTIST SAMANTHA HOBSON ON THE EMOTIONS IN HER ART **P5**

Travel

HELSINKI IS EUROPE WITHOUT THE LONG QUEUES OR ANNOYING CROWDS **P9**

Dark moon rising

HOLLYWOOD IS BEING TAKEN OVER BY VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES AND AVATARS **P16**

Optimistic: Author Andrew Griffiths is living life to the full, after writing his latest book *The Me Myth* (inset).



The getting of wisdom

Andrew Griffiths has come from an early life of hardship to a life in which he has, in his own words, not only survived but thrived. DENISE CARTER speaks to the successful entrepreneur and author about his venture into writing personal development books and discusses his first offering, *The Me Myth*

If people could see businessman Andrew Griffiths when he goes into true writer mode and turns off his mobile, closes his emails, and shuts himself away from the world, they may be surprised.

"I used to write at night until all hours," Andrew says. "But now I can block out a week or weekend."

"I go a bit feral – it's not the most attractive period in my life," he says, laughing.

Andrew is brimming with enthusiasm about his new book.

The Me Myth is his first in the personal development genre, and it has autobiographical elements.

Readers will learn Andrew skinny dips, that despite being attacked by many animals throughout his life he still loves nature, as well as poignant details about his past.

It's his honesty about his journey which perhaps plays a pivotal role in the book's success – it sold out in the first two weeks.

Andrew is maybe too honest at times for his own good.

In one of the final chapters, he writes it's time to put away the self-help books and to live a more actioned life. He says many of us suffer from over-analysis paralysis.

Me, me, me, may be the cry of the modern world. But *The Me Myth*, Andrew says, is "a way to look at life differently".

Andrew says he's not trying to be preachy but simply letting people know what has worked for him.

"From my experience, I've spent a lot of time internally reviewing," he says.

"You reach a stage where you have to

put all that stuff down and get on with life. You can read about India but nothing compares to going to India."

Andrew's life thus far has been a maelstrom of lows and highs, from his childhood in Western Australia, where he was abandoned by his parents and raised by an abusive older woman, to his lost teenage years when he fell into a drug and alcohol scene and was in danger of living a life of crime. Even when he cleaned himself up, life wasn't easy.

His diving career was ruined due to decompression sickness, and then his first stab in the entrepreneurial world went awry.

Andrew left his dive shop with a new

People hire personal trainers for their bodies, but we do nothing to put our brains in the right state of mind

business partner while he went on holiday, only to find on his return that everything had been sold and the person he trusted, who hadn't come up with the money for the partnership before he left, had disappeared.

In his book, Andrew amusingly says he considered hiring a hit man but instead he went about working to recoup the money with a fire in his belly, and once he reached his goal, he forgave his errant business partner.

"It just makes me listen to my sixth sense more," Andrew says.

"I could harbour hatred for years but then he wins again."

For all Andrew's scrapes and mishaps in life, he says he has chosen to live a life

of optimism.

In a large room in his house, which he says is like a Dymocks shop because it is so full of books, he spends the beginning of each day doing something for himself.

"People hire personal trainers for their bodies, but we do nothing to put our brains in the right state of mind," he says.

Andrew's set up might include a moment to think his day through or to find what he terms his day's philosophy.

He might read an inspirational quote or a piece about someone who is doing something remarkable with their lives.

"Then I can leave the house with a big smile on my face," he says.

"Some people think this is airy fairy and

Pollyanna, but I believe in being positive and enthusiastic in life."

And every day he works on being a better man.

"Some days I don't want to face the world but they are few and far between," he says. "I also have the optimism gene."

"Even as a kid with terrible things happening, I could always see the light side."

Ask Andrew how he made it through his early years and you'll hear a sad tale, by which he measures everything in his life afterwards.

"My sister didn't survive," Andrew says. "She died of a broken heart – heart disease when she was just 35 years old."

"It was my greatest fear that something

would happen to Wendy," Andrew says.

"Nothing the world could throw at me could be worse."

Now he's using his past and his survival to help other people, through his ambassadorship of the Abused Child Trust, through mentoring young people who want to be entrepreneurs, and through writing self-help books.

There's even a foundation on the cards.

Andrew still works as a business consultant, he has published three books this year, and has spoken at 50 conferences.

Helping others, he says, gives him the energy to keep going.

"I got an email from a lady who said I changed her life," Andrew says.

"That's like having 20 cups of coffee."

Now with Simon & Shuster publishers, he is among big names like Stephen King, and could be set for big success on the international market. And he is showing no signs of slowing down.

Next year Andrew hits the road with Michael Gerber, author of *The E-Myth*, whom he calls the "rock God of the business world".

"So in March it will be *The E-Myth* meets *The Me Myth*."

And then he seems to be taking the basis of *The Me Myth*, to stop analysing and start living, to the hilt.

"There are about 100 books I want to write," he says. "I want to write fiction and I have two screenplays up my sleeve."

"I see myself travelling to Vanuatu and becoming a crazy writer."

■ *The Me Myth* is available from all good books stores, price \$29.99.