

The Four Agreements

by Don Miguel Ruiz

Be impeccable with your word

The first agreement is the most important one and also the most difficult one to honor. It sounds very simple, but it is very, very powerful. Impeccable comes from the Latin “impeccata” – meaning without sin. Your word is the power that you have to create. The word is a force; it is the power you have to express and communicate, to think, and thereby to create the events in your life. It is like a sword with two edges – your word can create beauty and harmony or it can destroy everything within you and around you. Speak with thoughtfulness and integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

Don't take anything personally

Nothing other people do is because of you. It is because of themselves. *What others say and do is a projection of their own dream.* All people live in their own dream, in their own mind. Even when a situation seems so personal, even if others insult you directly, it has nothing to do with you. Personal importance, or taking things personally, is the maximum expression of selfishness because we make the assumption that everything is about “me”. We think we are responsible for everything. You are never responsible for the actions of others; you are only responsible for you. When you truly understand, integrate and practice this, you refuse to take things personally and you cannot be hurt by the careless comments or actions of others. Direct your energy toward holding yourself accountable, not in blaming others. Behave with integrity and treat others respectfully.

Don't make assumptions

We have the tendency to make assumptions about everything, and then we believe they are the truth. We make assumptions about what others are doing or thinking – we take it personally – then we blame them and react by sending emotional poison with our word. We make an assumption, we misunderstand, we take it personally, and we end up creating a whole big drama for nothing. Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really need. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

Always do your best

Under any circumstance, always do your best, no more and no less. Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. When you do your best you learn to accept yourself. Be aware and learn from your mistakes. Learning from your mistakes means you practice, look honestly at the results and keep practicing. This increases your awareness. When you are doing your best just for the pleasure of doing it, you are taking action because you enjoy the action. Action is about living fully. We don't need to know or prove anything. Just to be, to take a risk and enjoy your life, is all that matters. You express your own divinity by being alive and by loving yourself and others. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret.