The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom (A Toltec Wisdom Book)

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz is a transformative guide to personal freedom, offering timeless wisdom rooted in Toltec tradition. Through four simple yet powerful agreements—Be impeccable with your word, Don’t take anything personally, Don’t make assumptions, and Always do your best—Ruiz shows how to break free from limiting beliefs and achieve emotional and spiritual peace. This short, impactful book is perfect for anyone seeking personal growth, clarity, and a path to a more fulfilling life.

INTRODUCTION

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The Smokey Mirror

THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THERE WAS A HUMAN just like you and me who lived near a city surrounded by mountains. The human was studying to become a medicine man, to learn the knowledge of his ancestors, but he didn’t completely agree with everything he was learning. In his heart, he felt there must be something more.

One day, as he slept in a cave, he dreamed that he saw his own body sleeping. He came out of the cave on the night of a new moon. The sky was clear, and he could see millions of stars. Then something happened inside of him that transformed his life forever. He looked at his hands, he felt his body, and he heard his own voice say, “I am

made of light; I am made of stars.”

He looked at the stars again, and he realized that it’s not the stars that create light, but rather light that creates the stars. “Everything is made of light,” he said, “and the space in-between isn’t empty.” And he knew that everything that exists is one living being, and that light is the messenger of life, because it is alive and contains all information.

Then he realized that although he was made of stars, he was not those stars. “I am in-between the stars,” he thought. So he called the stars the tonal and the light between the stars the nagual, and he knew that what created the harmony and space between the two is Life or Intent. Without Life, the tonal and the nagual could not exist. Life is the force of the absolute, the supreme, the Creator who creates everything.

This is what he discovered: Everything in existence is a manifestation of the one living being we call God. Everything is God. And he came to the conclusion that human perception is merely light perceiving light. He also saw that matter is a mirror — everything is a mirror that reflects light and creates images of that light — and the world of illusion, the Dream, is just like smoke which doesn’t allow us to see what we really are. “The real us is pure love, pure light,” he said.

This realization changed his life. Once he knew what he really was, he looked around at other humans and the rest of nature, and he was amazed at what he saw. He saw himself in everything — in every human, in every animal, in every tree, in the water, in the rain, in the clouds, in the earth. And he saw that Life mixed the tonal and the nagual in different ways to create billions of manifestations of Life.

In those few moments he comprehended everything. He was very excited, and his heart was filled with peace. He could hardly wait to tell his people what he had discovered. But there were no words to explain it. He tried to tell the others, but they could not understand. They could see that he had changed, that something beautiful was radiating from his eyes and his voice. They noticed that he no longer had judgment about anything or anyone. He was no longer like anyone else.

He could understand everyone very well, but no one could understand him. They believed that he was an incarnation of God, and he smiled when he heard this and he said, “It is true. I am God. But you are also God. We are the same, you and I. We are images of light. We are God.” But still the people didn’t understand him.

He had discovered that he was a mirror for the rest of the people, a mirror in which he could see himself. “Everyone is a mirror,” he said. He saw himself in everyone, but nobody saw him as themselves. And he realized that everyone was dreaming, but without awareness, without knowing what they really are. They couldn’t see him as themselves because there was a wall of fog or smoke between the mirrors. And that wall of fog was made by the interpretation of images of light — the Dream of humans.

Then he knew that he would soon forget all that he had learned. He wanted to remember all the visions he had had, so he decided to call himself the Smokey Mirror so that he would always know that matter is a mirror and the smoke in-between is what keeps us from knowing what we are. He said, “I am the Smokey Mirror, because I am looking at myself in all of you, but we don’t recognize each other because of the smoke in-between us. That smoke is the Dream, and the mirror is you, the dreamer.”

Domestication and the Dream of the Planet

Domestication and the Dream of the Planet is a powerful concept introduced in *The Four Agreements*, delving into the ways human consciousness is shaped and controlled by societal expectations. The chapter opens with a striking observation: the life we experience, both when we are awake and asleep, is not purely our own creation but instead a dream—constantly shaped by our thoughts, perceptions, and the collective influences of society. This "dream of the planet" is an ever-evolving narrative, where the boundaries between our waking lives and sleeping dreams blur. The primary distinction, however, is that while we have little control over our dreams during sleep, the waking dream is constructed by the internalized beliefs and ideas we are taught by our families, culture, and society at large. This societal dream dictates much of our behavior, shaping the way we view the world and our place within it.

The idea of the "dream of the planet" is explained as a massive, interconnected tapestry formed by the collective human consciousness. It’s the invisible force that binds us, dictating everything from cultural norms and religious beliefs to the social roles we take on from birth. As we grow up, we are taught to conform to these societal expectations, absorbing them through direct instruction and observation. From the language we speak to the actions we take, we are conditioned into believing that the rules of this dream are the only way to live. This process of socialization leaves little room for deviation from the accepted norms, causing us to internalize this collective dream as our own reality. What we don’t realize is that we have been subtly domesticated into following these unwritten societal rules, and our ability to think outside the boundaries of this dream is suppressed.

The concept of "domestication" is pivotal in the chapter, with Ruiz comparing the process to how animals are trained to behave through a system of rewards and punishments. Human beings are similarly conditioned by external forces, particularly

during childhood, to adopt behaviors and beliefs that conform to the larger societal framework. This system is deeply ingrained, often so much so that individuals never question the rules they've been taught. We simply accept the standards set before us, whether they pertain to our roles in relationships, our professional lives, or our social interactions. The problem with this process is that it strips away our freedom to make independent choices. We are molded to think, act, and feel in ways that society deems acceptable, often to the point where our true selves are lost under layers of societal expectation. The names we carry, the religions we practice, and the expectations placed upon us are all inherited, passed down from one generation to the next through this domestication process.

Ruiz critiques this process, noting that it robs individuals of their natural freedom and creativity, leaving them to adopt a "false self." This false self is driven by the fear of rejection and the desire to gain acceptance from others. Over time, we begin to judge ourselves according to the standards of this domesticated dream, measuring our worth based on an impossible set of rules. Our internal belief system, referred to by Ruiz as the "Book of Law," dictates how we see ourselves and how we interact with others. Unfortunately, this internal law is often harsh and unforgiving, constantly pushing us toward self-judgment and self-rejection. If we fail to meet the expectations set by this law, we are left feeling unworthy, guilty, and emotionally distressed. This inner turmoil and cycle of punishment is one of the most destructive consequences of living within the societal dream, as it keeps us trapped in a constant state of fear, guilt, and self-doubt.

This "dream of hell," as Ruiz calls it, is characterized by ongoing emotional suffering due to fear, judgment, and rejection—both from external sources and from within ourselves. The chapter emphasizes that this societal dream becomes a prison, restricting our ability to express ourselves authentically and freely. Instead of living from a place of peace and self-love, we become slaves to the negative judgments that others and we ourselves impose upon us. The author argues that this dream prevents us from living a life of true fulfillment, as we are constantly chasing approval and

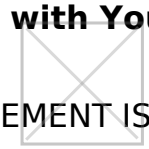
trying to fit into a mold that doesn’t align with our true nature. This way of living—rooted in fear, guilt, and rejection—limits our potential for happiness and prevents us from fully experiencing the freedom of being our authentic selves.

In contrast, Ruiz suggests that there is a possibility of escaping this constrictive dream by breaking free from the restrictive agreements we’ve made, often unknowingly, with society, our families, and ourselves. By letting go of the false self created by domestication, we can start living a life that is based on self-acceptance, love, and truth. Ruiz emphasizes that the key to breaking free lies in conscious choice—choosing to create a new dream, one that reflects who we truly are. This new dream is founded on love, peace, and the acceptance of oneself and others. By embracing this new way of living, we can experience a life free from the limitations imposed by the "dream of the planet." It’s a call to embrace personal freedom and authenticity, and to let go of the suffocating fear and judgment that have shaped so much of our existence. In doing so, we can begin to create a new reality that fosters happiness, self-empowerment, and true inner peace. The ultimate goal is to shift from living within the confines of the old, fear-driven dream to embracing a life rooted in love, freedom, and authenticity, paving the way for a brighter and more liberated future.

Be Impeccable with Your Word

Chapter 2: THE FIRST AGREEMENT

Be Impeccable with Your Word



THE FIRST AGREEMENT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE and also the most difficult one to honor. It is so important that with just this first agreement you will be able to transcend to the level of existence I call heaven on earth.

The first agreement is to be impeccable with your word. It sounds very simple, but it is very, very powerful.

Why your word? Your word is the power that you have to create. Your word is the gift that comes directly from God. The Gospel of John in the Bible, speaking of the creation of the universe, says, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word is God.” Through the word you express your creative power. It is through the word that you manifest everything. Regardless of what language you speak, your intent manifests through the word. What you dream, what you feel, and what you really are, will all be manifested through the word.

The word is not just a sound or a written symbol. 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. You can speak. What other animal on the planet can speak? The word is the most powerful tool you have as a human; it is the tool of magic. But like a sword with two edges, your word can create the most beautiful dream, or your word can destroy everything around you. One edge is the misuse of the word, which creates a living hell. The other edge is the impeccability of the word, which will only create beauty, love, and heaven on earth. Depending upon how it is used, the word can set you free, or it can enslave you even more than you know. All the magic you possess is based on your word. Your word is pure magic, and misuse of your word is black magic.

The word is so powerful that one word can change a life or destroy the lives of millions

of people. Some years ago one man in Germany, by the use of the word, manipulated a whole country of the most intelligent people. He led them into a world war with just the power of his word. He convinced others to commit the most atrocious acts of violence. He activated people's fear with the word, and like a big explosion, there was killing and war all around the world. All over the world humans destroyed other humans because they were afraid of each other. Hitler's word, based on fear-generated beliefs and agreements, will be remembered for centuries.

The human mind is like a fertile ground where seeds are continually being planted. The seeds are opinions, ideas, and concepts. You plant a seed, a thought, and it grows. The word is like a seed, and the human mind is so fertile! The only problem is that too often it is fertile for the seeds of fear. Every human mind is fertile, but only for those kinds of seeds it is prepared for. What is important is to see which kind of seeds our mind is fertile for, and to prepare it to receive the seeds of love.

Take the example of Hitler: He sent out all those seeds of fear, and they grew very strong and beautifully achieved massive destruction. Seeing the awesome power of the word, we must understand what power comes out of our mouths. One fear or doubt planted in our mind can create an endless drama of events. One word is like a spell, and humans use the word like black magicians, thoughtlessly putting spells on each other.

Every human is a magician, and we can either put a spell on someone with our word or we can release someone from a spell. We cast spells all the time with our opinions. An example: I see a friend and give him an opinion that just popped into my mind. I say, "Hmmm! I see that kind of color in your face in people who are going to get cancer." If he listens to the word, and if he agrees, he will have cancer in less than one year. That is the power of the word.

During our domestication, our parents and siblings gave their opinions about us without even thinking. We believed these opinions and we lived in fear over these opinions, like not being good at swimming, or sports, or writing. Someone gives an opinion and says, "Look, this girl is ugly!" The girl listens, believes she is ugly, and grows up with the idea that she is ugly. It doesn't matter how beautiful she is; as long

as she has that agreement, she will believe that she is ugly. That is the spell she is under.

By hooking our attention, the word can enter our mind and change a whole belief for better or for worse. Another example: You may believe you are stupid, and you may have believed this for as long as you can remember. This agreement can be very tricky, causing you to do a lot of things just to ensure that you are stupid. You may do something and think to yourself, “I wish I were smart, but I must be stupid or I wouldn’t have done that.” The mind goes in hundreds of different directions, and we could spend days getting hooked by just that one belief in our own stupidity.

Then one day someone hooks your attention and using the word, lets you know that you are not stupid. You believe what the person says and make a new agreement. As a result, you no longer feel or act stupid. A whole spell is broken, just by the power of the word. Conversely, if you believe you are stupid, and someone hooks your attention and says, “Yes, you are really the most stupid person I have ever met,” the agreement will be reinforced and become even stronger.

Now let us see what the word impeccability means. Impeccability means “without sin.” Impeccable comes from the Latin *pecatus*, which means “sin.” The im in impeccable means “without,” so impeccable means “without sin.” Religions talk about sin and sinners, but let’s understand what it really means to sin. A sin is anything that you do which goes against yourself. Everything you feel or believe or say that goes against yourself is a sin. You go against yourself when you judge or blame yourself for anything.

Being without sin is exactly the opposite. Being impeccable is not going against yourself. When you are impeccable, you take responsibility for your actions, but you do not judge or blame yourself.

From this point of view, the whole concept of sin changes from something moral or religious to something commonsense. Sin begins with rejection of yourself. Self-rejection is the biggest sin that you commit. In religious terms self-rejection is a “mortal sin,” which leads to death. Impeccability, on the other hand, leads to life.

Being impeccable with your word is not using the word against yourself. If I see you in

the street and I call you stupid, it appears that I’m using the word against you. But really I’m using my word against myself, because you’re going to hate me for this, and your hating me is not good for me. Therefore, if I get angry and with my word send all that emotional poison to you, I’m using the word against myself.

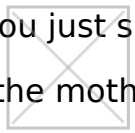
If I love myself I will express that love in my interactions with you, and then I am being impeccable with the word, because that action will produce a like reaction. If I love you, then you will love me. If I insult you, you will insult me. If I have gratitude for you, you will have gratitude for me. If I’m selfish with you, you will be selfish with me. If I use the word to put a spell on you, you are going to put a spell on me.

Being impeccable with your word is the correct use of your energy; it means to use your energy in the direction of truth and love for yourself. If you make an agreement with yourself to be impeccable with your word, just with that intention, the truth will manifest through you and clean all the emotional poison that exists within you. But making this agreement is difficult because we have learned to do precisely the opposite. We have learned to lie as a habit of our communication with others and more importantly with ourselves. We are not impeccable with the word.

The power of the word is completely misused in hell. We use the word to curse, to blame, to find guilt, to destroy. Of course, we also use it in the right way, but not too often. Mostly we use the word to spread our personal poison — to express anger, jealousy, envy, and hate. The word is pure magic — the most powerful gift we have as humans — and we use it against ourselves. We plan revenge. We create chaos with the word. We use the word to create hate between different races, between different people, between families, between nations. We misuse the word so often, and this misuse is how we create and perpetuate the dream of hell. Misuse of the word is how we pull each other down and keep each other in a state of fear and doubt. Because the word is the magic that humans possess and misuse of the word is black magic, we are using black magic all the time without knowing that our word is magic at all.

There was a woman, for example, who was intelligent and had a very good heart. She had a daughter whom she adored and loved very much. One night she came home from a very bad day at work, tired, full of emotional tension, and with a terrible

headache. She wanted peace and quiet, but her daughter was singing and jumping happily. The daughter was unaware of how her mother was feeling; she was in her own world, in her own dream. She felt so wonderful, and she was jumping and singing louder and louder, expressing her joy and her love. She was singing so loud that it made her mother's headache even worse, and at a certain moment, the mother lost control. Angrily she looked at her beautiful little girl and said, "Shut up! You have an ugly voice. Can you just shut up!"



The truth is that the mother's tolerance for any noise was nonexistent; it was not that the little girl's voice was ugly. But the daughter believed what her mother said, and in that moment she made an agreement with herself. After that she no longer sang, because she believed her voice was ugly and would bother anyone who heard it. She became shy at school, and if she was asked to sing, she refused. Even speaking to others became difficult for her. Everything changed in the little girl because of this new agreement: She believed she must repress her emotions in order to be accepted and loved.

Whenever we hear an opinion and believe it, we make an agreement, and it becomes part of our belief system. This little girl grew up, and even though she had a beautiful voice, she never sang again. She developed a whole complex from one spell. This spell was cast upon her by the one who loved her the most: her own mother. Her mother didn't notice what she did with her word. She didn't notice that she used black magic and put a spell on her daughter. She didn't know the power of her word, and therefore she isn't to blame. She did what her own mother, father, and others had done to her in many ways. They misused the word.

How many times do we do this with our own children? We give them these types of opinions and our children carry that black magic for years and years. People who love us do black magic on us, but they don't know what they do. That is why we must forgive them; they don't know what they do.

Another example: You awake in the morning feeling very happy. You feel so wonderful, you stay one or two hours in front of the mirror, making yourself beautiful. Well, one of your best friends says, "What has happened to you? You look so ugly. Look at the

dress you are wearing; you look ridiculous.” That’s it; that is enough to put you all the way down in hell. Maybe this girlfriend just told you this to hurt you. And, she did. She gave you an opinion with all the power of her word behind it. If you accept the opinion, it becomes an agreement now, and you put all your power into that opinion. That opinion becomes black magic.

These types of spells are difficult to break. The only thing that can break a spell is to make a new agreement based on truth. The truth is the most important part of being impeccable with your word. On one side of the sword are the lies which create black magic, and on the other side of the sword is the truth which has the power to break the spell of black magic. Only the truth will set us free.

Looking at everyday human interactions, imagine how many times we cast spells on each other with our word. Over time this interaction has become the worst form of black magic, and we call it gossip. Gossip is black magic at its very worst because it is pure poison. We learned how to gossip by agreement. When we were children, we heard the adults around us gossiping all the time, openly giving their opinions about other people. They even had opinions about people they didn’t know. Emotional poison was transferred along with the opinions, and we learned this as the normal way to communicate.

Gossiping has become the main form of communication in human society. It has become the way we feel close to each other, because it makes us feel better to see someone else feel as badly as we do. There is an old expression that says, “Misery likes company,” and people who are suffering in hell don’t want to be all alone. Fear and suffering are an important part of the dream of the planet; they are how the dream of the planet keeps us down.

Using the analogy of the human mind as a computer, gossip can be compared to a computer virus. A computer virus is a piece of computer language written in the same language all the other codes are written in, but with a harmful intent. This code is inserted into the program of your computer when you least expect it and most of the time without your awareness. After this code has been introduced, your computer doesn’t work quite right, or it doesn’t function at all because the codes get so mixed

up with so many conflicting messages that it stops producing good results.

Human gossip works exactly the same way. For example, you are beginning a new class with a new teacher and you have looked forward to it for a long time. On the first day of class, you run into someone who took the class before, who tells you, “Oh that instructor was such a pompous jerk! He didn’t know what he was talking about, and he was a pervert too, so watch out!”

You are immediately imprinted with the word and the emotional code the person had when saying this, but what you are not aware of is his or her motivation in telling you. This person could be angry for failing the class or simply making an assumption based on fears and prejudices, but because you have learned to ingest information like a child, some part of you believes the gossip, and you go on to the class. As the teacher speaks, you feel the poison come up inside you and you don’t realize you see the teacher through the eyes of the person who gave you that gossip. Then you start talking to other people in the class about this, and they start to see the teacher in the same way: as a jerk and a pervert. You really hate the class, and soon you decide to drop out. You blame the teacher, but it is gossip that is to blame.

All of this mess can be caused by one little computer virus. One little piece of misinformation can break down communication between people, causing every person it touches to become infected and contagious to others. Imagine that every single time others gossip to you, they insert a computer virus into your mind, causing you to think a little less clearly every time. Then imagine that in an effort to clean up your own confusion and get some relief from the poison, you gossip and spread these viruses to someone else.

Now imagine this pattern going on in a never-ending chain between all the humans on earth. The result is a world full of humans who can only read information through circuits that are clogged with a poisonous, contagious virus. Once again, this poisonous virus is what the Toltecs called the *mitote*, the chaos of a thousand different voices all trying to talk at once in the mind.

Even worse are the black magicians or “computer hackers” who intentionally spread the virus. Think back to a time when you or someone you know was angry with

someone else and desired revenge. In order to seek revenge you said something to or about that person with the intention of spreading poison and making that person feel bad about him- or herself. As children we do this quite thoughtlessly, but as we grow older we become much more calculated in our efforts to bring other people down. Then we lie to ourselves and say that person received a just punishment for their wrongdoing.

When we see the world through a computer virus, it is easy to justify the cruelest behavior. What we don't see is that misuse of our word is putting us deeper into hell.

For years we have received the gossip and spells from the words of others, but also from the way we use our word with ourselves. We talk to ourselves constantly and most of the time we say things like, "Oh, I look fat, I look ugly. I'm getting old, I'm losing my hair. I'm stupid, I never understand anything. I will never be good enough, and I'm never going to be perfect." Do you see how we use the word against ourselves? We must begin to understand what the word is and what the word does. If you understand the first agreement, be impeccable with your word, you begin to see all the changes that can happen in your life. Changes first in the way you deal with yourself, and later in the way you deal with other people, especially those you love the most.

Consider how many times you have gossiped about the person you love the most to gain the support of others for your point of view. How many times have you hooked other people's attention, and spread poison about your loved one in order to make your opinion right? Your opinion is nothing but your point of view. It is not necessarily true. Your opinion comes from your beliefs, your own ego, and your own dream. We create all this poison and spread it to others just so we can feel right about our own point of view.

If we adopt the first agreement, and become impeccable with our word, any emotional poison will eventually be cleaned from our mind and from our communication in our personal relationships, including with our pet dog or cat.

Impeccability of the word will also give you immunity from anyone putting a negative spell on you. You will only receive a negative idea if your mind is fertile ground for that

idea. When you become impeccable with your word, your mind is no longer fertile ground for words that come from black magic. Instead, it is fertile for the words that come from love. You can measure the impeccability of your word by your level of self-love. How much you love yourself and how you feel about yourself are directly proportionate to the quality and integrity of your word. When you are impeccable with your word, you feel good; you feel happy and at peace.

You can transcend the dream of hell just by making the agreement to be impeccable with your word. Right now I am planting that seed in your mind. Whether or not the seed grows depends upon how fertile your mind is for the seeds of love. It is up to you to make this agreement with yourself: I am impeccable with my word. Nurture this seed, and as it grows in your mind, it will generate more seeds of love to replace the seeds of fear. This first agreement will change the kind of seeds your mind is fertile for.

Be impeccable with your word. This is the first agreement that you should make if you want to be free, if you want to be happy, if you want to transcend the level of existence that is hell. It is very powerful. Use the word in the correct way. Use the word to share your love. Use white magic, beginning with yourself. Tell yourself how wonderful you are, how great you are. Tell yourself how much you love yourself. Use the word to break all those teeny, tiny agreements that make you suffer.

It is possible. It is possible because I did it, and I am no better than you. No, we are exactly the same. We have the same kind of brain, the same kind of bodies; we are humans. If I was able to break those agreements and create new agreements, then you can do the same. If I can be impeccable with my word, why not you? Just this one...

Don’t Take Anything Personally

Don’t Take Anything Personally is the second agreement in *The Four Agreements*, and it centers on the critical need to detach emotionally from the opinions and actions of others. This principle teaches us that everything people say or do, especially when directed at us, is more about their own internal world—shaped by their beliefs, experiences, and feelings—than it is about us. Ruiz emphasizes that when someone criticizes or reacts negatively, it is often a projection of their own reality and not an objective truth about our character. These judgments are filtered through their personal filters and are not a reflection of who we are or our value. When we internalize others’ opinions and take them personally, we invite unnecessary emotional turmoil into our lives, leading to defensiveness, hurt feelings, and, ultimately, a cycle of suffering. Recognizing this truth allows us to detach from the need to take offense and free ourselves from the emotional weight of others' words and actions.

The habit of taking things personally is rooted in a false sense of self-importance. We are conditioned from a young age to believe that the world revolves around us and that everything we experience must somehow be related to our actions or behavior. This perception distorts our view of interpersonal relationships, as we assume that others' words or actions are aimed at us. By buying into this belief, we end up personalizing every interaction and, as a result, taking offense even when none was intended. This mindset fuels unnecessary conflict and emotional upset, making it more difficult to see things clearly. When we choose not to take things personally, we are able to rise above this distorted thinking and cultivate emotional resilience. By stepping away from this deeply ingrained habit, we create a stronger sense of self-worth that is not dependent on external validation or judgments, allowing us to engage with the world more peacefully.

Another essential aspect of the second agreement is the concept of the "mitote," a term that Ruiz uses to describe the chaotic inner dialogue within our minds. The mitote represents the conflicting beliefs and voices that shape our perception of reality, often leading to confusion and inner conflict. These internal battles mirror the turmoil we experience when we assume that others’ words and actions are aimed directly at us. Our minds become clouded with judgment, and we are left feeling uncertain about who we are or what we stand for. The mitote can distort our true nature, leading us to interpret the actions of others as personal slights or attacks. Ruiz urges us to recognize that this inner noise is a product of our own conditioning and the assumptions we make, and that it is separate from our true essence. By learning to clear the mental fog and not take things personally, we can quiet the mitote and gain greater clarity in how we relate to ourselves and the world.

When we apply the second agreement, we liberate ourselves from the emotional chaos that stems from taking others' actions and words personally. Instead of being swept up in the tide of external opinions, we begin to develop a stronger internal sense of peace and stability. This shift allows us to see the world with more compassion, not just for others but for ourselves as well. We can then express ourselves freely and authentically, unburdened by the fear of judgment or rejection. When we no longer take things personally, we free ourselves from the limitations of fear, anger, and resentment. This newfound freedom empowers us to make choices based on our true desires and values, not on the need to gain approval or avoid criticism. Ruiz argues that living without taking things personally leads to a more peaceful, fulfilling life, where we can experience joy and love without the emotional weight of others' opinions weighing us down.

Ultimately, the second agreement serves as a powerful tool for personal growth and emotional freedom. By choosing not to take anything personally, we can stop absorbing the negativity of others, and instead, we can live from a place of self-assurance and emotional strength. It also fosters a sense of independence, as we no longer depend on others’ approval or reactions to validate our worth. This transformation allows us to create healthier relationships, both with others and

ourselves. As we cultivate emotional resilience and learn to engage with the world from a position of inner peace, we begin to understand that the actions and words of others are simply a reflection of them, not a reflection of us. By embracing this mindset, we not only free ourselves from the “dream of hell” created by others’ judgments, but we also embark on a path toward true happiness, where we can live authentically and with love in our hearts, unaffected by the negativity around us.

Don’t Make Assumptions

Chapter 4: *Don’t Make Assumptions*, the third agreement in *The Four Agreements* by don Miguel Ruiz, a principle that addresses the profound impact assumptions can have on our lives. Ruiz explains that making assumptions often leads to misunderstandings, unnecessary conflict, and emotional distress. Many of the problems we face in relationships and life stem from the habit of assuming we know what others are thinking or what they mean by their actions, often without confirming or asking for clarification. These assumptions create a false reality in our minds, leading us to react based on that flawed perception, which can fuel negative emotions and cause us to take things personally. The chapter invites us to reflect on how these assumptions, based on partial truths or misinterpretations, affect the way we view ourselves and others, ultimately contributing to more conflict than understanding.

Ruiz breaks down how the habit of making assumptions creates a cycle of emotional pain and misunderstanding. When we assume something about someone’s actions or intentions, it is easy to jump to conclusions and react without full knowledge, which causes unnecessary distress. This leads to the cycle of taking things personally, which in turn triggers emotional responses like anger, frustration, or sadness. In relationships, especially intimate ones, assumptions can be particularly harmful. Partners may assume they understand each other’s feelings or thoughts without explicitly communicating, which often results in misalignment, hurt feelings, and resentment. These miscommunications accumulate and build up, damaging the relationship over time. The solution Ruiz proposes is a simple yet powerful one: instead of assuming, we should strive for open and honest communication. By asking questions and seeking clarity, we create an environment where misunderstandings can be avoided and emotional well-being preserved.

Beyond relationships, the habit of making assumptions also stems from our natural desire for security and certainty. When faced with uncertainty or when we feel vulnerable, our minds quickly attempt to fill in the blanks with assumptions to provide a sense of control and understanding. This behavior is an attempt to protect ourselves from discomfort, but in doing so, we often distort reality and hurt others in the process. Ruiz suggests that the healthier alternative to assuming is to embrace curiosity and open-mindedness, asking direct questions and allowing room for clarity. By actively engaging in clear communication, we prevent unnecessary emotional turmoil and misunderstandings, fostering healthier and more genuine interactions. Seeking to understand rather than relying on assumptions allows us to navigate life's complexities with less emotional baggage, making it easier to embrace the present moment without letting fear or anxiety cloud our judgment.

The chapter also highlights how assumptions affect our perception of ourselves and others. When we assume things about our own capabilities or desires, we can either overestimate or underestimate ourselves, leading to self-doubt or inflated expectations. Similarly, when we assume things about others, we impose our own beliefs, fears, or expectations on them, which can lead to disappointment or resentment when they inevitably fall short of these unspoken standards. Ruiz encourages readers to replace assumptions with honesty and transparency, both in how we communicate with others and how we relate to ourselves. By being clear about our needs, desires, and expectations, we prevent ourselves from projecting false assumptions onto others, fostering more authentic and meaningful connections. This shift towards openness helps reduce internal conflict and enables us to see ourselves and others more clearly, without the distortion caused by assumptions.

In conclusion, *Don't Make Assumptions* serves as a powerful reminder that assumptions can cloud our judgment, damage relationships, and create unnecessary suffering. Ruiz encourages readers to let go of the habit of assuming and instead embrace a practice of asking questions and engaging in open, honest dialogue. By doing so, we can eliminate misunderstandings, strengthen relationships, and experience greater emotional peace. This agreement offers a path to deeper

connection and understanding by removing the barriers of miscommunication and replacing them with the clarity and transparency that comes from asking questions and seeking truth. Through this simple yet profound change in approach, we can transform our lives, reduce conflict, and create stronger, more authentic connections with those around us.

Always Do Your Best

THE FOURTH AGREEMENT

Always Do Your Best

THERE IS JUST ONE MORE AGREEMENT, BUT IT’S the one that allows the other three to become deeply ingrained habits. The fourth agreement is about the action of the first three: Always do your best. Under any circumstance, always do your best, no more and no less. But keep in mind that your best is never going to be the same from one moment to the next. Everything is alive and changing all the time, so your best will sometimes be high quality, and other times it will not be as good. When you wake up refreshed and energized in the morning, your best will be better than when you are tired at night. Your best will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick, or sober as opposed to drunk. Your best will depend on whether you are feeling wonderful and happy, or upset, angry, or jealous.

In your everyday moods, your best can change from one moment to another, from one hour to the next, from one day to another. Your best will also change over time. As you build the habit of the four new agreements, your best will become better than it used to be. Regardless of the quality, keep doing your best — no more and no less than your best. If you try too hard to do more than your best, you will spend more energy than is needed and in the end your best will not be enough. When you overdo, you deplete your body and go against yourself, and it will take you longer to accomplish your goal. But if you do less than your best, you subject yourself to frustrations, self-judgment, guilt, and regrets.

Just do your best — in any circumstance in your life. It doesn’t matter if you are sick or tired, if you always do your best there is no way you can judge yourself. And if you don’t judge yourself, there is no way you are going to suffer from guilt, blame, and

self-punishment. By always doing your best, you will break a big spell that you have been under.

There was a man who wanted to transcend his suffering so he went to a Buddhist temple to find a Master to help him. He went to the Master and asked, “Master, if I meditate four hours a day, how long will it take me to transcend?”

The Master looked at him and said, “If you meditate four hours a day, perhaps you will transcend in ten years.”

Thinking he could do better, the man then said, “Oh, Master, what if I meditated eight hours a day, how long will it take me to transcend?”

The Master looked at him and said, “If you meditate eight hours a day, perhaps you will transcend in twenty years.”

“But why will it take me longer if I meditate more?” the man asked.

The Master replied, “You are not here to sacrifice your joy or your life. You are here to live, to be happy, and to love. If you can do your best in two hours of meditation, but you spend eight hours instead, you will only grow tired, miss the point, and you won’t enjoy your life. Do your best, and perhaps you will learn that no matter how long you meditate, you can live, love, and be happy.”

Doing your best, you are going to live your life intensely. You are going to be productive, you are going to be good to yourself, because you will be giving yourself to your family, to your community, to everything. But it is the action that is going to make you feel intensely happy. When you always do your best, you take action. Doing your best is taking the action because you love it, not because you’re expecting a reward. Most people do exactly the opposite: They only take action when they expect a reward, and they don’t enjoy the action. And that’s the reason why they don’t do their best.

For example, most people go to work every day just thinking of payday, and the money they will get from the work they are doing. They can hardly wait for Friday or Saturday, whatever day they receive their money and can take time off. They are working for the reward, and as a result they resist work. They try to avoid the action and it becomes more difficult, and they don't do their best. They work so hard all week long, suffering the work, suffering the action, not because they like to, but because they feel they have to. They have to work because they have to pay the rent, because they have to support their family. They have all that frustration, and when they do receive their money they are unhappy. They have two days to rest, to do what they want to do, and what do they do? They try to escape. They get drunk because they don't like themselves. They don't like their life. There are many ways that we hurt ourselves when we don't like who we are.

On the other hand, if you take action just for the sake of doing it, without expecting a reward, you will find that you enjoy every action you do. Rewards will come, but you are not attached to the reward. You can even get more than you would have imagined for yourself without expecting a reward. If we like what we do, if we always do our best, then we are really enjoying life. We are having fun, we don't get bored, we don't have frustrations.

When you do your best, you don't give the Judge the opportunity to find you guilty or to blame you. If you have done your best and the Judge tries to judge you according to your Book of Laws, you've got the answer: "I did my best." There are no regrets. That is why we always do our best. It is not an easy agreement to keep, but this agreement is really going to set you free.

When you do your best you learn to accept yourself. But you have to 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.

Doing your best really doesn't feel like work because you enjoy whatever you are doing. You know you're doing your best when you are enjoying the action or doing it in

a way that will not have negative repercussions for you. You do your best because you want to do it, not because you have to do it, not because you are trying to please the Judge, and not because you are trying to please other people.

If you take action because you have to, then there is no way you are going to do your best. Then it is better not to do it. No, you do your best because doing your best all the time makes you so happy. When you are doing your best just for the pleasure of doing it, you are taking action because you enjoy the action.

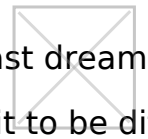
Action is about living fully. Inaction is the way that we deny life. Inaction is sitting in front of the television every day for years because you are afraid to be alive and to take the risk of expressing what you are. Expressing what you are is taking action. You can have many great ideas in your head, but what makes the difference is the action. Without action upon an idea, there will be no manifestation, no results, and no reward.

A good example of this comes from the story about Forrest Gump. He didn't have great ideas, but he took action. He was happy because he always did his best at whatever he did. He was richly rewarded without expecting any reward at all. Taking action is being alive. It's taking the risk to go out and express your dream. This is different than imposing your dream on someone else, because everyone has the right to express his or her dream.

Doing your best is a great habit to have. I do my best in everything I do and feel. Doing my best has become a ritual in my life because I made the choice to make it a ritual. It's a belief like any other belief that I choose. I make everything a ritual, and I always do my best. Taking a shower is a ritual for me, and with that action I tell my body how much I love it. I feel and enjoy the water on my body. I do my best to fulfill the needs of my body. I do my best to give to my body and to receive what my body gives to me.

In India they perform a ritual called puja. In this ritual, they take idols that represent God in many different forms and bathe them, feed them, and give their love to them. They even chant mantras to these idols. The idol itself is not important. What is important is the way they perform the ritual, the way they say, "I love you, God." God

is life. God is life in action. The best way to say, “I love you, God,” is to live your life doing your best. The best way to say, “Thank you, God,” is by letting go of the past and living in the present moment, right here and now. Whatever life takes away from you, let it go. When you surrender and let go of the past, you allow yourself to be fully alive in the moment. Letting go of the past means you can enjoy the dream that is happening right now.



If you live in a past dream, you don’t enjoy what is happening right now because you will always wish it to be different than it is. There is no time to miss anyone or anything because you are alive. Not enjoying what is happening right now is living in the past and being only half alive. This leads to self-pity, suffering, and tears.

You were born with the right to be happy. You were born with the right to love, to enjoy and to share your love. You are alive, so take your life and enjoy it. Don’t resist life passing through you, because that is God passing through you. Just your existence proves the existence of God. Your existence proves the existence of life and energy.

We don’t need to know or prove anything. Just to be, to take a risk and enjoy your life, is all that matters. Say no when you want to say no, and yes when you want to say yes. You have the right to be you. You can only be you when you do your best. When you don’t do your best you are denying yourself the right to be you. That’s a seed that you should really nurture in your mind. You don’t need knowledge or great philosophical concepts. You don’t need the acceptance of others. You express your own divinity by being alive and by loving yourself and others. It is an expression of God to say, “Hey, I love you.”

The first three agreements will only work if you do your best. Don’t expect that you will always be able to be impeccable with your word. Your routine habits are too strong and firmly rooted in your mind. But you can do your best. Don’t expect that you will never take anything personally; just do your best. Don’t expect that you will never make another assumption, but you can certainly do your best.

By doing your best, the habits of misusing your word, taking things personally, and making assumptions will become weaker and less frequent with time. You don't need to judge yourself, feel guilty, or punish yourself if you cannot keep these agreements. If you're doing your best, you will feel good about yourself even if you still make assumptions, still take things personally, and still are not impeccable with your word.

If you do your best always, over and over again, you will become a master of transformation. Practice makes the master. By doing your best you become a master. Everything you have ever learned, you learned through repetition. You learned to write, to drive, and even to walk by repetition. You are a master of speaking your language because you practiced. Action is what makes the difference.

If you do your best in the search for personal freedom, in the search for self-love, you will discover that it's just a matter of time before you find what you are looking for. It's not about daydreaming or sitting for hours dreaming in meditation. You have to stand up and be a human. You have to honor the man or woman that you are. Respect your body, enjoy your body, love your body, feed, clean, and heal your body. Exercise and do what makes your body feel good. This is a puja to your body, and that is a communion between you and God.

You don't need to worship idols of the Virgin Mary, the Christ, or the Buddha. You can if you want to; if it feels good, do it. Your own body is a manifestation of God, and if you honor your body everything will change for you. When you practice giving love to every part of your body, you plant seeds of love in your mind, and when they grow, you will love, honor, and respect your body immensely.

Every action then becomes a ritual in which you are honoring God. After that, the next step is honoring God with every thought, every emotion, every belief, even what is "right" or "wrong." Every thought becomes a communion with God, and you will live a dream without judgments, victimization, and free of the need to gossip and abuse yourself.

When you honor these four agreements together, there is no way that you will live in hell. There is no way. If you are impeccable with your word, if you don’t take anything personally, if you don’t make assumptions, if you always do your best, then you are going to have a beautiful life. You are going to control your life one hundred percent.

The Four Agreements are a summary of the mastery of transformation, one of the masteries of the Toltec. You transform hell into heaven. The dream of the planet is transformed into your personal dream of heaven. The knowledge is there; it’s just waiting for you to use it. The Four Agreements are there; you just need to adopt these agreements and respect their meaning and power. Just do your best to honor these agreements. You can make this agreement today: I choose to honor The Four Agreements. It’s so simple and logical that even a child can understand them. But, you must have a very strong will, a very strong will to keep these agreements. Why? Because wherever we go we find that our path is...

Breaking Old Agreements

Breaking Old Agreements

EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT FREEDOM. ALL AROUND the world different people, different races, different countries are fighting for freedom. But what is freedom? In America we speak of living in a free country. But are we really free? Are we free to be who we really are? The answer is no, we are not free. True freedom has to do with the human spirit — it is the freedom to be who we really are.

Who stops us from being free? We blame the government, we blame the weather, we blame our parents, we blame religion, we blame God. Who really stops us from being free? We stop ourselves.

What does it really mean to be free? Sometimes we get married and we say that we lose our freedom, then we get divorced and we are still not free. What stops us? Why can’t we be ourselves?

We have memories of long ago, when we used to be free and we loved being free, but we have forgotten what freedom really means. If we see a child who is two or three, perhaps four years old, we find a free human. Why is this human free? Because this human does whatever he or she wants to do. The human is completely wild. Just like a flower, a tree, or an animal that has not been domesticated — wild! And if we observe humans who are two years old, we find that most of the time these humans have a big smile on their face and they’re having fun. They are exploring the world. They are not afraid to play. They are afraid when they are hurt, when they are hungry, when some of their needs are not met, but they don’t worry about the past, don’t care about the future, and only live in the present moment.

Very young children are not afraid to express what they feel. They are so loving that if they perceive love, they melt into love. They are not afraid to love at all. That is the description of a normal human being. As children we are not afraid of the future or ashamed of the past. Our normal human tendency is to enjoy life, to play, to explore, to be happy, and to love.

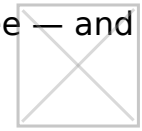
But, what has happened with the adult human? Why are we so different? Why are we not wild? From the point of view of the Victim we can say that something sad happened to us, and from the point of view of the warrior we can say that what happened to us is normal. What has happened is that we have the Book of Law, the big Judge and the Victim who rule our lives. We are no longer free because the Judge, the Victim, and the belief system don't allow us to be who we really are. Once our minds have been programmed with all that garbage, we are no longer happy.

This chain of training from human to human, from generation to generation, is perfectly normal in human society. You don't need to blame your parents for teaching you to be like them. What else could they teach you but what they know? They did the best they could, and if they abused you, it was due to their own domestication, their own fears, their own beliefs. They had no control over the programming they received, so they couldn't have behaved any differently.

There is no need to blame your parents or anyone who abused you in your life, including yourself. But it is time to stop the abuse. It is time to free yourself of the tyranny of the Judge by changing the foundation of your own agreements. It is time to be free from the role of the Victim.

The real you is still a little child who never grew up. Sometimes that little child comes out when you are having fun or playing, when you feel happy, when you are painting, or writing poetry, or playing the piano, or expressing yourself in some way. These are the happiest moments of your life — when the real you comes out, when you don't care about the past and you don't worry about the future. You are childlike.

But there is something that changes all that: We call them responsibilities. The Judge says, “Wait a second, you are responsible, you have things to do, you have to work, you have to go to school, you have to earn a living.” All these responsibilities come to mind. Our face changes and becomes serious again. If you watch children when they are playing adults, you will see their little faces change. “Let’s pretend I’m a lawyer,” and right away their faces change; the adult face takes over. We go to court and that is the face we see — and that is what we are. We are still children, but we have lost our freedom.



The freedom we are looking for is the freedom to be ourselves, to express ourselves. But if we look at our lives we will see that most of the time we do things just to please others, just to be accepted by others, rather than living our lives to please ourselves. That is what has happened to our freedom. And we see in our society and all the societies around the world, that for every thousand people, nine hundred and ninety-nine are completely domesticated.

The worst part is that most of us are not even aware that we are not free. There is something inside that whispers to us that we are not free, but we do not understand what it is, and why we are not free.

The problem with most people is that they live their lives and never discover that the Judge and the Victim rule their mind, and therefore they don’t have a chance to be free. The first step toward personal freedom is awareness. We need to be aware that we are not free in order to be free. We need to be aware of what the problem is in order to solve the problem.

Awareness is always the first step because if you are not aware, there is nothing you can change. If you are not aware that your mind is full of wounds and emotional poison, you cannot begin to clean and heal the wounds and you will continue to suffer.

There is no reason to suffer. With awareness you can rebel and say, “This is enough!” You can look for a way to heal and transform your personal dream. The dream of the planet is just a dream. It is not even real. If you go into the dream and start

challenging your beliefs, you will find that most of the beliefs that guided you into the wounded mind are not even true. You will find that you suffered all those years of drama for nothing. Why? Because the belief system that was put inside your mind is based on lies.

That is why it is important for you to master your own dream; that is why the Toltecs became dream masters. Your life is the manifestation of your dream; it is an art. And you can change your life anytime if you aren't enjoying the dream. Dream masters create a masterpiece of life; they control the dream by making choices. Everything has consequences and a dream master is aware of the consequences.

To be Toltec is a way of life. It is a way of life where there are no leaders and no followers, where you have your own truth and live your own truth. A Toltec becomes wise, becomes wild, and becomes free again.

There are three masteries that lead people to become Toltecs. First is the Mastery of Awareness. This is to be aware of who we really are, with all the possibilities. The second is the Mastery of Transformation — how to change, how to be free of domestication. The third is the Mastery of Intent. Intent from the Toltec point of view is that part of life that makes transformation of energy possible; it is the one living being that seamlessly encompasses all energy, or what we call "God." Intent is life itself; it is unconditional love. The Mastery of Intent is therefore the Mastery of Love.

When we talk about the Toltec path to freedom, we find that they have an entire map for breaking free of domestication. They compare the Judge, the Victim, and the belief system to a parasite that invades the human mind. From the Toltec point of view, all humans who are domesticated are sick. They are sick because there is a parasite that controls the mind and controls the brain. The food for the parasite is the negative emotions that come from fear.

If we look at the description of a parasite, we find that a parasite is a living being who lives off of other living beings, sucking their energy without any useful contribution in return, and hurting their host little by little. The Judge, the Victim, and the belief

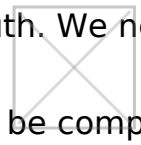
system fit this description very well. Together they comprise a living being made of psychic or emotional energy, and that energy is alive. Of course it is not material energy, but neither are emotions material energy. Our dreams are not material energy either, but we know they exist.

One function of the brain is to transform material energy into emotional energy. Our brain is the factory of the emotions. And we have said that the main function of the mind is to dream. The Toltecs believe that the parasite — the Judge, the Victim, and the belief system — has control of your mind; it controls your personal dream. The parasite dreams through your mind and lives its life through your body. It survives on the emotions that come from fear, and thrives on drama and suffering.

The freedom we seek is to use our own mind and body, to live our own life, instead of the life of the belief system. When we discover that the mind is controlled by the Judge and the Victim and the real “us” is in the corner, we have just two choices. One choice is to keep living the way we are, to surrender to the Judge and the Victim, to keep living in the dream of the planet. The second choice is to do what we do as children when parents try to domesticate us. We can rebel and say “No!” We can declare a war against the parasite, a war against the Judge and the Victim, a war for our independence, a war for the right to use our own mind and our own brain.

That is why in all the shamanic traditions in America, from Canada to Argentina, people call themselves warriors, because they are in a war against the parasite in the mind. That is the real meaning of a warrior. The warrior is one who rebels against the invasion of the parasite. The warrior rebels and declares a war. But to be a warrior doesn’t mean we always win the war; we may win or we may lose, but we always do our best and at least we have a chance to be free again. Choosing this path gives us, at the very least, the dignity of rebellion, and ensures that we will not be the helpless victim of our own whimsical emotions or the poisonous emotions of others. Even if we succumb to the enemy — the parasite — we will not be among those victims who would not fight back.

At best, being a warrior gives us an opportunity to transcend the dream of the planet, and to change our personal dream to a dream that we call heaven. Just like hell, heaven is a place that exists within our mind. It is a place of joy, a place where we are happy, where we are free to love and to be who we really are. We can reach heaven while we are alive; we don't have to wait until we die. God is always present and the kingdom of heaven is everywhere, but first we need to have the eyes and ears to see and hear that truth. We need to be free of the parasite.



The parasite can be compared to a monster with a thousand heads. Every head of the parasite is one of the fears that we have. If we want to be free, we have to destroy the parasite. One solution is to attack the parasite head by head, which means we face each of our fears, one by one. This is a slow process, but it works. Every time we face one of the fears we are a little more free.

A second approach is to stop feeding the parasite. If we don't give the parasite any food, we kill the parasite by starvation. To do this we have to gain control of our emotions, we have to refrain from fueling the emotions that come from fear. This is easy to say, but it is very difficult to do. It is difficult because the Judge and the Victim control our mind.

A third solution is called the initiation of the dead. The initiation of the dead is found in many traditions and esoteric schools around the world. We find it in Egypt, India, Greece, and America. This is a symbolic death which kills the parasite without harming our physical body. When we "die" symbolically the parasite has to die. This is faster than the first two solutions, but it is even more difficult to do. We need a great deal of courage to face the angel of death. We need to be very strong.

Let's take a closer look at each of these solutions.

THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION: THE DREAM OF THE SECOND ATTENTION

We have learned that the dream you are living now is the result of the outside dream hooking your attention and feeding you all of your beliefs. The process of

domestication can be called the dream of the first attention because it was how your attention was used for the first time to create the first dream of your life.

One way to change your beliefs is to focus your attention on all those agreements and beliefs, and change the agreements with yourself. In doing this you are using your attention for the second time, thus creating the dream of the second attention or the new dream.

The difference is that you are no longer innocent. When you were a child this was not true; you didn’t have a choice. But you are no longer a child. Now it’s up to you to choose what to believe and what not to believe. You can choose to believe in anything, and that includes believing in yourself.

The first step is to become aware of the fog that is in your mind. You must become aware that you are dreaming all the time. Only with awareness do you have the possibility of transforming your dream. If you have the awareness that the whole drama of your life is the result of what you believe, and what you believe is not real, then you can begin to change it. However, to really change your beliefs you need to focus your attention on what it is that you want to change. You have to know which agreements you want to change before you can change them.

So the next step is to develop awareness of all the self-limiting, fear-based beliefs that make you unhappy. You take an inventory of all that you believe, all your agreements, and through this process you begin the transformation. The Toltecs called this the Art of Transformation, and it’s a whole mastery. You achieve the Mastery of Transformation by changing the fear-based agreements that make you suffer, and reprogramming your own mind, in your own way. One of the ways to do this is to explore and adopt alternative beliefs such as the Four Agreements.

The decision to adopt the Four Agreements is a declaration of war to regain your freedom from the parasite. The Four Agreements offer the possibility of ending the emotional pain, which can open the door for you to enjoy your life and begin a new dream. It’s up to you to explore the possibilities of your dream, if you are interested.

The Four Agreements were created to assist you in the Art of Transformation, to help you break the limiting agreements, gain more personal power, and become stronger. The stronger you get, the more agreements you can break until the moment comes when you make it to the core of all of those agreements.

Going to the core of those agreements is what I call going into the desert. When you go into the desert you meet your demons face-to-face. After coming out of the desert, all those demons become angels.

Practicing the four new agreements is a big act of power. Breaking the spell of black magic in your mind requires great personal power. Every time you break an agreement, you gain extra power. You start by breaking agreements that are very small and require less power. As those smaller agreements are broken, your personal power will increase until you reach a point when you can finally face the big demons in your mind.

For example, the little girl who was told not to sing is now twenty years old and she still does not sing. One way she can overcome the belief that her voice is ugly is to say, “Okay, I will try to sing, even if I do sing badly.” Then she can pretend that someone is clapping and telling her, “Oh! That was beautiful.” This may break the agreement a teeny, tiny bit, but it will still be there. However, now she has a little more power and courage to try again and again until finally she breaks the agreement.

That’s one way out of the dream of hell. But for every agreement you break that makes you suffer, you will need to replace it with a new agreement that makes you happy. This will keep the old agreement from coming back. If you occupy the same space with a new agreement, then the old agreement is gone forever and in its place is the new agreement.

There are many strong beliefs in the mind that can make this process look hopeless. This is why you need to go step-by-step and be patient with yourself because this is a slow process. The way you are living now is the result of many years of domestication. You cannot expect to break the domestication in one day. Breaking agreements is very

difficult because we put the power of the word (which is the power of our will) into every agreement we have made. We need the same amount of power to change an agreement. We cannot change an agreement with less power than we used to make the agreement, and almost all our personal power is invested in keeping the agreements we have with ourselves. That's because our agreements are actually like a strong addiction. We are addicted to being the way we are. We are addicted to anger, jealousy, and self-pity. We are addicted to the beliefs that tell us, "I'm not good enough, I'm not intelligent enough. Why even try? Other people will do it because they're better than me."

All of these old agreements which rule our dream of life are the result of repeating them over and over again. Therefore, to adopt the Four Agreements, you need to put repetition in action. Practicing the new agreements in your life is how your best becomes better. Repetition makes the master.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE WARRIOR: CONTROLLING YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR

Imagine that you awake early one morning overflowing with enthusiasm for the day. You feel good. You are happy and have plenty of energy to face the day. Then at breakfast, you have a big fight with your spouse, and a flood of emotion comes out. You get mad, and in the emotion of anger you spend a lot of personal power. After the fight, you feel drained, and you just want to go and cry. In fact, you feel so tired that you go to your room, collapse, and try to recover. You spend the day wrapped up in your emotions. You have no energy to keep going, and you just want to walk away from everything.

Every day we awake with a certain amount of mental, emotional, and physical energy that we spend throughout the day. If we allow our emotions to deplete our energy, we have no energy to change our lives or to give to others.

The way you see the world will depend upon the emotions you are feeling. When you are angry, everything around you is wrong, nothing is right. You blame everything

including the weather; whether it’s raining or the sun is shining, nothing pleases you. When you are sad, everything around you is sad and makes you cry. You see the trees and you feel sad; you see the rain and everything looks so sad. Perhaps you feel vulnerable and have a need to protect yourself because you don’t know in what moment someone will attack you. You do not trust anything or anyone around you. This is because you see the world with the eyes of fear!

Imagine that the human mind is the same as your skin. You can touch healthy skin and it feels wonderful. Your skin is made for perception and the sensation of touch is wonderful. Now imagine you have an injury and the skin gets cut and infected. If you touch the infected skin, it is going to hurt, so you try to cover and protect the skin. You will not enjoy being touched because it hurts.

Now imagine that all humans have this skin disease. Nobody can touch each other because it is going to hurt. Everyone has wounds on their skin, so the infection is seen as normal, the pain is also considered normal; we believe we are supposed to be that way.

Can you imagine how we would behave with each other if all the humans in the world had this skin disease? Of course we would hardly ever hug each other because it would be too painful. So we would need to create a lot of distance between us.

The human mind is exactly like this description of infected skin. Every human has an emotional body completely covered with infected wounds. Each wound is infected with emotional poison — the poison of all the emotions that makes us suffer, such as hate, anger, envy, and sadness. An action of injustice opens a wound in the mind and we react with emotional poison because of the concepts and beliefs we have about injustice and what is fair. The mind is so wounded and full of poison by the process of domestication, that everyone describes the wounded mind as normal. This is considered normal, but I can tell you it is not normal.

We have a dysfunctional dream of the planet, and humans are mentally sick with a disease called fear. The symptoms of the disease are all the emotions that make

humans suffer: anger, hate, sadness, envy, and betrayal. When the fear is too great, the reasoning mind begins to fail, and we call this mental illness. Psychotic behavior occurs when the mind is so frightened and the wounds so painful, that it seems better to break contact with the outside world.

If we can see our state of mind as a disease, we find there is a cure. We don't have to suffer any longer. First we need the truth to open the emotional wounds, take the poison out, and heal the wounds completely. How do we do this? We must forgive those we feel have wronged us, not because they deserve to be forgiven, but because we love ourselves so much we don't want to keep paying for the injustice.

Forgiveness is the only way to heal. We can choose to forgive because we feel compassion for ourselves. We can let go of the resentment and declare, "That's enough! I will no longer be the big Judge that goes against myself. I will no longer beat myself up and abuse myself. I will no longer be the Victim."

First, we need to forgive our parents, our brothers, our sisters, our friends, and God. Once you forgive God, you can finally forgive yourself. Once you forgive yourself, the self-rejection in your mind is over. Self-acceptance begins, and the self-love will grow so strong that you will finally accept yourself just the way you are. That's the beginning of the free human. Forgiveness is the key.

You will know you have forgiven someone when you see them and you no longer have an emotional reaction. You will hear the name of the person and you will have no emotional reaction. When someone can touch what used to be a wound and it no longer hurts you, then you know you have truly forgiven.

The truth is like a scalpel. The truth is painful, because it opens all of the wounds which are covered by lies so that we can be healed. These lies are what we call the denial system. It's a good thing we have the denial system, because it allows us to cover our wounds and still function. But once we no longer have any wounds or any poison, we don't need to lie anymore. We don't need the denial system, because a healthy mind, like healthy skin, can be touched without hurting. It's pleasurable for the

mind to be touched when it is clean.

The problem with most people is that they lose control of their emotions. It is the emotions that control the behavior of the human, not the human who controls the emotions. When we lose control we say things that we don’t want to say, and do things that we don’t want to do. That is why it is so important to be impeccable with our word and to become a spiritual warrior. We must learn to control the emotions so we have enough personal power to change our fear-based agreements, escape from hell, and create our own personal heaven.

How are we to become a warrior? There are certain characteristics of the warrior that are nearly the same around the world. The warrior has awareness. That’s very important. We are aware that we are at war, and the war in our minds requires discipline. Not the discipline of a soldier, but the discipline of a warrior. Not the discipline from the outside to tell us what to do and what not to do, but the discipline to be ourselves, no matter what.

The warrior has control. Not control over another human, but control over one’s own emotions, control over one’s own self. It is when we lose control that we repress the emotions, not when we are in control. The big difference between a warrior and a victim is that the victim represses, and the warrior refrains. Victims repress because they are afraid to show the emotions, afraid to say what they want to say. To refrain is not the same thing as repression. To refrain is to hold the emotions and to express them in the right moment, not before, not later. That is why warriors are impeccable. They have complete control over their own emotions and therefore over their own behavior.

THE INITIATION OF THE DEAD: EMBRACING THE ANGEL OF DEATH

The final way to attain personal freedom is to prepare ourselves for the initiation of the dead, to take death itself as our teacher. What the angel of death can teach us is how to be truly alive. We become aware that we can die at any moment; we have just the

present to be alive. The truth is that we don’t know if we are going to die tomorrow. Who knows? We have the idea that we have many years in the future. But do we?

If we go to the hospital and the doctor tells us that we have one week to live, what are we going to do? As we have said before, we have two choices. One is to suffer because we are going to die, and to tell everyone, “Poor me, I am going to die,” and really create a huge drama. The other choice is to use every moment to be happy, to do what we really enjoy doing. If we only have one week to live, let’s enjoy life. Let’s be alive. We can say, “I’m going to be myself. No longer am I going to run my life trying to please other people. No longer am I going to be afraid of what they think about me. What do I care what others think if I am going to die in one week? I’m going to be myself.”

The angel of death can teach us to live every day as if it is the last day of our lives, as if there may be no tomorrow. We can begin each day by saying, “I am awake, I see the sun. I am going to give my gratitude to the sun and to everything and everyone, because I am still alive. One more day to be myself.”

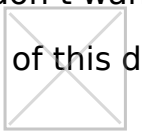
That is the way I see life, that is what the angel of death taught me — to be completely open, to know that there is nothing to be afraid of. And of course I treat the people I love with love because this may be the last day that I can tell you how much I love you. I don’t know if I am going to see you again, so I don’t want to fight with you.

What if I had a big fight with you and I told you all those emotional poisons that I have against you and you die tomorrow? Oops! Oh my God, the Judge will get me so bad, and I will feel so guilty for everything that I told you. I will even feel guilty for not telling you how much I love you. The love that makes me happy is the love that I can share with you. Why do I need to deny that I love you? It is not important if you love me back. I may die tomorrow or you may die tomorrow. What makes me happy now is to let you know how much I love you.

You can live your life this way. By doing so, you prepare yourself for the initiation of death. What is going to happen in the initiation of death is that the old dream that you

have in your mind is going to die forever. Yes, you are going to have memories of the parasite — of the Judge, the Victim, and what you used to believe — but the parasite will be dead.

That is what is going to die in the initiation of death — the parasite. It is not easy to go for the initiation of death because the Judge and the Victim will fight with everything they have. They don’t want to die. And we feel we are the ones who are going to die, and we are afraid of this death.



When we live in the dream of the planet, it is as if we are dead. Whoever survives the initiation of the dead receives the most wonderful gift: the resurrection. To receive the resurrection is to arise from the dead, to be alive, to be ourselves again. The resurrection is to be like a child — to be wild and free, but with a difference. The difference is that we have freedom with wisdom instead of innocence. We are able to break our domestication, become free again, and heal our mind. We surrender to the angel of death, knowing that the parasite will die and we will still be alive with a...

Heaven on Earth

Heaven on Earth

I WANT YOU TO FORGET EVERYTHING YOU HAVE learned in your whole life. This is the beginning of a new understanding, a new dream.

The dream you are living is your creation. It is your perception of reality that you can change at any time. You have the power to create hell, and you have the power to create heaven. Why not dream a different dream? Why not use your mind, your imagination, and your emotions to dream heaven?

Just use your imagination and a tremendous thing will happen. Imagine that you have the ability to see the world with different eyes, whenever you choose. Each time you open your eyes, you see the world around you in a different way.

Close your eyes now, and then open them and look outside. What you will see is love coming out of the trees, love coming out of the sky, love coming out of the light. You will perceive love from everything around you. This is the state of bliss. You perceive love directly from everything, including yourself and other humans. Even when humans are sad or angry, behind these feelings you can see that they are also sending love.

Using your imagination and your new eyes of perception, I want you to see yourself living a new life, a new dream, a life where you don’t need to justify your existence and you are free to be who you really are.

Imagine that you have permission to be happy and to really enjoy your life. Your life is free of conflict with yourself and with others. Imagine living your life without fear of expressing your dreams. You know what you want, what you don’t want, and when you want it. You are free to change your life the way you really want to. You are not afraid

to ask for what you need, to say yes or no to anything or anyone.

Imagine living your life without the fear of being judged by others. You no longer rule your behavior according to what others may think about you. You are no longer responsible for anyone's opinion. You have no need to control anyone, and no one controls you, either.

Imagine living your life without judging others. You can easily forgive others and let go of any judgments that you have. You don't have the need to be right, and you don't need to make anyone else wrong. You respect yourself and everyone else, and they respect you in return.

Imagine living without the fear of loving and not being loved. You are no longer afraid to be rejected, and you don't have the need to be accepted. You can say "I love you" with no shame or justification. You can walk in the world with your heart completely open, and not be afraid to be hurt.

Imagine living your life without being afraid to take a risk and to explore life. You are not afraid to lose anything. You are not afraid to be alive in the world, and you are not afraid to die.

Imagine that you love yourself just the way you are. You love your body just the way it is, and you love your emotions just the way they are. You know that you are perfect just as you are.

The reason I ask you to imagine these things is because they are all entirely possible! You can live in the state of grace, the state of bliss, the dream of heaven. But in order to experience this dream, you must first understand what it is.

Only love has the ability to put you in that state of bliss. Being in bliss is like being in love. Being in love is like being in bliss. You are floating in the clouds. You are perceiving love wherever you go. It is entirely possible to live this way all the time. It is possible because others have done it and they are no different from you. They live in bliss because they have changed their agreements and are dreaming a different

dream.

Once you feel what it means to live in a state of bliss, you will love it. You will know that heaven on earth is truth — that heaven truly exists. Once you know that heaven exists, once you know it is possible to stay there, it’s up to you to make the effort to do it. Two thousand years ago, Jesus told us about the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of love, but hardly anyone was ready to hear this. They said, “What are you talking about? My heart is empty, I don’t feel the love that you are talking about; I don’t feel the peace that you have.”

Prayers

Prayers are presented as a deep invitation to connect intimately with the divine, drawing attention to a heart-centered approach to experiencing love and communion with the Creator. The focus is on the breath, encouraging readers to become aware of this simple yet vital process. In doing so, the chapter highlights how something as fundamental as breathing can offer immense peace and joy. It serves as a reminder that the breath is a tool for mindfulness, grounding us in the present moment and offering a moment of reflection and gratitude for life itself. This approach shifts the focus from external distractions to the inner peace that is always available to us, if only we take the time to recognize it.

The Prayer for Freedom speaks directly to the need for liberation from the emotional constraints we often place upon ourselves and others. By calling on the Creator, or Love itself, the prayer seeks to open the heart to unconditional love for life, for oneself, and for all others. This prayer asks for freedom from self-judgment, which can poison our lives and cloud our interactions with others, fostering negativity and separation. It goes further to ask for a day filled with peace, love, and acceptance, a day in which we are not weighed down by the fears or limitations imposed by past wounds. The ultimate goal of the prayer is to express love freely without fear or hesitation, fully accepting who we are, without conditions. As the prayer concludes, gratitude for the freedom to be authentic and true to oneself emerges as a central theme, highlighting the immense joy and peace that comes from embracing our true nature.

The Prayer for Love introduces a vivid and symbolic vision where the narrator encounters an old man who exudes love and light in an almost magical way. The old man shares the story of receiving a sacred flame of love from his teacher, a transformative gift that purified his heart and soul, allowing him to radiate that love toward all living things. His ability to share this love unconditionally with nature,

animals, and humanity highlights the profound ripple effect of a single act of love passed through generations. In this story, the old man eventually passes this flame of love onto the narrator, signifying the perpetuation of this pure, selfless love that transcends boundaries. This act symbolizes the interconnectedness of all things, reminding the narrator—and the reader—that love is not just an emotion, but a force that connects everything in the universe. The prayer that follows is an expression of gratitude for life itself, for love, and for the unity of all creation, calling for peace and love to remain in the heart as a new way of living, one rooted in harmony, compassion, and the collective good.

The chapter then shifts to offer more resources by don Miguel Ruiz, including additional works that build upon the wisdom imparted in this chapter. Books such as *The Four Agreements*, *The Mastery of Love*, and *The Voice of Knowledge* offer deeper insights into the principles of living a life centered around love, self-awareness, and inner freedom. These works explore themes of personal growth, relationships, and spiritual wisdom, offering readers the tools they need to transform their lives in profound ways. By incorporating these teachings, readers are given the opportunity to take what they've learned in the chapter and apply it practically, gaining further clarity on how to live authentically and embrace a life of peace, love, and freedom.

Through the prayers and the accompanying narrative, the chapter emphasizes the profound power of love and the importance of connecting with the divine essence that exists both within and around us. The central message is clear: embracing love, in all its forms, is the key to unlocking a life of peace and fulfillment. It stresses that unconditional love—love without judgment, love without fear—is not only transformative for the individual but for all of creation. The narrative invites readers to explore how this deeper connection to love can change their relationships, their environment, and ultimately their view of themselves and the world. By focusing on cultivating love within and embracing it as a guiding force in everyday life, we are called to live with greater compassion, understanding, and unity. This chapter offers a transformative perspective on love, showing that by embodying it, we open the door to healing, peace, and a life filled with greater purpose. Through this deeper connection

with love, we can begin to see the world and ourselves in a new light, full of possibility and potential for growth.