

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz

Brief Summary

Sit at the foot of a native elder and listen as great wisdom of days long past is passed down. In *The Four Agreements* shamanic teacher and healer Don Miguel Ruiz exposes self-limiting beliefs and presents a simple yet effective code of personal conduct learned from his Toltec ancestors. Full of grace and simple truth, this handsomely designed book makes a lovely gift for anyone making an elementary change in life, and it reads in a voice that you would expect from an indigenous shaman. The four agreements are these: Be impeccable with your word. Don't take anything personally. Don't make assumptions. Always do your best. It's the how and why one should do these things that make *The Four Agreements* worth reading and remembering.

Biography of Author

Don Miguel Ruiz was born into a family of healers and raised in rural Mexico by a curandera (healer) mother and nagual (shaman) grandfather. The family anticipated don Miguel would embrace their centuries old legacy of healing and teaching and as a nagual, carry forward the esoteric Toltec knowledge. Instead, distracted by modern life, don Miguel chose to attend medical school and later teach and practice as a surgeon.

Don Miguel began teaching in the United States, with his mother, the Curandera, Sarita in 1987. He taught small groups of people in a small room in Logan Heights, CA. Working with Sarita, he first began with healing practices. As his knowledge of English grew, he realized that he preferred to share his lineage through oral tradition, rather than a healing tradition.

Don Miguel's students grew in numbers and his mythologies and guidance grew with them. He appeared in lectures in Santa Fe, NM, Los Angeles, CA, Sacramento, CA, Santa Rosa, CA and in many other locales. He began to share the wisdom that resulted in the creation of The Four Agreements®, when he witnessed his various students struggling to quiet their minds. don Miguel created a specific series of practical tools, that when used by anyone, can result in consistent and long-term personal transformation.

Discussion Question

1. What is the difference between a person's individual goal and the dreams of society, for example, society's goals or expectations of an individual? How can this create conflict?
2. What do you think of when you hear the term "domestication"? Are you domesticated?

- 3.** The author states that humans are the only organisms which perpetually condemn themselves for the same mistake. How do we do this and why?
- 4.** Why do people gossip? What does their willful engagement in gossip tell us about them?
- 5.** Why is it essential to first be truthful (truthful to yourself prior to being truthful to others)?
- 6.** Why does it take a strong will to practice the Four Agreements?
- 7.** What excuses do people often give for not doing their best at work? What are the social and personal consequences of such apathy?
- 8.** How would Ruiz address a person being obligated to take a job one doesn't like in order to pay the rent? How should the employee approach the position? Why?
- 9.** Adults typically use the alibi that they have "responsibilities" (unlike children) as the reason for regret of the past and worry about the future. Is this a valid excuse for not focusing upon the present moment? Why or why not?
- 10.** Ruiz announces, "The way you see the world will depend upon the emotions you are feeling." How does following the Four Agreements place one in a better psychological mindset? Explain this in terms of why a person in a good mood is more likely to issue a compliment whereas an individual in a foul mood is not.
- 11.** What does the author mean when he states that "Nothing other people do is because of you."