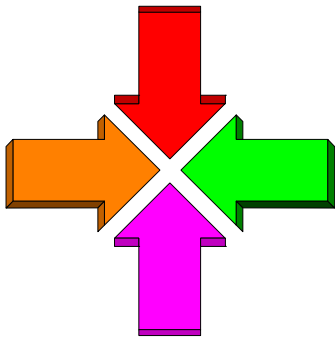


## Four Agreements



*This wonderful book by Miguel Ruiz is a must read for leaders. Here are the cliff notes.*

The **First Agreement** is the most important: “**Be impeccable with your word.**” According to Ruiz, your word, in both spoken and written forms, is pure magic. It is one of the most powerful tools you have. The word is not just a sound or symbol, but it is a power you have to express, communicate and to create events in your life. Ruiz says that “the human mind is like a fertile ground where seeds are continually being planted...You plant a seed, a thought, and it grows.” The question is: what kind of seeds are you planting? Do you ever plant seeds of criticism, negativity, and defensiveness? Do you ever gossip and say unkind things about others? When we do this, Ruiz says we create the worst kind of black magic. Instead, Ruiz urges us to use our word to show respect and spread truth, justice, and love because that act will foster these things for ourselves. He writes, “The magic of your word transforms you from a black magician into a white magician. A white magician uses the word for creation, giving, sharing, and loving.”

The **Second Agreement** is: “**Don’t take anything personally.**” When you take something personally, it is often because you are focused on yourself and you believe everything is about you. Ruiz writes, “We think we are responsible for everything. Me, me, me, always me!” Toltec wisdom tells us that nothing other people do is because of you. It is because of themselves. What others say and do to you says more about them than it does about you. If you can embrace the second agreement, you can become immune to black magicians. Just trust yourself and know that you have the choice to believe or not believe what someone says to you.

The **Third Agreement** is: “**Don’t make assumptions.**” Ruiz writes, “We have the tendency to make assumptions about everything. The problem with making assumptions is that we believe they are the truth.” We start gossiping about our assumptions. We assume that others think the way we think, feel the way we feel, judge the way we judge. The way to keep from making assumptions is to ask questions – to learn the truth through communication. Breaking free from assumptions and pursuing the truth moves one along the path to personal freedom.

The **Fourth Agreement** is: “**Always do your best.**” Ruiz tells us, “keep in mind that your best is never going to be the same from one moment to the next.” Your best will sometimes be high quality and other times not as good. Your best depends on your health, your mood, your energy level and more. Just recognize that doing less than your best will not be fulfilling, and trying to do more than your best can exhaust you and ultimately bring you harm. Both of these options will prove unhealthy. Doing your best is taking an action because you love it, not because you expect a reward. If you take an action just because you love it and without expecting a reward, you will find you enjoy every action you do. And you will always be able to say, “I did my best.”