

Empowerment

Chapter 6 (of 10)—Personal Freedom

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On the drive over to Myron's house I was tempted to pull out my cell phone and cancel our meeting due to the foul mood I was in, but that little voice inside kept nudging me to keep my appointment. I find it funny how difficult I can be at times. I swear, I fought myself all the way up the brick walkway to Myron's front porch until I finally called it a truce and knocked, once again, at precisely 8 AM. The door opened and Myron greeted me with a big friendly smile.

"Good morning Robert, how are you doing today?" and gestured for me to come in.

As I walked past him and into the living room I replied, "Well not so hot." We took our seats as I relayed to him the circumstances over the last couple of days. Myron poured the tea with a wry smile on his face and I wondered what the little elf was up to.

"Robert, one of the subjects I wanted to cover with you today is the works of Don Miguel Ruiz entitled the *Four Agreements*. Based upon what you just shared with me, it would appear that my timing is excellent."

I took my cup and settled back, prepared to hear some new pearls of wisdom I had become so used to experiencing. Myron also settled back in his chair and continued, "Don Miguel Ruiz comes from a long line of Toltec healers and teachers. Although his family anticipated that he would continue on with the family's centuries-old legacy, Don Miguel followed a different path and went to medical school and became a surgeon. After a near-death car accident, Don Miguel switched gears and now devotes his life to sharing the Toltec wisdom. In the interest of teaching mankind a path to personal freedom and not being controlled by your environment, he wrote his first book, *The Four Agreements*." Although I am

only going to discuss the highlights, I highly recommend that you get the book and study it in depth."

From the table next to him he picked up the book and held it up to show me, then opened it. "The first Agreement is BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD." He looked up from the book and said, "... Which means to speak with integrity. This sounds somewhat simple, but it is actually very, very powerful. Depending on how you use it, your words can change lives for the better which is demonstrated by people like Lao Tzu, Socrates and Jesus or they can destroy lives which is demonstrated by Hitler, Stalin and Saddam Hussein. If you do what you say, you can create a heaven on earth. If you spend your time gossiping or not being true to your word, you render your speech weak and powerless." He took a sip of tea and looked closely at me. "Is this making any sense?"

"Yes, I replied. "I get it. If we don't have our word we don't have much at all."

"Good!" Myron smiled and returned to the book. "The second Agreement is DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY." He stops to think for a moment, looks at me and says, "The reality is that whatever someone says or does to you, it has nothing to do with you and everything to do with them. When you become immune to the opinion of others, you become very powerful and enjoy a level of independence enjoyed by few. Just look back on your life and see how often your words and actions were based upon how others would perceive them. Now think how your life would be if you had the freedom to act independently and didn't take anything personally, would that improve your life?"

That was a powerful question and I had to stop and think about my answer. "Every time I was ever involved in a confrontation whether

it was verbal or otherwise, was a result of my reacting to what the other person said or did.”

“Excellent, that’s getting it!” He again read from the book, “The third Agreement is DON’T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS.” He slowly put down the book and looked at me. “Most people spend their entire lives making assumptions of what others say and do based upon their personal view of the world, not how the world really is. So the vast majority of what we believe to be true is false. By asking clarifying questions and not making assumptions, you can get to the actual truth as opposed to your *version* of it. With this one agreement, you can completely transform your life. Are you ready to give it a try?”

“I believe so.” I reconsidered my words, “Yes, I’m ready.”

Myron nodded affirmatively then went back to the book. “The fourth and last Agreement is ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.” He smiled, closed the book and looked at me once more. “By following this Agreement you will experience life with a positive intensity which will produce a high self esteem level and a lot of self fulfillment. By doing your best, which will vary, depending upon how you feel, you will be highly productive while at the same time being good to yourself. The main idea behind doing your best is that your actions are motivated by self love and respect—not for some reward at the end. Actions based upon rewards are hollow and not truly enjoyed.”

He placed the book back on the table and picked up his tea and sipped. “What do you think of the Four Agreements?”

“I love them. If I would have incorporated them into my life prior to yesterday, the outcome of my day would have been entirely different. Up until now, I never even considered the concept of personal freedom and the tremendous impact it would have for me and every person in my life.”

“Well Robert, today is your lucky day. In addition to the *Four Agreements*, I’m going

to show you an exercise which will give you even more personal freedom.”

“What have I done to deserve all this?” I said jovially.

“Like I said, ‘when the student is ready the teacher or teaching will appear.’ Now I want you to un-button your top button, un-tuck your shirt, loosen your belt a notch or two and lie down on the floor.”

“Are you kidding me?”

“Do I look like I’m kidding, let’s go.”

I followed Myron’s instructions feeling a little bit out of my comfort zone but then, I had to admit, my entire relationship with him has been about getting me out of my comfort zone. I proceeded to lie down on the floor.

“OK, now put this glass of water beside you and I’ll give you little background on Transformational Breathing or TB, which was co-created by Dr. Judith Kravitz. TB is a unique form of breath work that facilitates the natural healing process for all types of trauma and is beneficial in gaining greater physical, mental and spiritual health. It has a number of associated benefits including:

- Higher energy level;
- Reduces worry and anxiety;
- Enhances the awareness of self-sabotaging pattern;
- Clears past traumas and dramas;
- Relieves depressive and negative emotions;
- Improves self-esteem.

In addition to all of this, I do it every day and can personally vouch for the many benefits it has to offer.”

“Wow, that’s pretty impressive. Is it painful?”

“Well,” Myron said with a chuckle, “When I first started doing it I was a little con-

cerned about maintaining my pace for forty five minutes.”

“Forty five minutes, are you kidding me?”

“No, and the beauty is, Dr. Kravitz will guide you through the entire process. So let’s get started.”

Myron handed me a pillow for my head and one for my knees and then a set of head phones and turned on his CD player. As the music played and I breathed, Myron coached me on breathing deeper and deeper. Forty five minutes later, I was about as calm as I have ever been while at the same time feeling rejuvenated. What was weird was it didn’t feel as if I was doing it for forty-five minutes. It felt more like fifteen or twenty. And, I felt myself actually looking forward to doing it again.

When I opened my eyes, Myron was peering down at me with that big smile,

“How’d it go, are you gonna live?”

“Wow that was really something.”

“Are you up for doing it again sometime?”

“Absolutely!”

“OK,” He then slipped a piece of paper in my hand with the TB website scribbled on it. “You better gather up your things and I’ll see you next week.”

Still reeling from my Transformational Breathing experience and feeling more relaxed than I can imagine, I waived a faint good bye as I made my way out the door.