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Sarita Vasquez, don Miguel's mother, is a very powerful faith healer. Sarita teaches that any miracle, large or small, takes place by the simple act of faith to believe that it can. Sarita continues, as she has for more than seven decades, to achieve healings thought beyond the realm of traditional medicine. Sarita learned the ancient ancestral wisdom that she uses today in her healing from her grandfather, don Esiquio. Sarita passed this wisdom on to her youngest son Miguel, knowing that don Miguel would do a great service to the world by sharing the wisdom that teaches the value of living a life of love and happiness.

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.

The tools shared by don Miguel are based on common sense and shared with
such simplicity, that the universal message underlying his teaching is recognized by many. Don Miguel's message is simple, practical and when implemented, even incrementally, changes lives.

In the tradition of the Toltec, a Nagual guides an individual to personal freedom. Combining new insights with old wisdom, don Miguel has dedicated his life to sharing the ancient Toltec wisdom by translating it into practical concepts that promote transformation through truth and common sense.

In February of 2002, don Miguel survived a near-fatal heart attack. The impact of the heart attack on his physical body prevents him from returning to wide-spread public speaking and lecturing. He intends to complete several, limited appearances, each year.

When he knew that he could not return to public touring, don Miguel turned to his son, don Jose Luis, and witnessed the passage of a young man into the new Nagual in the Eagle-Knight lineage; Don Jose Luis.

Don Jose Luis Ruiz was born in Mexico City, Mexico and was raised in Tijuana, Mexico. When he was 21 he came to live in the U.S. with his father, don Miguel Ruiz. From a very young age don Jose Luis was guided by many teachers present in his life including, his mother and father, his grandmother Sarita, and several other Naguals.

Through masterful guidance by his teachers and amazing life experiences with precision synchronicity, Jose came to 'silent knowledge'; he witnessed the world as it is, without any story. In his early twenties, don Jose Luis lost his eyesight. In his process of surrendering, he learned the value of learning to listen; to listen to his inner wisdom and integrity and to see different perspectives, while knowing nothing is personal. He had a renewed love and gratitude for life ~ and he found acceptance, happiness and abundance; he found bliss. He grasped a true understanding of faith, love, gratitude and humility. Through his surrender and faith, in concert with modern medicine Jose recovered his eyesight.

Like his father, combining new insights with ancient wisdom, don Jose Luis Ruiz is dedicating his life to sharing the ancient Toltec wisdom by translating it into practical, everyday life concepts that promote transformation through truth, love and common sense.
Don Jose Luis teaches and lectures across the United States and around the world: Power Journeys to the pyramids of Teotihuacan, Palenque, Tulum and Coba; workshops with guest don Miguel or other teachers at Omega NY, Austin, Costa Rica; Darshans; Mirror Mitotes & Meditations. Don Jose Luis is currently writing his first book to be released in early 2006.

As don Miguel Ruiz approaches retirement, he passes this lineage of wisdom to his son Don Jose Luis. Join Don Jose as he follows in his father's footsteps and carries on the family lineage to a new generation of people searching for their reunion with peace.

Join this special family in a great and powerful adventure that is guaranteed to change your life!

http://www.miguelruiz.com/teachings/ruizlineage.html
Practical Shamanism:
an interview with don Miguel Ruiz
by Tasha K. Taylor

Don Miguel Ruiz not only teaches the mastery of love, but he embodies love. The first time I met him, he gave me an unsolicited hug. Not really sure what to do at the time, I returned his hug, and found myself overwhelmed with the most amazing feeling of love. In his quiet way, he truly allowed me to feel what unconditional love was like.

Ruiz, the author of *The Four Agreements* (1997), *The Mastery of Love* (1999), and *The Four Agreements Companion Book* (2000), has gained international attention for his practical approach to Toltec shamanism. He presents this philosophy in a very simple style, giving his readers easily understood tools they can immediately utilize to transform their lives. Don Miguel has fully integrated the age-old traditions of his ancestors into the modern-day world, and he has demystified Toltec shamanism by developing tools that anyone can follow to become a spiritual warrior.

Born into a family of healers, don Miguel was raised in rural Mexico by a *curandera* (healer) mother and a *nagual* (shaman) grandfather. The family anticipated that Miguel would embrace their centuries-old legacy of healing and teaching, but instead he chose to attend medical school and become a surgeon. A car accident and near-death experience in the early 1970s changed his life, and he began an intensive practice of self-inquiry. He devoted himself to the mastery of the ancient ancestral wisdom. Since that time, don Miguel Ruiz has dedicated his life to sharing his knowledge of the teachings of the ancient Toltec people.

*Tasha: What do you see as the cause of personal distress in our lives today?*

Don Miguel: There is only one reason we suffer, and when we understand this it is easy to understand all our problems. The reason we suffer is because we believe lies.

The millions of lies that we believe cause us to suffer and keep us from living in our integrity. One big lie people believe is "I'm not good enough." People tell themselves, "I am ugly, nobody loves me, nobody likes me, I am stupid." Think about the lies you tell yourself and ask, "Does this make me happy, or does it
make me suffer?" There is only one way to change this situation, and it is to stop believing in lies. So simple, but so difficult.

Because it is difficult to stop believing our own lies, which we have told ourselves for so long, I created the four agreements: Be impeccable with your word. Don't take anything personally. Don't make assumptions. Always do your best. These four agreements can help you to break apart your lies.

If you use these four agreements daily, your whole life will change. You will start to see your lies, so you can change them.

**Tasha: Is there any way that people can use the four agreements against themselves, as another lie?**

Don Miguel: Everybody can use any concept for manipulation. They can use loyalty for manipulation, also honesty and love. So of course they can use "don't take anything personally" in a manipulative way as well.

Depending on what point of view they are using, people can use the agreements against themselves, as another lie. "Don't take anything personally" does not mean "Do not take responsibility for your actions."

By not taking anything personally, you keep your clarity, and you can choose how to react. But as soon as you take something personally, you get emotional, and then it is more difficult to see the problem clearly and to see the solution. By not taking anything personally, we retain our clarity to make an active choice.

**Tasha: How do you recommend that individuals work with the four agreements in their daily lives?**

Don Miguel: They can use the four agreements by actively applying them to every decision and action, at work, with friends, and in relationship. If you continue to apply these agreements to all parts of your life, you will see how your lies used to run your life.

**Tasha: How can your teaching and practices assist individuals in overcoming their personal relationship issues?**

Don Miguel: People in relationships have to be honest with themselves. They need to be aware of where the relationship is, and if they really want that relationship or not.

Whether they really love that person or not, they have to be aware of up to what point they allow themselves to be abused. They need to be aware of what kind of agreements they have in relationship, and then they have to improve their communication. Communication creates new agreements, so you reinforce the agreements that are working and you break the ones that are not working.
Through forgiveness and respect, we have to allow each other to deal with whatever wounds we have in our minds. With respect, we don't need to control the other person or make them a certain way. We love them exactly for who they are.

They are responsible for their half of the relationship, and we are responsible for our half. We become a team, which means we play together, and not against each other. For a relationship to succeed, each person must open themselves to give and receive one hundred percent and to be loved one hundred percent.

Tasha: How do we learn to truly let love into our lives?

Don Miguel: You need to accept yourself just the way you are. You need to improve the personal relationship with you yourself. You need to learn to like yourself, and them to love yourself. At that point it is easy to love everyone else and to love yourself unconditionally. To do this, start by saying yes when you want to say yes, and say no when want to say no.

Learn to be yourself: don't believe your lies; don't take them personally. Trust what you want, and remember that you have the right to change your choices at any time you want to. You can change your mind to change your beliefs.

Tasha: What is the primary philosophy behind Toltec shamanism?

Don Miguel: Toltecs are artists of the spirit, dream masters. By becoming aware of their lies, they create a new dream, exactly as they want it. By removing their faith from the lies and agreements that make them suffer, Toltecs put their faith into creation and life, into respect and unconditional love, into seeing with the eyes of love instead of the eyes of fear or jealousy or doubt.

Tasha: What practical advice can you give a person who wants to begin the path to healing by becoming a Toltec shaman?

Don Miguel: It is all about action and awareness, and uncovering the truth of who you are. It is easier if you have people around you who also are working with the four agreements. Create a community of people dedicated to their freedom by sharing the four agreements with the people you love, the people at work, your family. Then you can support each other in creating a new dream, one based in love.

Tasha Taylor is a freelance writer who works at the University of Washington.

http://www.newtimes.org/issue/0107/ruiz.htm
RULES TO LIVE BY

Are you happy? Best-selling author Don Miguel Ruiz says finding true joy starts with making these four promises to yourself.

1. Be Impeccable With Your Word

Your words have power--with them, you can shape how you see yourself and even how others see themselves. Choose your words carefully; always use them to help, not to cause harm.

Try this: When you look in the mirror every day, what do you say to yourself? Go look in the mirror right now and make a list of three things that come to mind. ( )

Now review the list. Are your thoughts about yourself respectful and loving, or do they sound more like insults or gossip? If they’re negative, try again. This time, treat yourself as you would a child or a best friend. Use the power of your words to polish your self-image, not tear it to shreds. The same goes for when you're speaking to others (especially those you love): Avoid carelessly using the power of your words to tear them down as well.

2. Don't Take Anything Personally

Only one person knows the real you--you! So don't let others define you by taking what they say to heart. Your voice is the only one that really counts.

Try this: Use this exercise to help you stop judging yourself by how others see you. First, write five positive things about yourself that you know are true (like, you're a great actor, mathematician, whatever). ( )

Say you wrote down "great actor," but you recently lost out on the leading role in the school play to another girl. Just because someone rejected you for this role doesn't mean you can't be the next Julia Roberts! It was just one person's opinion that you didn't deserve the lead--and another person (like you!) might have made a different decision. So instead of taking it personally, figure out how you can get that leading role next time and don't give up if that's your dream. The only opinion about yourself that really counts is your own. If you believe you're a star, then you are!

3. Don't Make Assumptions

Too often, we jump to conclusions. We hear one thing and then assume a bunch of other things. But assumptions lead to misunderstandings and unhappiness. Asking questions will lead to the truth.
Try this: You know that voice in your head that is always talking to you? Think of it as a wild horse that can take you anywhere. If you let it, that horse can stir up fear. It can make you think someone hates you (even if they actually like you). You need to rein it in. The next time you are having a serious talk with someone, pay attention to your thoughts. What are they saying? Do you have all the info you need to draw the conclusions you are drawing? If not, ask the person you're speaking to if your conclusions are correct. Be brave and ask questions until you are certain you have the truth. You will avoid assumptions that lead to misunderstandings and build better relationships with the important people in your life.

4. Always Do Your Best

Do your best, and you'll never feel guilt or regret. You'll know that you gave 100 percent--and reach amazing heights.

Try this: Feel like you could be doing better in math or on the basketball court? Ask yourself, Am I doing my best? Even if your answer is yes, think about it: Is there anything you could do to get better results? List three things you can start today. ( )

When you do everything in your power to do your best, you will always feel joy and self-satisfaction, because you will never let down the most important person of all--you.

ILLUSTRATION (COLOR)

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By Don Miguel Ruiz

Don Miguel Ruiz is the author of The Four Agreements (Amber-Allen Publishing).

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