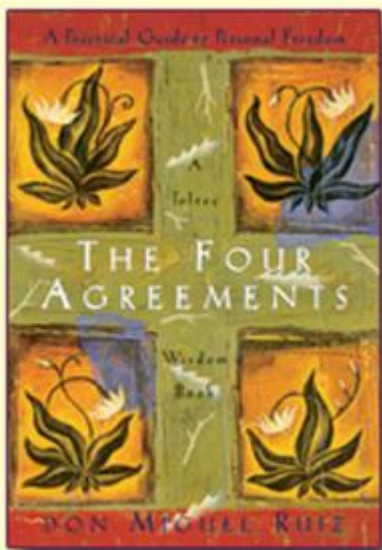


The power of words

There is a trend in our culture and perhaps in our world that involves people being reckless with their words. It's a personal peeve of mine because I (try to) live by a principle that I learned many years ago, that my words should be IMPECCABLE. When my kids were young, I drilled the phrase into their heads, BE YOUR WORD! Now, I assure you my kids could be the first to tell you I have failed with my words at times. Nonetheless, it is something I believe in. I gained this philosophy in part, from a book that I LOVE called The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz. It is a book based on Toltec wisdom which I think we could all learn from. If you're a coaching client of mine, you've probably read it because it's a must for my clients. My favorite agreement is the first one about our words.....but ALL of the agreements are life changing when put to use. I wish it were a National requirement for everyone to read this book every 2 years!



The Four Agreements are:

1. **Be Impeccable With Your Word**

Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

2. **Don't Take Anything Personally**

Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

3. **Don't Make Assumptions**

Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

4. **Always Do Your Best**

Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret.

I get hundreds of emails a week and my take is that many people just do and say whatever pops into their heads without regard for the person or persons they're targeting with their message. A great example of that is our political race. I get so much garbage mail slamming candidates. I was bombarded after the Vice Presidential debate for 2 days. The senders didn't care what my personal position or views are because they simply seek to be vocal about their own distaste of the opposing party. As for politics, why would I slam a candidate that I don't even know when both candidates sling mud and few seldom deliver their promises once in office anyway? I get to vote my conscience and you get to vote yours why so much noise about it? In fact, much of what I get in emails I have to run through sites like Snopes to even see if it's true. There seem

to be few people who even care if they are communicating lies or truth. It's just about the freedom to hit "send".

Here are some other examples that stand out where I've experienced the abuse of words:

- The Media every day.
- I take a particular interest, and have done a great deal of research on the topic of "bullying" in our public school system. It's a great example of the devastation words can bring.
- When my brother passed away, I actually received condolences from a few people because they knew my grief must be compounded by knowing my brother was in Hell as a result of his committing suicide.
- Political candidates are constantly slamming one another and you can't get a straight answer from any of them. Then "we" as a society, parrot their propaganda.
- In our churches, we hear sermons that are often not at all reflective of the Greatest Commandment, which was to love. Far too much judgment.

Here's another example: The Dixie Chicks. Do you remember the crazy mess that resulted when they spoke carelessly about the President in an inappropriate setting? Equally wrong was the dramatic outrage from the public that even included death threats. What is wrong with the world? Don't misunderstand me, I like the Dixie Chicks but all parties in that drama were wrong because no one was impeccable with their words. What a waste of time and energy? What an emotional drain on all of us to have to hear about it day after day and song after song!

In the book of James the Bible talks about how we can actually *murder* with our words. If you've ever seen or experienced, the effects of emotional or verbal abuse, you know what I mean. It may perhaps be more damaging than a fist. It's tragic really but very true and often right in our own homes! I would speculate that as a society, we are seldom impeccable in the way we speak to our spouses or our children and it is reflected by the state of our homes, schools and Country.

So why has our society made it so easy for people to sound off opinions without responsibility? Is it really our First Amendment Right to be offensive and uneducated? This may be a better question; why have *we* made it acceptable for our own FRIENDS and acquaintances to barrage us daily in our inboxes and yet we seldom speak up and object? Why don't we demand that only impeccable information be sent to us rather than allow someone to conduct a one-sided debate on their personal views in a forum that doesn't bring about change anyway? WHY? What's the purpose in all the rhetoric?

Well, you may not want to hear my honest thoughts but you are on my site.....and *this is* an appropriate forum for me to share my *thought-out* position on this subject. Here it is: I think people who fly off without regard for facts or the views of the others are just being plain stupid.

Ok, maybe *they're* not "stupid" (always) but they are certainly reckless with words. Why would intelligent, sensitive people hurl, potentially offensive opinions, whether in an email or in person, to people that they care about or regard as friends? What are we trying to prove? Why so much drama?

I believe that what we SPEAK into the world, says something about who *we* are. When we take our negative thoughts or opinions and release them into the atmosphere, we are only damaging ourselves. Do you believe that we can make a positive change in the world by using negative words and responses? What do your words say about you?

If the media misstates something, we're all over them. If our politicians make biased comments or say a single word out of line, they can be sacrificed on the altar of the public conscience. If our churches judge a person or a group, we get all up in arms about it. We hold our leaders to a standard of perfection and then *we* do or say whatever we want to in any method we want without regard to truth or feelings of others. It isn't about what you believe in, it's about being impeccable.....in my opinion. It drives me crazy to see good people contribute to the overwhelmingly negative vibe that encapsulates the world we live in?

Here is my disclaimer: For the record, I'm not talking about jokes or even opinions given appropriately with consideration of the other person. AND NO, I do NOT think that any of us should be pushovers with no opinions of our own! What I do believe is that if we only add to the noise and rhetoric of our society, what have we accomplished? Don't let someone *else* cause you to use your power and words in wrong way because when you do.....they win through *your* loss of credibility. There are good ways to take a stand but not until you are fully armed with truth and love. AND BY THE WAY: There is power in silence too. If you believe in the example modeled by Jesus when he walked the earth, then you will appreciate as I do, the example he left behind on this very subject! If you believe that Jesus was God then you believe He could have put a halt to all the injury He suffered. Yet, He was put on trial and spoke not one single word in His own defense. If you've known me long, you've heard me say "Jesus didn't talk to STUPID". Well you know what, neither should we!

If I haven't ticked you off by now, I have a challenge for you. My challenge is that you read The Four Agreements and if you're a Christian, you might also read the Book of James. While you're in the Bible take some time to research the capabilities of Satan. We're told in the Bible that he is unable to read our minds. So where does he get the ammunition to harm us or challenge us in our weakest areas? I believe he gets it from us and our own negative words. Will you take a stand? Will you take a look at your own conduct when you get revved up about something? Will you consider whether your negative words or comments will have a positive result before you speak them? Will you find a way to share your views in ways that reflects your own character? It isn't about being perfect and always getting it right, it is just about thinking first. Is your theme love and if so, do your words reflect that?

Are your words IMPECCABLE?