



Practice the 4 Agreements of Council

Agreement 1: Practice being Impeccable With Your Word

While this agreement is the most important, it is the most difficult one to honour. For this agreement we analyse the word "impeccable". The word impeccable comes from the Latin word peccatus meaning "sin", and the "im" in the beginning of impeccable is the Latin prefix that means "without". In this context we describe a sin to be anything that goes against oneself, and therefore being impeccable with language means to take responsibility for one's actions and remain without judgement against oneself (and others). In essence, this agreement focuses on the significance of speaking with integrity and carefully choosing words before saying them aloud.

Agreement 2: Practice not Taking Anything Personally

The second agreement is a profound way to deal with hurtful treatment from others that you may experience in life. It advocates the importance of having a strong sense of self and not needing to rely on the opinions of others in order to be content and satisfied with your self-image. This agreement also allows readers to understand the notion that each individual has a unique worldview that alters their own perceptions, and that the actions and beliefs of a person is a projection of their own personal reality. It is possible that anger, jealousy, envy, and even sadness can lessen or dissipate once an individual stops taking things personally.

Agreement 3: Practice not Making Assumptions

The third agreement describes the issue of making assumptions, how it leads to suffering, and why individuals should practice not partaking in making them. When one assumes what others are thinking, it can create stress and interpersonal conflict because the person believes their assumption is the truth, instead of a representation of the truth. A solution to overcoming the act of making an assumption is to ask questions and ensure that the communication is clear between the persons involved. Individuals can avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama by not making assumptions.

Agreement 4: Practice always Doing Your Best

The fourth agreement affords you better insight on achieving progress towards your goals in life. This agreement entails integrating the first three agreements into daily life and also living to one's full potential. It involves doing the best that one can individually manage, which varies from the different situations and circumstances that you may encounter. If you avoid self-judgement and do your best in every given moment, you will be able to avoid regret. By incorporating the first three agreements and doing your best in regard the first three agreements in all facets of life, you will be able to live a life free from sorrow and self-ridicule.

Practice the 7 Protocols of Council

1) **Always practice speaking from the first person.** Speak from the “I”. Avoid using words that deflect away from your power of speech - like “you” and “we” when you are actually talking about yourself – your own story.

2) **Practice speaking from the heart.** Do not think about what it is you want to say. Thoughts are a collection of ideas, opinions, theories. They can be challenged and can be challenging to harmonious and effective communication. Thoughts are further from the truth than your personal experience and how you feel. Open your heart and speak your heart’s truth.

3) **Practice listening from the heart.** When you do, you will have a greater opportunity to truly understand what the other is trying to say from her/his heart. Listening from the heart suspends all judgment and critique. A listening heart is not defensive and protected but is open and receptive.

4) **Practice being brief.** When the heart speaks the message is always concise and to the point. There is no need for justifications or explanations to help others understand. The heart’s language is its own truthful speech. Trust that all who are listening from their heart will completely understand. Being brief also allows everybody the opportunity to speak in the limited time available.

5) **Practice that only the person with the talking piece speaks.** All others are listening. The one with the talking piece has the power and opportunity to communicate their heart’s truth unhindered by the distractions or influence of others in the circle. Anyone who does not have the talking piece becomes a listener of the heart. This applies both to verbal and non-verbal communication. The speaker can use verbal and non-verbal communication to communicate what their heart wants to say. All others are still, quiet, present and receptive.

6) **Practice that the truth is always in the center.** Everyone gathered in the circle has their very own unique perspective which is limited to their particular vantage point. When everyone has shared their perspective, they have contributed their vantage point to the whole – a full collection of many perspectives. This collection brings us closer to a collective or universally shared truth. The Truth is in the center of you when you are having a conversation with yourself. It is in the center between you and a friend when having a conversation together, or it is in the center of the talking circle.

7) **Practice the protocol that what is said in Council stays in Council.** Council depends on safety and the freedom to speak one’s own truthful story free from judgment or defensiveness. Speaking in Council occurs in the presence of each other, and with the presence of each other. The heart is always present in council. We protect the sacredness of this truthful communication art form by not speaking after the conclusion of Council about what occurred in Council.