

"the four agreements" by don miguel ruiz essay sample

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Mystic Don Miguel Ruiz (1997) brings his reader into another dimension as he explores the profound and unfathomable terrain of freedom and happiness. In a world wherein pain and suffering are inevitable, Don Miguez Ruiz (1997) comes up with a " survival kit" geared to honing the warrior in every individual and let him eventually emerge as the victorious and triumphant survivor amidst the roughest seas and deep-seated problems. The Four Agreements, which is carefully explored by Ruiz, serves as potent tools and defense against the seemingly cruel and harsh world.

Ruiz (1997) begins to enlighten his readers by elucidating that many individuals are covered with the so-called " mitote" wherein there is a Judge and a Victim which punishes an individual (Ruiz, 1997). More often than not, human beings create their own Judge and Victim (Ruiz, 1997). Thus, they tend to judge and punish themselves. The mitote can be also understood as an illusion that has prevented people from pursuing their own happiness and contentment (Ruiz, 1997). This illusion is further reinforced by the domestication of the planet. Domestication, in this sense, pertains to the norms and conventions that have programmed mankind on how they should react and confront the different situations that they encounter (Ruiz, 1997). These norms and conventions are the " worldly agreements" that man and his community has formed. These agreements, in return, become man's belief system and just like in every communal setting breaking " conduct codes" result to certain sanctions. Mostly of these sanctions would include being stereotyped and an outcast. However, the more those individuals adhere to these notions, subliminally; they create fears and hesitations, thus, prohibiting them from expressing their true self.

However, armed with the four agreements, an individual can eventually break free from the illusion that has chained him or her for the longest time. A religious observance of these agreements promises fulfillment, and to a certain extent—immunity from pain and suffering. The first agreement dabbles on being impeccable in one's word. Words are considered as powerful tools that can either send poison or blessing to one's soul. On the other hand, the second agreement stresses that one should not immediately take things personally (Ruiz, 1997). The comments and criticisms that an individual received should not be dismissed as something against him or her. These comments are based on how other people perceive the world and these are reflected through the opinions that they give or (impose) to other human beings. However, if these views are taken personally, the concerned individual will be subject to more suffering since they place more importance to what other people say about them. The third agreement emphasizes the need for asking questions instead of making assumptions (Ruiz, 1997). Assumptions are often the cause of misunderstandings and further division in relationships. The last agreement, places heavy importance on giving the best in everything, not for the sake of being better from someone else. Rather it is more of the act of putting a hundred percent in every situation that an individual encounters (Ruiz, 1997).

At a first glance, it seems that the ideals and concepts presented by Don Miguel Ruiz are a little bit problematic. Somehow, the Four Agreements tend to devoid the individual the chance of being human in the sense that it literally debunks the usual approaches to how a person resolves or confronts

the problem that besets him or her. The book seems to argue that the common means and ways on how a human being responds on the certain situations or incidents simply create more suffering and misery. Take for example the case wherein Ruiz maintains that man should not make assumptions. Instead, he must resort to asking questions before drawing to a certain conclusion. Ruiz further contends that via making assumptions, the individual create negative energy and harvest ill feelings.

While this may seem to be plausible at a certain extent, it can be seen that such notion tend to prohibit a person from being critical to the scenarios that lay before him or her. Assumptions are formed because each and every human being thinks and is highly capable of " reading between the lines." In addition to that, human beings are not robots. One thing that separate individuals from machines is that the former is capable of feeling. Humans have emotions that it is quite impossible for one not to take things personally. By not taking things personally, or the excessive practice of it makes an individual prone to being " numb" or " insensitive" and the ability to decipher " context clues" are taken out of the picture.

To a certain extent, the Four Agreements seem to be difficult to follow and observe. When human nature is put into the test, indeed the matter becomes complex. But then again, on a critical perspective, the Four Agreements becomes complicated and problematic simply because it is the question of reforming one's habits. This is exactly the main essence and importance of the Four Agreements—to change the habits that have generated too much ill feelings and bitter emotions. More often than not,

habits cannot be easily subject to change. This is most especially true if such has been practiced and observed for the longest span of time. The habits, or agreements, as Don Miguel Ruiz, pertains to it, are activities that suits the individual's comfort zone. Going against the comfort zone entails a whole lot of adjustments. But take note that the adjustments involved in the Four Agreements are not just adjustments in action. The most difficult part of it is adjusting one's orientation and perspective and this matter cannot be easily accomplished over night. Furthermore, the mere thought of " adjustment" per se tends to create fear among many individuals. There is an innate need for mankind to achieve a sense of belongingness or togetherness. Man cannot live alone and he has the strong need to be accepted. Basically, this is the reason behind the Four Agreements' seemingly complicated nature.

But then again, the Four Agreements, in general are really simple rules. It becomes difficult mainly because, a huge portion of humanity still refuses to break the habits or the agreements that they have formed within themselves. Many are still hesitant to crawl out of their " comfort zones," which in reality, is a mitote—an illusion.

References

Ruiz, D. (1997). *The Four Agreements* . Berkeley, California: Publishers Group West