

Always Do Your Best

You are being provided with a book chapter by chapter. I will request you to read the book for me after each chapter. After reading the chapter, 1. shorten the chapter to no less than 300 words and no more than 400 words. 2. Do not change the name, address, or any important nouns in the chapter. 3. Do not translate the original language. 4. Keep the same style as the original chapter, keep it consistent throughout the chapter. Your reply must comply with all four requirements, or it's invalid. I will provide the chapter now.

5 THE FOURTH AGREEMENT

Always Do Your Best

THERE IS JUST ONE MORE AGREEMENT, BUT IT'S THE one that allows the other three to become deeply ingrained habits. The fourth agreement is about the action of the first three: Always do your best. Under any circumstance, always do your best, no more and no less. But keep in mind that your best is never going to be the same from one moment to the next. Everything is alive and changing all the time, so your best will sometimes be high quality, and other times it will not be as good. When you wake up refreshed and energized in the morning, your best will be better than when you are tired at night. Your best will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick, or sober as opposed to drunk. Your best will depend on whether you are feeling wonderful and happy, or upset, angry, or jealous. In your everyday moods your best can change from one moment to another, from one hour to the next, from one day to another. Your best will also change over time. As you build the habit of the four new agreements, your best will become better than it used to be. Regardless of the quality, keep doing your best — no more and no less than your best. If you try too hard to do more than your best, you will spend more energy than is needed and in the end your best will not be enough. When you overdo, you deplete your body and go against yourself, and it will take you longer to accomplish your goal. But if you do less than your best, you subject yourself to frustrations, self-judgment, guilt, and regrets.

Just do your best — in any circumstance in your life. It doesn't matter if you are sick or tired, if you always do your best there is no way you can judge yourself. And if you don't judge yourself there is no way you are going to suffer from guilt, blame, and self-punishment. By always doing your best, you will break a big spell that you have been under.

There was a man who wanted to transcend his suffering so he went to a Buddhist temple to find a Master to help him. He went to the Master and asked, "Master, if I meditate four hours a day, how long will it take me to transcend?"

The Master looked at him and said, "If you meditate four hours a day, perhaps you will transcend in ten years."

Thinking he could do better, the man then said, “Oh, Master, what if I meditated eight hours a day, how long will it take me to transcend?”

The Master looked at him and said, “If you meditate eight hours a day, perhaps you will transcend in twenty years.”

“But why will it take me longer if I meditate more?” the man asked.

The Master replied, “You are not here to sacrifice your joy or your life. You are here to live, to be happy, and to love. If you can do your best in two hours of meditation, but you spend eight hours instead, you will only grow tired, miss the point, and you won’t enjoy your life. Do your best, and perhaps you will learn that no matter how long you meditate, you can live, love, and be happy.”

Doing your best, you are going to live your life intensely. You are going to be productive, you are going to be good to yourself, because you will be giving yourself to your family, to your community, to everything. But it is the action that is going to make you feel intensely happy. When you always do your best, you take action. Doing your best is taking the action because you love it, not because you’re expecting a reward. Most people do exactly the opposite: They only take action when they expect a reward, and they don’t enjoy the action. And that’s the reason why they don’t do their best. For example, most people go to work every day just thinking of payday, and the money they will get from the work they are doing. They can hardly wait for Friday or Saturday, whatever day they receive their money and can take time off. They are working for the reward, and as a result they resist work. They try to avoid the action and it becomes more difficult, and they don’t do their best. They work so hard all week long, suffering the work, suffering the action, not because they like to, but because they feel they have to. They have to work because they have to pay the rent, because they have to support their family. They have all that frustration, and when they do receive their money they are unhappy. They have two days to rest, to do what they want to do, and what do they do? They try to escape. They get drunk because they don’t like themselves. They don’t like their life. There are many ways that we hurt ourselves when we don’t like who we are.

On the other hand, if you take action just for the sake of doing it, without expecting a reward, you will find that you enjoy every action you do. Rewards will come, but you are not attached to the reward. You can even get more than you would have imagined for yourself without expecting a reward. If we like what we do, if we always do our best, then we are really enjoying life. We are having fun, we don’t get bored, we don’t have frustrations.

When you do your best, you don’t give the Judge the opportunity to find you guilty or to blame you. If you have done your best and the Judge tries to judge you according to your Book of Laws, you’ve got the answer: “I did my best.” There are no regrets. That is why we always do our best. It is not an easy agreement to keep, but this agreement is really going to set you free.

When you do your best you learn to accept yourself. But you have to be aware and learn from your mistakes. Learning from your

mistakes means you practice, look honestly at the results, and keep practicing. This increases your awareness.

Doing your best really doesn't feel like work because you enjoy whatever you are doing. You know you're doing your best when you are enjoying the action or doing it in a way that will not have negative repercussions for you. You do your best because you want to do it, not because you have to do it, not because you are trying to please the Judge, and not because you are trying to please other people.

If you take action because you have to, then there is no way you are going to do your best. Then it is better not to do it. No, you do your best because doing your best all the time makes you so happy. When you are doing your best just for the pleasure of doing it, you are taking action because you enjoy the action.

Action is about living fully. Inaction is the way that we deny life. Inaction is sitting in front of the television every day for years because you are afraid to be alive and to take the risk of expressing what you are. Expressing what you are is taking action. You can have many great ideas in your head, but what makes the difference is the action. Without action upon an idea, there will be no manifestation, no results, and no reward.

A good example of this comes from the story about Forrest Gump. He didn't have great ideas, but he took action. He was happy because he always did his best at whatever he did. He was richly rewarded without expecting any reward at all. Taking action is being alive. It's taking the risk to go out and express your dream. This is different than imposing your dream on someone else, because everyone has the right to express his or her dream.

Doing your best is a great habit to have. I do my best in everything I do and feel. Doing my best has become a ritual in my life because I made the choice to make it a ritual. It's a belief like any other belief that I choose. I make everything a ritual, and I always do my best. Taking a shower is a ritual for me, and with that action I tell my body how much I love it. I feel and enjoy the water on my body. I do my best to fulfill the needs of my body. I do my best to give to my body and to receive what my body gives to me.

In India they perform a ritual called puja. In this ritual, they take idols that represent God in many different forms and bathe them, feed them, and give their love to them. They even chant mantras to these idols. The idol itself is not important. What is important is the way they perform the ritual, the way they say, "I love you, God." God is life. God is life in action. The best way to say, "I love you, God," is to live your life doing your best. The best way to say, "Thank you, God," is by letting go of the past and living in the present moment, right here and now. Whatever life takes away from you, let it go. When you surrender and let go of the past, you allow yourself to be fully alive in the moment. Letting go of the past means you can enjoy the dream that is happening right now.

If you live in a past dream, you don't enjoy what is happening right now because you will always wish it to be different than it is. There is no time to miss anyone or anything because you are alive. Not enjoying what is happening right now is living in the past and being only half alive. This leads to self-pity, suffering, and tears.

You were born with the right to be happy. You were born with the right to love, to enjoy and to share your love. You are alive, so take your life and enjoy it. Don't resist life passing through you, because that is God passing through you. Just your existence proves the existence of God. Your existence proves the existence of life and energy.

We don't need to know or prove anything. Just to be, to take a risk and enjoy your life, is all that matters. Say no when you want to say no, and yes when you want to say yes. You have the right to be you. You can only be you when you do your best. When you don't do your best you are denying yourself the right to be you. That's a seed that you should really nurture in your mind. You don't need knowledge or great philosophical concepts. You don't need the acceptance of others. You express your own divinity by being alive and by loving yourself and others. It is an expression of God to say, "Hey, I love you."

The first three agreements will only work if you do your best. Don't expect that you will always be able to be impeccable with your word. Your routine habits are too strong and firmly rooted in your mind. But you can do your best. Don't expect that you will never take anything personally; just do your best. Don't expect that you will never make another assumption, but you can certainly do your best.

By doing your best, the habits of misusing your word, taking things personally, and making assumptions will become weaker and less frequent with time. You don't need to judge yourself, feel guilty, or punish yourself if you cannot keep these agreements. If you're doing your best, you will feel good about yourself even if you still make assumptions, still take things personally, and still are not impeccable with your word.

If you do your best always, over and over again, you will become a master of transformation. Practice makes the master. By doing your best you become a master. Everything you have ever learned, you learned through repetition. You learned to write, to drive, and even to walk by repetition. You are a master of speaking your language because you practiced. Action is what makes the difference.

If you do your best in the search for personal freedom, in the search for self-love, you will discover that it's just a matter of time before you find what you are looking for. It's not about daydreaming or sitting for hours dreaming in meditation. You have to stand up and be a human. You have to honor the man or woman that you are.

Respect your body, enjoy your body, love your body, feed, clean, and heal your body. Exercise and do what makes your body feel good. This is a puja to your body, and that is a communion between you and God.

You don't need to worship idols of the Virgin Mary, the Christ, or the Buddha. You can if you want to; if it feels good, do it. Your own body is a manifestation of God, and if you honor your body everything will change for you. When you practice giving love to every part of your body, you plant seeds of love in your mind, and when they grow, you will love, honor, and respect your body immensely.

Every action then becomes a ritual in which you are honoring God.

After that, the next step is honoring God with every thought, every emotion, every belief, even what is “right” or “wrong.” Every thought becomes a communion with God, and you will live a dream without judgments, victimization, and free of the need to gossip and abuse yourself.

When you honor these four agreements together, there is no way that you will live in hell. There is no way. If you are impeccable with your word, if you don't take anything personally, if you don't make assumptions, if you always do your best, then you are going to have a beautiful life. You are going to control your life one hundred percent.

The Four Agreements are a summary of the mastery of transformation, one of the masteries of the Toltec. You transform hell into heaven. The dream of the planet is transformed into your personal dream of heaven. The knowledge is there; it's just waiting for you to use it. The Four Agreements are there; you just need to adopt these agreements and respect their meaning and power. Just do your best to honor these agreements. You can make this agreement today: I choose to honor The Four Agreements. It's so simple and logical that even a child can understand them. But, you must have a very strong will, a very strong will to keep these agreements. Why? Because wherever we go we find that our path is