

# The Four Agreements

## JOURNALING PROMPTS

The below journal prompts are from my blog series on [The Four Agreements](#). I encourage you to read [the book](#) (it's short!) along with my blog posts so you can apply these agreements to your life and relationships.

The purpose of these prompts is to increase your self-awareness so you're able to catch yourself when you go against the agreements, which we all do. It's not about being perfect, and it's not about punishing yourself. Remember, with awareness comes the choice to do things differently!

Grab a pen and let's go!

### Agreement #1: Be Impeccable With Your Word

What is something you are hiding, which you may have shame around? What are your fears around expressing it to another person?

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When was the last time you said you would do something, but didn't go through with it? Examples might include making plans to get together with someone, doing the dishes, sending a thank you note, calling a parent or friend, etc.

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How did/do you feel by going against what you said you would do?

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What is the benefit? Is it a pattern of letting yourself down that is on autopilot? Is it an opportunity to punish or berate yourself because that's something you're used to?

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For the next week, pay attention to your words, both verbal and non-verbal (so yes, this also includes your thoughts!) and jot them down. Write down when you were impeccable with your word and spoke your truth, and when you didn't.

I suggest making two columns: one for times you adhered to the agreement, and one for the occasions you didn't. You can do this at the end of the day, or first thing in the morning, reflecting back on the previous day. And if you catch yourself in the act, write it down in the moment! If you have trouble remembering to check in with yourself, set a reminder once or twice a day.

Remember NOT to judge yourself for the times you went against yourself. This is not an exercise in self-flagellation. It is simply to notice where you are truthful and where you still hide so you build that awareness. Some examples of what you may write:

- A friend invited me to her birthday dinner, but instead of telling her why I wasn't going (I always feel inferior around her group of friends because they are all so successful), I said I had other plans.
- I looked at my partner this morning and said "I love waking up beside you."
- I was triggered by an email at work and quickly replied, "If you don't want my input, don't ask for it."
- I yelled at the driver in front of me for driving slow in the fast lane.

Keep your eyes focused on your words and record them. Do it everyday and you'll start to notice patterns.

Adhered to the Agreement

Did not adhere

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### **ACTION EXERCISE**

Tell at least one person you care about how you feel about them. This should feel uncomfortable, so say something you don't normally say (i.e. I love you, I appreciate you, You make me happy, I'm grateful for you, I love your laugh, etc.).

Take it a step further by picking someone you don't usually express yourself to like a parent, sibling, friend, or colleague.

Whatever you express, make sure it's truthful and focus on feeling it when you say it.

## Agreement #2: Don't Take Anything Personally

First, write this down and stick it somewhere you'll see it every day:



Next, complete the following sentences:

1. When someone says something that I take personally, this is what I actually hear: (examples: I'm not good enough, I'm not lovable, I'll always be single, I can't do anything right, I'm stupid, I'll never amount to anything, etc.)

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2. When these negative beliefs come up, I feel: (examples: lonely, ashamed, belittled, angry, embarrassed, unworthy, anxious, etc.)

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3. How I would feel if I chose NOT to take things personally: (examples: light, confident, secure, relaxed, at ease, unburdened, happy, etc.)

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For the next week, pay attention to when you take things personally. How do you know it's happening if most of it is subconscious? You'll be triggered. You'll feel that internal sting, or want to run away and hide.

Look for shame, embarrassment or anger—those are good clues. They aren't specific to personalizing, but often associated. It may be an email you get or a comment someone makes that leaves you feeling ignored, misunderstood, not accepted, etc. With insecure attachment, personalizing tends to happen a lot.

### Step 1.

Jot these down without commentary or judgment. Again, this is simply about increasing your self-awareness. Use simple bullet points, writing down what happened and how you personalized. Again you can choose to do this at the end of your day, first thing in the morning as you reflect on the day prior or when it happens. For example:

- I was giving a presentation and someone walked out (what happened)
  - She hated my presentation and thought I was boring (how you personalized)
- My mate reorganized the dishwasher again.
  - She doesn't think I can do anything right
- I asked the server for my salad dressing on the side and I could've sworn he rolled his eyes
  - He thinks I'm high-maintenance
- After only an hour at the coffee shop, my date said she had to leave
  - She doesn't think I'm worth her time
- My partner said, "Can we chat about this later?" when I asked how the call with his mom went.
  - He thinks I'm a nag

### Step 2.

Now, go back through each scenario and list three possible reasons for the action. It doesn't matter if they're true or not. The purpose is to take the focus off you and open yourself up to other possibilities. Using the first example above, you might write:

- I was giving a presentation and someone walked out (what happened)
  - She hated my presentation and thought I was boring (how you personalized)
  - She had to urgently use the bathroom (possible reason #1)
  - She double-booked herself and had to run to another meeting (possible reason #2)
  - She got a text or email from her boss, calling her back (possible reason #3)

Step 1.

TRIGGER

MY REACTION

Step 2.

OTHER POSSIBLE  
REASONS

## EXTENSION EXERCISE

When you notice yourself personalizing, catch yourself and sit with the uncomfortable emotion. Don't react right away or try to distract yourself. Just allow the feeling to wash over you.

Then identify it: is it pain, embarrassment, shame, guilt, anger, regret, fear?

Don't judge the feeling, just allow it. This will make it dissipate quicker.

Then say to yourself, "It's not personal."

### Agreement #3: Don't Make Assumptions

1. When someone around you is in a bad mood, angry or annoyed, what are the first thoughts that usually come to mind? Do you act based on your assumptions, or do you ask what's wrong?

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2. What is the benefit to assuming? Does it confirm a story in your head about how the other person feels about you, or confirm a story about how you feel about THEM?

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3. Can you think back on a time recently when this happened? What was the story in your head? And why were you afraid to challenge it by finding out the truth?

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Focus your attention on your assumptions. Trying to read someone's mind, looking for meaning in what someone does/says or not getting the response you expect are all good clues.

## Step 1.

Each time you catch yourself making an assumption, write it down in your journal. Again, it's important to do this without judgment. This exercise is about increasing your level of awareness, so don't beat yourself up for the assumptions you make; it's a pattern you've developed over many years.

Use simple bullet points, writing down what happened and the assumption you made. For example:

- An attractive woman smiled at me in line at the grocery store
  - I assumed she was interested in me, so I built this whole story around our life together by the time I got to the cashier
- My partner forgot it was his turn to make dinner
  - I assumed it was because he resents having to cook, and is always looking for a way out of it
- My boss gave me extra work on a project
  - I assumed it was because she doesn't trust the other people on our team
- My date left the server a small tip
  - I assumed he was an asshole who thought he was superior

## Step 2.

Now, let's flip it. For each scenario, put yourself in their shoes and write down what the other person might believe. Again, this isn't about guessing correctly (that would be assuming!). It's an exercise in perspective, acknowledging that other peoples' view of the world is different from yours. There is no right or wrong. Just different. Here's an example:

- An attractive woman smiled at me in line at the grocery store
  - Smiling at strangers instantly lifts her mood so she does it whenever she has a hard day.



Step 1.

TRIGGER

MY ASSUMPTION

Step 2.

WHAT THEY  
MIGHT BELIEVE

## EXTENSION EXERCISE

When you catch yourself assuming, challenge it by listing other possibilities. Let's say someone cuts you off in traffic and you assume they're an aggressive, selfish asshole with no friends.

Challenge that assumption by saying out loud, "Maybe their kid is in the hospital. Maybe their friend's flight arrived early and they are rushing to the airport. Maybe there is a bee in the car and they are trying not to get stung. Maybe they just got off a race track and forgot what it's like to drive on the freeway."

Throw in a few absurd ones just for the fun of it. Your anger will quickly subside.

### Agreement #4: Always Do Your Best

What is something you constantly overdo or put extra effort towards that depletes you? It could be work, making dinner, cleaning, keeping in touch with people, caring for a parent, etc. Write it down. Now, what would happen if you put forth HALF the effort? Would you disappoint someone? Would something terrible happen? Sit with the feelings of what you imagine would happen.

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What is something you put effort into that you love? Where, at the end, you might be tired, but not depleted. You feel a sense of joy and/or accomplishment, and may even feel invigorated. Like a "runner's high." Examples might include writing, organizing, gardening, cooking, planning events, etc. What do you feel after engaging in one of these activities? Can you see how these feelings are different from activities you overdo?

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Every day from this day forward, write the below in your journal as a reminder of the agreements you have made with yourself.

Today, I will do my best  
to speak my truth  
and be impeccable  
with my word.

Today, I will do my best  
not to take things  
personally, remembering  
it's about them, not me.

Today, I will do my best  
not to assume I know what  
other people are thinking  
or feeling.

Today, I will simply do my  
best... no more, no less...  
and it will come from  
my heart.

*“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.”*

CHAPTER FIVE  
THE FOUR AGREEMENTS

