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Your Weekly Guide on the Road to Maximizing Your Potential • June 11, 2008

By Kay Caldwell

Do you ever feel like you limit yourself? Do you have your life in a nice, neat little box that you dust off every now and then? Have you ever felt like you are in someone else's territory? I read once "it's not trespassing if the boundaries you cross are your own." If you stop and think about you, and we rarely do, you have probably set boundaries in your life without realizing it. We all tend to set these boundaries based on life experiences. Let's think about a new way of handling things.

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz is a book that I really found interesting. The author reveals the source of self-limiting beliefs that rob us of joy and create needless suffering. I want to share what the four agreements are with you because I think there is someone out there that might need or want to stop limiting yourself.

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." This is so important. You've heard "you are what you eat;" well, I say "you are what you think!" As far as gossip, in the movie, *Steele Magnolias*, Olivia Dukakis told her friends, "Well, you know what they say: if you don't have anything nice to say about anybody, come sit by me." We all laughed but the shoe sort of fit for me. I am changing that about me. If you think about it, our words are so powerful. The keys here are three of my favorite things — integrity, truth and love. Speaking in truth and in love will enrich you and make miracles happen for others.

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." Everyone has their own map of the world and it doesn't match mine most of the time. My perception is that this is an area of forgiveness. I have learned taking things personally usually causes defensiveness, arguing and distrust. This is where the pain comes to you. Taking things personally can mean we need to forgive something inside of ourselves. Understanding we are not responsible for someone else's opinions and actions is such a relief.

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 the one agreement, you can completely transform your life." This is something we know but we do it anyway and that is to assume. There is no way for us to know what someone else is thinking unless we ask. Most of us are extraordinary people and don't realize the supernatural inside of us. We have this inner power and inner voice that tells us who we are, and what is right for us individually. We can avoid many calamities if we just communicate.

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." Self-judgment is one of the great destroyers. Don't let it trap you. Barbra Streisand once said, "You have to discover you, what you do and trust it!" When you discover it do your best! No one could ask for anything more. Practice *The Four Agreements* and see if it changes your life for the better.