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Testimonials

"The instructors at Summit are very professional, friendly, helpful, understanding, considerate people."

—R. R. (student)

Ode to Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spare the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozing hours by hours.



Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

—John Keats (1795-1821)

Oat & Almond Butter Energy Bites

Ingredients for Oat & Almond Butter Energy Bites

- 1/2 cup dark or semi-sweet chocolate chips (or carob, if vegan)
- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup flax meal
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 2/3 cup homemade almond butter
(make this first—see provided ingredients and recipe below)
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup (or more to taste)

Directions for Oat & Almond Butter Energy Bites

1. In a large bowl, stir together all the ingredients until well mixed.
2. Roll the dough into 12 balls using cookie scoop or your hands.
3. Place rolled bites into a sturdy re-sealable container and store in the refrigerator.

Delicious, nutritious,
chewy, nutty, creamy, crunchy,
naturally sweet, and easy-to-make
for school snacks
or for any time you want a
healthy and tasty pick-me-up.

Directions for Homemade Almond Butter

1. Place all the almond butter ingredients into a food processor and blend for 5 minutes (scraping down the sides as needed), or until the mixture is smooth and a bit runny.
2. Use mixture in **Oat & Almond Butter Energy Bites** recipe above and store the rest in a sealed container in the refrigerator.



Ingredients for Homemade Almond Butter

- 2 cups roasted almonds (salted, or unsalted, or a mix of both if preferred)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Agreeing with *The Four Agreements*

Forty years after reading Castaneda, I reconsider ancient Toltec wisdom.

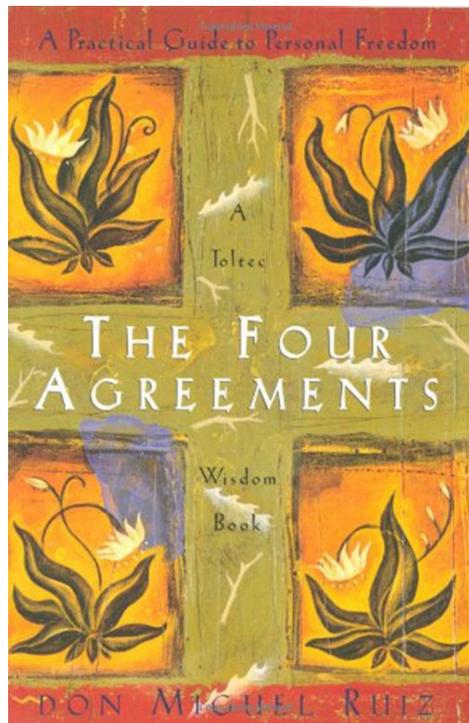
I want to write about a book by don Miguel Ruiz, *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom, a Toltec Wisdom Book*. A very long title for a very short book. Despite the claim that the ideas in this book represent insights possessed by the Toltecs in what is now Mexico a thousand years ago, most of these ideas are highly similar to concepts used by modern humanist psychologists, transactional analysts, and cognitive-behavioral psychologists. For example, Ruiz says that all children are born perfectly loving, playful, and genuine. However, parents teach their children what Carl Rogers called *conditions of worth*—standards of behavior the children must follow to receive love and avoid punishment. Eventually these standards become internalized into what Eric Berne called a *life script*—an unconscious set of instructions for living life. According to Ruiz, most of these unconscious beliefs are perfectly arbitrary or downright false. Many of them are irrational and unnecessarily limiting. The key to freedom—pace cognitive therapists such as Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck—is to become aware of our irrational and limiting thoughts so that we can replace them with healthy thoughts. In short, this book could be a primer for cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Ruiz says that children do not know any better than to agree with the adult realities into which they are indoctrinated. Children do not argue with the meanings of words or grammar as they are learning language. If my parents tell me I am smart and handsome, I believe them. If they tell me I am stupid and ugly, I believe them. Children have no choice but to agree. They are like Plato's prisoners in the cave, shackled and forced into believing that shadows of artificial objects are real. But as we mature, we can become warriors, breaking free from the shackles of agreements with our false ideas.

We can accept healthier agreements. Ruiz presents four such healthier agreements in his book. Below is a Reader's Digest version; I have written more extensively on the agreements elsewhere.

1. *Be impeccable with your word.*

In a sense, social constructivists are correct about words creating reality. We act on what we tell ourselves is real. Albert Ellis encouraged us to screen our self-talk for negative, irrational chatter. So, what kinds of words do you use when you describe reality? Do you lie and say hurtful things about yourself and others? Not healthy. To be impeccable with your word is to be truthful and to say things that have a positive influence on yourself and others.



2. *Don't take anything personally.*

The first agreement suggests that we avoid treating others hurtfully. The second agreement provides us with a way of dealing with potentially hurtful treatment from others. Because each person sees the world in a unique way, the way that others treat us says as much about them as it does about us. To not take anything personally is to acknowledge the unique identities of other people. We respect their subjective realities, realizing that their views do not necessarily describe us accurately.

3. *Don't make assumptions.*

Assuming that you know what other people think or feel about you is a limiting thought that Aaron Beck called "Mind Reading". Obviously, none of us can read minds. When we try to engage in mind reading we will often be wrong, leading to undesirable consequences. The antidote to mind reading is to ask for evidence before concluding what people are thinking.

4. *Always do your best.*

One obvious reason for doing your best is that we cannot achieve our goals by being lazy. If you do your best, not only are you more likely to achieve goals, but you will also avoid criticism from what Ruiz calls your *internal Judge*. There are also more subtle issues about doing "your best." One is that you should not try to do better than your best. Pushing yourself too hard can cause pain, injury, and mistakes. More subtle still is the recognition that our "best" will vary from moment to moment, that, in a sense, you are always doing your best. Realize this, and your inner Judge can take a permanent vacation.

—Excerpt from December 2010 article in *Psychology Today*, by John A. Johnson, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Pennsylvania State University and author of the blog, *Cui Bono*.

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