

BOOK SUMMARY

THE FIFTH AGREEMENT

**Don M. Ruiz & Don J. Ruiz
2010**

This is one of the most amazing books I have ever read in the self-help department. If I could use only one word to explain what this book is about, I would use the word **TRUTH**.

This book will help you do the following:

1. Make better decisions in life.
2. Improve your communication and listening skills.
3. Make better buying decisions. Armed with this information, you are less likely to become a victim of people who choose to be ambiguous when selling their products or services.
4. You are less likely to fall for investment or Ponzie schemes because you will focus on asking pointed questions in the ‘**virtual truth**’ area, when you are aware that the **real truth** is not being provided.
5. Improve your relationships with the people around you. Once people understand that you insist on clarity and that you are aware of the difference between **truth & virtual truth** then you will be less likely to fall into the trap of miscommunication.

The following are the five agreements:

1. 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.

2. 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 dreams.
- When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

3. Don't manage 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 this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

4. 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 ill. Under any circumstances, simply do your best and you will avoid self-judgement, self-abuse and regret.

5. Be skeptical and learn to listen

- Don't believe yourself or anybody else. Use the power of doubt to question everything you hear. Is it really the truth? Listen to the intent behind words, and you will understand the real message.

- **There are two kinds of truth:**
 1. **What is real** - what we cannot change e.g. the earth is round, there is no debate, and it would be a waste of time to challenge this truth. With this purist form of truth, there is full transparent disclosure and we see everything just as it is.
 2. **Virtual truth** - what we believe is real. If you asked most people in the world, early in 2007 about the impending stock market crisis, they would have responded that this will be just another crash/correction in the market. Some people may have wished or hoped for this. The world now knows most of the real truth about this crisis.
 3. The critical point of this is for you to be aware of the difference between the **real truth** and **virtual truth**.

The following are some more gems I found sprinkled around in the book:

- We cannot teach anything if we don't have someone's attention; we cannot learn anything if we don't pay attention.
- The truth is objective, we call it science. Our interpretation of truth is subjective, and we call it art.
- What's real is truth? What's truth is truth for everyone. But virtual truth is our personal creation; it's our art, and it's only "truth" for each one of us.
- If you are what you believe you are, then the first question is "what do you believe you are?"
- Dreams are always transforming. They are born, they grow and they die.
- I am responsible for what I say, but I am not responsible for what you understand. You are responsible for what you understand; you are responsible for whatever you do with what you hear in your head.
- Be responsible for every choice you make in your life.

- If you are enjoying your dream or suffering your dream, it's because you're creating it that way.
- If we do not respect ourselves, how can we respect anyone else or anything else?
- What is the worst thing that can happen to any of us? To die? We are all going to die, and there's nothing we can do about it. We can enjoy the ride, or resist it and suffer.
- How are you going to change the world? The answer is easy. By changing your world.

I have attached an article from the Harvard Business Review entitled "Who Do These Bankers Think They Are?" which provides an excellent example of **virtual truth**. The critical question is, how far up the management food chain of government and the financial services industry does one have to go to get the real truth about what our financial institutions are really up to?

I trust that you will benefit by this summary. Please do read the book as it provides a powerful message.

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Your autodidactic retirement planner