

IT'S NOT PERSONAL

Week #2 of a new 4-Week series inspired by the don Miguel Ruiz book, "The Four Agreements"

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Rev. Richard Rogers

MEDITATION

I want you to take a deep breath, and I want you to feel the presence of God that is within you and all around you. That there is an infinite Spirit that is expressing through you, as you: right here, right now. That, no matter what you believe about yourself -- no matter what you've been told about yourself; whatever your greatest fear is about yourself -- you are so much more than that. You are an expression of the Infinite. You are an expression of God. You are an expression of all that God is.

Take a deep breath. And allow all that is within you to come forth. And call forth the wisdom, the power, the love, and the possibilities. That you are not here to play a small, little game i life; you are here to express all that God is. You are here to overcome every challenge; to heal; to transform; to make your life the greatest example of God's good that you can. That there is no limit to you, because there is no limit to God.

So today we say "Yes!" to the presence, to the power, to the Infinite within us. And we allow that infinite Spirit of God to transform us at depth. Wherever we have been limited -- wherever we have played small; wherever we have been scared -- we allow the Holy of Holies to renew our soul. To uplift our spirit. And to make all things new again.

Today, let your spirit stand in the greatness of who you are. Let the fullness of God manifest as your truest self. There is a power within you that is greater than you can even imagine. And we say, "Yes!" And we see this and know this, not only for ourselves, but we know it for every man, woman and child on the planet. That we are a world awakening. We are a people unleashed. That we let go of the small concepts of life. We let go of the fear and the hatred, and we stand together in the power of who we are: that we are all children of God. We are all heirs to all that God is. Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God! And so it is. Amen.

MESSAGE

Rev. Richard Rogers: Alright, So my question for you tonight is: How much drama do you do? Right? Now, would you say you're a low drama individual? Would you say you're a medium drama individual? Or could you admit -- in this loving room -- that maybe, from time to time, you've been known to be a high drama individual?

Now, what's interesting about that question is: most people think they're low drama. Right? Because most people think that whatever level of drama they're doing is just normal. Right? Because that's what they were raised with. That's what they're friends are doing. So most people think they're a low-drama individual, regardless of how much drama they do. Right?

And my question for you tonight is: Would you be willing to dial your drama down? *"Well, most of the time I would, but you know ... there are times when that drama just needs to be kicked up!"*

[Congregation laughs] "Where, Katie bar the door ... it's time to get busy here ..."

So that's where I want to go. I want to look at that. The Urban Dictionary defines drama as "A way of relating to the world in which a person consistently overreacts to or greatly exaggerates the importance of an event." Nobody in this room would ever do that, right? *[Congregation laughs]* They go on and give us: *"There are common warning signs of drama and/or dramatic people to be aware of. Having one supposedly one serious problem after another."* Nobody here! *"Constantly telling other people about*

their problems. Extreme emotionality or frequently shifting in intense emotions. Claiming to have experiences -- negative events -- that are highly improbable."

That's my favorite one! Where, you not only do not have enough drama in your life, but you make up drama to have drama! Right? That is one wonderful child of God, right? *[Congregation laughs]* Who actually makes up drama so they can have more stuff to talk about!

And the fifth one: *"A pattern [Rev. Rogers laughs] of irrational behavior or an overreaction to everyday problems."* See, we're good! None of us fall into any of those things! We're all good!

So last week we began doing don Miguel Ruiz's book, *The Four Agreements*. And the first agreement that we worked on last week was this idea that we're going to **be impeccable with our word**. And what "impeccable with your word" means is that you're going to use your word to express the highest and the best that is within you and all around you.

Now, as you become impeccable with your word, what begins to happen is: the drama in your life starts dialing down, because you're not creating it anymore! When you learn to master your words -- when you get control over your words -- all the ... Well, not all of it. But a lot of the craziness automatically begins to go away, because you're taken dominion over the power of your words, and you're not using your words to create craziness any more. You're actually speaking the highest truth. You're actually accelerating the good that's in your life. You're actually manifesting. Because the moment that you speak your highest good into the Universe, that has a vibration -- that has a charge, that has an energy -- around it. And when you continually affirm the highest good that you want, everything in your life begins to line up with that!

Jesus said, *"Let your answer be, 'Yes; Yes!' or 'No; No!'"* And, you know, what I said last week ... The actual quote is, *"Anything else comes of evil."* What he meant to say was, *"Anything else makes God crazy."* Right? And it's this idea that, when we're all over the place ... When one moment we're claiming the good that we want; the next moment we say, *"Life's killing us"* or, *"Why doesn't it ever work for me?"* When our words are all over the place, we experience a life that's all over the place. We experience one upset -- one drama, one pain -- after another.

And when we take mastery of our words, we learn to take mastery of our thoughts. When we take mastery of our words and our thoughts, then we take mastery of our actions. And what happens is: then we become laser clear.

I believe that, for each and every one of us, there's a path in front of us. And, because we have free will, we can either walk that path, or we cannot walk that path. You know, for some of us, when we don't really believe that it's possible to have our greatest desires, then what we begin to do is begin to throw shade on everybody else. We create so much drama around us, because we don't believe that we can really have what we want. So then we believe, *"Well, why should anybody have what they could have?"* Right? That we actually lose our focus; we give up our path. Right?

And that takes us to the second agreement. The second agreement that don Miguel Ruiz talks about is: **Take nothing personal**. Alright? The second agreement is: Take nothing personally. *[Reading from the book]:*

"Whatever happens around you, don't take it personally. Using an earlier example, if I see you on the street and I say, 'Hey you are so stupid,' without knowing you, it's not about you; it's about me. If you take it personally, then perhaps you believe you are stupid. Maybe you think to yourself, 'How does he know that? Is he clairvoyant, or can everybody see how stupid I am?'" *[Congregation laughs]*

Well, sometimes, right? *[Continues reading]:*

"You take it personally because you agree with whatever was said. As soon as you agree, the poison goes from them to you: you're trapped in the dream of hell. What causes you to be trapped in this dream is your personal importance. Personal importance, or taking things personally, is the maximum expression of selfishness, because it makes the assumption that everything is about 'me.' During periods of our education, or our domestication, we learn to take everything personally. We think that we're responsible for everything. Me, me, me, always me!

Nothing other people do is because of you. It is because of themselves. All people live in their own dream, in their own mind; they are in a completely different world than yours. When we take something personally, we make the assumption that you know what's going on in their world, and we try to impose our world upon them."

I want you to see if you can think back to the last time you were offended by what someone said about you. Can everybody think of something *[laughs]*? Right? Where somebody may have made a comment about you, and you were like *[gasps]*? Like, you know, you gasped! You were indignant! You were like, "That's not who I am!" Right?

And what I want you to see is: the moment you get offended -- the moment you take it personally -- you actually get off your path. The moment you take it personally, you are no longer creating what's next in your life, and now we are in the drama of the moment, and we are no longer creating our greatest desire. And, see, I want you so created to your life -- to the good, to the good that God has for you -- that, no matter what somebody says to you, you don't give up your path. Right? That you don't give other people the power to distract you from the glory of God.

Because there are individuals ... And, you know, every family has a handful of them, right? There are individuals who sport by making sure that you're upset. They actually enjoy when you're upset! They actually say things to upset you! You work with them. You live with them. They're in your neighborhood. Like, they're actually enjoy getting you off your path.

And the moment you step off your path because you're offended, everything in your life is no longer creating your greatest desire. You're now in the drama of that moment. You're now in the conflict of that moment. And I don't think it's worth it.

Now, does that mean that I never get offended. No! I get offended! I just try to do it quickly. *[Congregation laughs]* Do you know what I mean by that? So, if I get offended, I want to get over it so quickly so that I can get back on my path. I don't want to waste a minute of being on my path. That my path is so important to me -- it is so important! -- that I stay clear about what I want to create in my life. That, when I get distracted, it is not the highest and best for me, for my family, for my world. I want to be on purpose. And the second agreement is that: if you're going to be "on purpose," you can't take anything personally.

Now, if I was to say to you, "You look a little plaid today" ... Like, some of you might be offended by that. Some of you may think, "Well, Richard's just a kook; I don't even know what that means!" *[Congregation laughs]* Right? But, because most of us are not emotionally triggered by being called "plaid." Right? If I said, "Man, you are so plaid!" And, in my snarkest voice, said, "You are so plaid; I can't believe you're so plaid!" Right? That, no matter how I said it, it wouldn't trigger you ... at least most of us. *[Laughs]* Some of us can be offended by anything, right? But most of us would not be offended if I said to you, "Oh, my gosh; what is wrong with you? You're so plaid!" You would make it about me! You would not think, "I wonder if I need to go look in the mirror!" *[Congregation laughs]* "I didn't feel plaid when I woke up this morning! Nobody's ever called me that before! I'm not sure if it's a good thing or a bad thing!" Like, you probably wouldn't give it a lot of time!

But if I came to you and said, you know, "What a jerk!" You're like *[whispers]*, "My minister just called me a jerk!" Right? *[Congregation laughs]* Like, how many of us would be offended by that? Most of us!

Right? I mean, that's why I don't lead with that, right? *[Congregation laughs]* Because most of us would be offended by that!

But I want you to see that you being offended by the words that come out of my mouth doesn't make sense! It's not about you! I know you were taught to believe that everything was about you, but it's really never been about you! If I think you're a jerk, who is it about? Me! It's about my woundedness! It's about me projecting my brokenness upon you! It's about me seeing the places in myself that I haven't healed yet, and wanting you to be responsible for my woundedness! It's never been about you! No matter what your parents said ... No matter what your teachers said ... No matter what the first five husbands said ... *[Congregation laughs]* It was never about you! It's never been about you! It's about us sharing our woundedness, and wanting somebody to dance with.

Will you say with me, "I'm not broken"? Together: *[With congregation]* "I'm not broken." One more time: *[With congregation]* "I'm not broken."

So, if somebody says to you, "You're broken," and you get offended by that, who is that about now? Is that about them, or is it about you? If we react to it, it's about us. If we get offended, it's about me! Because now I'm believing, or I'm in resistance, or I'm hoping you won't say out loud my worst fear about myself. And it really doesn't matter what the word is! I want you to really see: it doesn't matter what the word is! The word is just pointing out a fear, a wound, a resistance place that you have believed or hoped wasn't true about you.

So *[laughs]* I'm really going to do this. And this might be too much. Alright; I want you ... Are you ready for your homework? I'm not even halfway through my talk yet, I'm already giving you homework. Are you ready for your homework?

I want you to think of the five worst things that somebody could call you. I want you to actually write them down. What are the five worst things that somebody could call you? And I want you to actually make peace with all five of those things. Because when they're no longer a trigger for you ... When they're no longer a problem for you ... When you're no longer resistant to them ... When you no longer feel broken by that ... Your life gets to move on in an incredible way.

And I'm sorry for whatever was taught to you, that you're broken. Or you're less than. Or something's not right about you. But it's never been true. It's never been true! There is nothing wrong with you! Nothing! You're created in the image and likeness of God. Right? The more that we make peace with the power of our own word, and we take the power of our own word back, then we don't give that power to other people. To think that their words could harm us, or those could belittle us. Or those words could identify us. Or those words could label us.

Nobody gets to label you but you! Nobody gets to tell the world who you are but you! And ... *[Sighs]*

Can we all agree that you're a spiritual being? Can we all just agree that that's true? That you were created in the image and likeness of God? Right? That you are in the same measure -- every bit as much -- created in the image and likeness of God as Jesus Christ? Or whatever person you see a holy or righteous or good? Right? That you are that? Right?

And the moment we begin to live that life, we move from living an ego life to truly living a spiritual life. And when we're living an ego life, we're always protecting and defending what anybody else thinks about us. What the worst that we've believed about us. Whatever insecurity or brokenness or frailness that we've accepted is true about ourselves.

And if we really take on that second agreement, we don't get to take any of that personally anymore. We actually don't get to live an ego-generated life. We actually set ourselves free, and we get about the business that God has before us.

One of my favorite lines from Paul is this: *"Am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I am still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ."* Right?

So if your job is to look good, right? If your job is to make sure that everybody around you thinks you're "all that," it's fine. But it's not necessarily living the spiritual life. Living the spiritual life is that you're clear that you and God are a majority. That God has a mission for you: a purpose for you. There's something that your soul always wants to create. And being distracted ... Getting off your path ... Defending yourself ... Now, it just -- for most of us -- it's not what we're here to do. We're actually here to create the life that God has for us.

Going back to don Miguel:

"When you take things personally, then you feel offended, and your reaction is to defend your beliefs and create conflicts. You make something big out of something so little, because you have the need to be right and make everybody else wrong. You also try hard to be right by giving them your own opinions. In the same way, whatever you feel and do is just a projection of your own personal dream, a reflection of your own agreements."

He goes on:

"You may tell me, 'Miguel, why are you saying hurtful things?' But it is not what I am saying that I hurting you; it is that you have wounds that I touch by what I have said. You are hurting yourself. There is no way that I can take this personally. Not because I don't believe in you or trust you, but because I know that you see the world with different eyes than mine. You create an entire picture -- a movie in your mind -- and in that picture you are the director, you are the producer, you are the main actor or actress. Everybody else is just a secondary actor or actress. It is your movie."

I want you to be so clear about who you are, and then just notice, *"Wow! I took that personally."* Right? Or, *"Oh! I reacted to that!"* Right? And I want you to really see where in you is still getting attached to the drama of others. And maybe we're never going to be fully emotionally bulletproof. But we can take some big steps. We can set ourselves free of the drama of others. And, in the world today, we can be about that. Right?

Because, do you know -- as a nation -- that we have a purpose? And our purpose is to build a more perfect union. And if we keep fighting, and keep calling each other names, we never really get to the business of building a more perfect union. That we get off track. And we do that in our families ... We do it as a nation ... We do it in our communities ... We do it as individuals ... We allow the drama to keep us from moving our life forward.

And, today, I want you to be free. I want you to -- I really do! If you want to play this week, I want you to write down the five worst things that somebody could say about you. You're fat. You're stupid. You're lazy. You're unkind. You're unlovable. You're broken. You're less than. Whatever, whatever, whatever. And I want you to make peace with your five things so that you no longer are wounded by other people's opinion. That you no longer personalize the woundedness of others, and make it yours.

See, the moment we don't take it personally, we're actually free! We can actually do the work that God has for us to do!

There's this great scene in the final act before Jesus is crucified where Peter comes up to Jesus, and he's disappointed that Jesus gave John this job of staying with him. And Peter wanted the job, right? Like, *"Why did you have John stay with you during this time? I really wanted to be there."* And Jesus just looks him straight in the face and says, *"What is that to thee? Come and follow me."* Right?

And where I see that we are many times is: we're spending weeks and months and years in the drama of situations, and not moving our lives forward. And we feel completely justified in stopping the upward

progress of our life to heal this thing. Right? *"Well, now we have to have a conversation. Now we've got to heal this! Now we've got to get mediation. Now we've got to blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."* And what I'm saying is: it actually stops the forward movement of your life, and you're no longer progressing. You're no longer moving upward. You're no longer transforming. Now your focus is turned, and now you're focusing on this person and making them the focus of your life. And I don't believe they're worth it! I don't think they're for your highest good! I don't think they're even concerned about knowing why you're here! They're just bored! And they want somebody else who will do this crazy dance with them, because they're not sure what their next step is. And I want you free.

"I no longer need to take anything personally." Will you say that with me? *[With congregation]: "I no longer need to take anything personal."*

"It's never been about me." Together: *[With congregation] "It's never been about me."* It's not about me now, and it never has been about me. I let it go, and I stay on my path!

There's a path before you, and it's an important path! It's a path that only you can walk! It is a path that is good and righteous and abundant and loving and wonderful, and it's your path! Don't let anyone keep you from your path! It's your path!

Do you know what AKA cords are? And this is the time where I usually go one step too far. And so I know that, not only have I gone one step too far already, but I'm going to do that twice in the same talk. Right? Which I really try to restrict myself to just once a talk to going too far. Now I'm going to go ... And I know that I'm going there ... So you don't have to help me with this. That I actually know that I'm going too far.

Do you know what AKA cords are? Do you know what Ho'oponopono is? Okay. Ho'oponopono is a Hawaiian tradition of reconciliation. And when you live on an island, reconciliation is really important, because there's only so far you can get away from people. *[Congregation laughs]* Right?

So in Ho'oponopono, the reconciliation, and you know the steps. *"I love you." "I forgive you."* And bluh, bluh, bluh, bluh, bluh. Right? Well, one of the aspects of Ho'oponopono is cutting the AKA cords. And, in the Hawaiian tradition, every interaction creates emotional connections. And, with people that you've been emotionally with, it actually, over time: relationship, parent, child ... You know, those primary relationships ... bosses or people you work with for a long time ... And it creates emotionally entanglement. And what the Hawaiians taught was that, as you cut those AKA cords, you actually set people free. You actually set them free to live their life, and you to live your life.

And what's interesting about this: in the Hawaiian tradition, unconditional love doesn't create AKA cords. Because love is a free gift, right? So it doesn't create entanglement. So, as you cut an AKA cord, you actually set them free to live their best life, and it also sets you free. Right? And what's amazing about this is: as you begin to cut AKA cords, you realize that you're a lot more emotionally entangled to people than you ever realized. And that it's actually really healthy to let everybody go.

So we're going to do it. Right? You want to close your eyes and pray? I want you to close your eyes, and if there's a person that instantly said, *"I want to cut my AKA cords with this person,"* yes! You can do that. Or you can just generally do it with everybody in your life. Now, does it mean that you stop loving them or stop caring about them? No. It just means that we're going to emotionally set them free so that we can all get to move on.

So I want you to close your eyes. And I want you to call forth the Holy Spirit to cut any emotional entanglement that you have with anyone: past, current. That, wherever you have been emotionally entangled with anyone, that we just ask the Holy Spirit to cut those cords. Those that you're conscious of; those that you're unconscious of. Those that are above you, below you, to the right of you, to the left

of you, in front of you, behind you. Wherever they are, we just ask the Holy Spirit: cut any inappropriate emotional connection you have with anyone to set yourself free and to set everyone around you free.

And now we ask the Holy Spirit to place the hand of Spirit on any place on your soul that has become weak from those emotional connections. Anyplace where you've been drained. Anyplace where you've been ... that's been actually wounded from those connections. And we see your soul full. So in the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

How many of you could feel that? That you could actually feel those emotional connections being severed?

Now, what's interesting for me, right? Is ... What I want you to see is that, as you cut -- you know, if you believe in energy -- as you cut all those AKA cords, your soul gets to stay full all day long. It's not draining out all around you. You can actually live each day completely full. You can actually be about your life in a brand new way, because you're not being drained out from all the people around you that are ...

Have you ever felt like somebody -- have you ever picked up the phone and talked to somebody -- and you felt like they were sucking the energy right through your ear? [Congregation laughs] Right? And you couldn't get off the phone fast enough? In an AKA situation, that would be considered an AKA depletion. So, you hang up, and you, like, [congregation laughs] wash your ear out to get the energy out, right?

And so what I want you to feel, right? Is that as you don't take anything personal ... As you cut all the emotional entanglements that you have with anyone ... Your life becomes greater. It becomes easier for you to create everything else, because you now have the energy every day that God has given you. *"Give us this day our daily"* [With congregation]: *"Bread!"* Like, you actually have all the energy you need to create the life you want, because you're not feeding the whole world out of your soul!

Uh, that's too far. [Congregation laughs] Alright. Let's pray.

I want you to open your mind, your heart, your soul, to the activity of God right here, right now. I want you to see yourself full: complete and lacking in nothing. And whenever anybody tries to throw anything on your path, to make any comment about you, you know the truth. That you were created in the image and likeness of God. That you are whole and complete and lacking in nothing. That you are God's beloved. And it doesn't mean that people can't help us and guide us and teach us. But we know the difference when somebody's trying to take us out and someone's trying to lift us higher. And today we are about the work of God. We are about creating the kingdom of heaven right here, right now -- not only for ourselves, but for everyone. And we can no longer afford to be distracted by other people's opinion. We are here to be full and happy and loved and abundant. And so it is. Amen.

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