

# Pamela J. Firle, MA, LPC

Inspiration

Education

Transformation



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*“Great freedom and ease is available through this simple portal”*

~ P F

## Pamela J. Firle, MA

Licensed Professional Counselor

Counseling and  
Psychotherapy for Adults,  
Adolescents and Couples

28465 Ranch Road 12  
Dripping Springs, Texas  
512-784-7770

www.PamelaJFirle.com  
www.kdrplive.org  
pjfirle@austin.rr.com

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Last month we looked at the first of, *The Four Agreements*, by don Miguel Ruiz, “*Be impeccable with your word.*” This month we’ll focus on the second principle of living: “*Don’t Take Anything Personally.*”

If you can feel your anxiety rise just reading the words, don’t worry, you’re not alone. If you feel defensive just thinking about that hurtful thing your friend said to you last week, and it’s impossible to imagine that it wasn’t personal—don’t worry, you’re not alone. Most of us live with the perception that the actions and reactions of those we encounter are all about with us. After all, it *feels* like it’s about us; and the other person may even be saying that it’s about us. How are we to believe otherwise? And it is about a belief, not an objective reality. A belief that creates an immeasurable amount of unnecessary personal pain. One that is born out of our egocentric human nature.

When we are children, we all believe that the world revolves around us. If you’re in doubt about this, just ask any pre-schooler. If my brother’s behaving badly, they are being mean “to me.” If my sister won’t share her toy, she doesn’t love “me.” And if my pet dies it’s because “I” was mad at it. For a child, whatever happens is personalized; it is in some way about “me.” Ideally, as we grow in age and emotionally maturity, our worldview grows accordingly. We become less egocentric and more appreciative of how other’s experience generates their behavior. However, this healthy development is impeded by the emotional wounds we experience (and we all have them); so that we are often stuck in the personalized state that characterized our youth. So much so, that we are convinced our painful relationships are a reflection of reality and not our beliefs.

The admonition of Don Miguel is to recognize our beliefs for what they are and claim our ability to let go of what does not serve us. To choose to “not take things personally” is one of the most powerful paradigm shifts we can make; albeit one of the most challenging. Great freedom and ease is available through this simple portal. I am not suggesting that we have no reason to consider the reactions of others; I think we do. But I am suggesting conscious consideration rather than a default position that assumes reactions are “about me,” and therefore require a certain response from me. Such assumptions can lead to a host of convoluted interactions and further emotional wounds, which will be explored next month—so stay tuned!

## **Mindful Connections**

*A program devoted to your body, mind and spirit.*

I am pleased to host *Mindful Connections* with fellow psychotherapist, Tina Moody, every Saturday morning from 11-12:00 on our community radio station **KDRP, 99.9FM** in Dripping Springs and streaming live at [www.kdrplive.org](http://www.kdrplive.org). You can also listen to podcasts of recent shows on the website at your convenience. Just click on the link for **Saturday Talk Block**, and then **Mindful Connections**.

August’s programs include *Holidays and Beautiful Vegetables; Welcome Back and Timing is Everything*