

# Pamela J. Firle, MA, LPC

Inspiration

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Transformation



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## DON'T MAKE ANY ASSUMPTIONS

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*“Find the  
courage to  
ask questions  
and express  
what you  
really want”*

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As promised, this month continues our discussion of *The Four Agreements*, by don Miguel Ruiz, by exploring the third agreement “Don’t Make Any Assumptions.” (If you missed the first two, they are available on my website under the Newsletters tab.)

In this third agreement don Miguel brings to light an enormous relational stumbling block. So enormous I’m not sure it’s importance can be overstated. Just take a moment and bring to mind a recent relationship conflict. Now see if you can step back from it enough to observe how assumptions (conscious or unconscious) played a role. If we stretch that exercise back in our relational history, we can probably follow a thread of emotional pain based on assumptions.

Assumptions are such a part of the fabric of our social agreements that it is often hard to recognize them. They become an intrinsic part of our mindset; one that we believe everyone shares. And that’s where the rub begins. Beyond our social assumptions lie the more intimate ones we make with the people we are closest to; i.e. the ones we think we know the best. This is the ground for the deepest wounds our assumptions make. How often I listen to a couple talk about the damage done by one spouse taking well-intended action based on false assumptions of what the other needs, wants or doesn't want. It is a rare person who cannot relate to this experience. The sting is memorable - for both.

So how do we practice this agreement and avoid painful misunderstandings? As with all change, it has to begin by becoming more aware of our behavior; noticing when we make the mental leap to assuming what another is saying, thinking or feeling and having **the courage to ask questions** instead. A simple solution and one that can prevent mountains of misunderstandings. Your conclusion may be right on the money, but it doesn’t cost anything to check it out.

The second part of the practice is **owning our responsibility to communicate with others as clearly as we can what it is that we really mean**. This means not expecting the other to read our mind, take our cues or just know because they love us. Such expectations set us up for assumptions and the disappointment that is undoubtedly to come.

In my experience, the longer we are with someone the easier it is to become convinced of what we think we know. Long-term relationships can be kept fresh by letting go of our assumptions and exploring each other anew.

### **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**.

September’s programs include *Whistle While You Work; The Health-Wealth Connection; The Network Buzz and Dreaming Big: Breaking through the Fear Barrier*