

## The Four Agreements and Music, Part 2

by Dennis Winge

The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz is a bit of ancient wisdom boiled down to four steps that are very simple but very profound in their implications and can transform your life if practiced consciously. It's not a book about music at all, but each one pertains greatly to being a successful musician or learning an instrument.

The four agreements are: 1. Be Impeccable with your Word; 2. Don't Take Anything Personally; 3. Don't Make Assumptions; 4. Always Do Your Best. Today we will focus on number 2: **Don't Take Anything Personally**. This is hugely relevant to the music business.

1. **When People Do Not Follow Through.** Suppose you are trying to book a gig (or form a band, or even a jam session, etc.) and people don't get back to you even after they have said they would like to work with you. It is very easy to get frustrated. Even very recently I called a musician for a gig, and he said he was 99% sure that he could do it (which to me is totally useless – if it ain't a yes, then it's a no, but that's another topic). So I allowed him to get back to me to confirm (mistake #1) without giving him a timeframe within which to do it (mistake #2) and after a few days, I booked someone else (mistake #3). When he saw I had booked someone else I reminded him that he never confirmed, which he thought he had. The basic message here is to not get frustrated like I did. Set your clear expectations (agreement #1), don't make assumptions (agreement #3), and don't let their lack of response affect you negatively.
2. **When you are not chosen.** Suppose you audition for a band, and you nail everything, and you totally rock the audition, they seem to like you, and you really want the gig. There are so many other factors that are involved. You don't know how many other people were auditioned, and you don't even know whether the decision was made before the auditions were even held. It does happen sometimes that auditions are just held because of some legal requirement, but the whole thing is 'rigged.' It can also happen that the band member that was to be replaced ends up staying with the band and you may be considered as a sub for that person if the need ever arises. Or maybe the band breaks up right after the audition process. Anything can happen. Don't take it personally.
3. **When the gig doesn't go well.** You played your best, and there was hardly anyone there, or the owner tried to stiff you, or whatever else you were expecting doesn't happen. A wise teacher from the East once said "If you don't make appointments, you won't have disappointments." Obviously, he wasn't using the word 'appointments' literally, he just meant 'expectations.' The music business can be tough in and of itself, but if you take things personally, it'll make things infinitely more challenging.