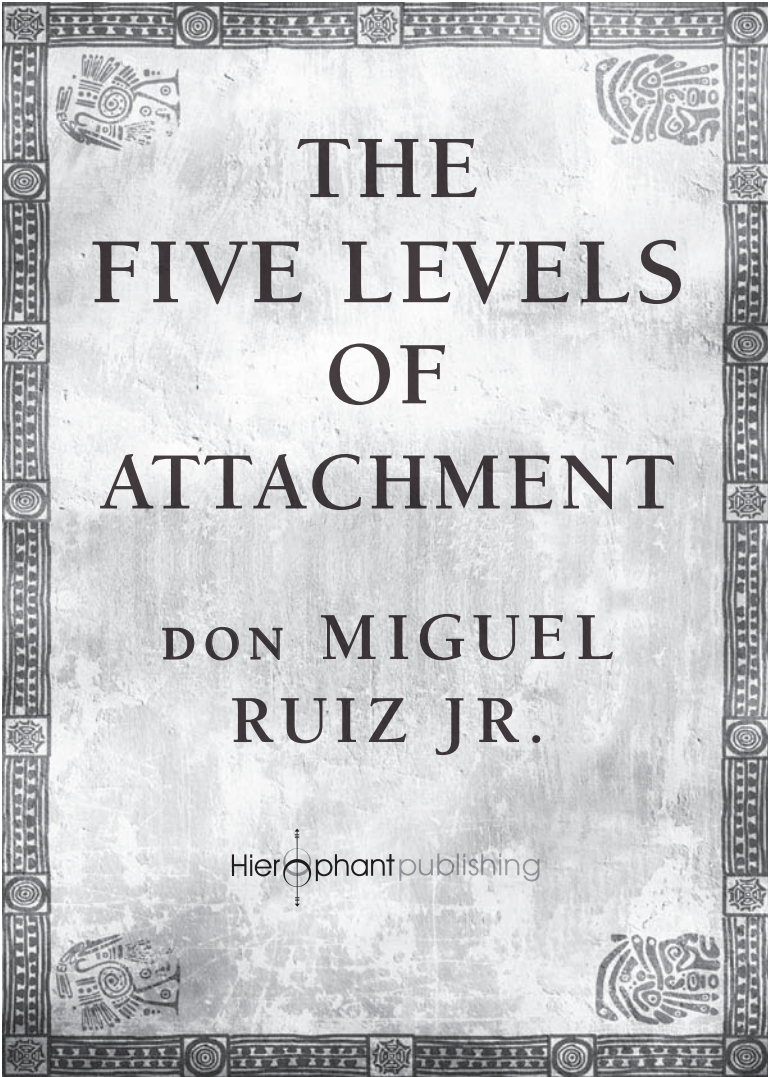


THE
FIVE LEVELS
OF
ATTACHMENT



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OF
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DON MIGUEL
RUIZ JR.

Hierophant publishing

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Dedication

To all whom I love

Among individuals, as among nations,
respect for the rights of others is peace.

—BENITO JUAREZ

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Foreword

Don Miguel Ruiz Jr., my first son, belongs to a new generation of artists, Toltecs, who are transforming the way of life of our beloved humanity.

My son has spent a great portion of his life silently rebelling against the way other people live, creating many judgments and opinions. He did not realize that in doing so, he was becoming attached to those judgments and opinions, and his emotional reactions were becoming increasingly intense.

One day he had a conversation with his grandmother—a conversation that would forever change his life. During this conversation, his grandmother, a faith healer, helped him understand the attachment she had to the rituals she used for healing her patients. My son saw his own reflection in this interaction with his grandmother and was able

to clearly see all of his attachments. This is how his rebellion came to an end.

Although it took him a couple of years to completely assimilate this experience into his life, he finally decided to share it in a book. *The Five Levels of Attachment* is that book, and it is destined to transform the lives of millions of readers. It is written in a way that is simple, congruent, and easy to understand.

This book will help you gain awareness of how your attachments have created your reality, and how your belief system has been making all the decisions in the story of your life. It will also help you see how you create your identity based on the opinions and judgments of others around you. Don Miguel Ruiz Jr. explains how our beliefs become intimately connected to our identity, or who we think we are. This belief of what the truth is in turn creates all our attachments and all our emotional responses.

He also explains how our attachment to our beliefs distorts our perceptions, allowing us to readjust our perceptions until they conform to the rest of our belief system. This awareness helps us to easily understand how we create our own superstitions and might become fanatics of our own attachments.

He helps us realize that although we live in the present, our attachment makes us dream of a past that no longer exists, a past that is full of regret and drama. Our attachments also take us to an uncertain future full of fears that do not yet exist, making us feel unsafe.

By explaining how our attachments can be divided into five levels of intensity, he teaches us how to assess our own attachment to any particular belief that we have, and points out that the majority of the world's population lives within levels three and four, Identity and Internalization.

As you will see, don Miguel Jr. clearly states the influence attachment has over the decisions we make when designing the story of our life, and how these attachments move us away from reality. He also offers very effective tools that will help us improve the way we handle our levels of attachment and our resulting emotional reactions. This improvement will be reflected in the interactions we have with those around us, especially our loved ones.

This book is definitely destined to become a classic—one you will surely be reading again and again.

—DON MIGUEL RUIZ

Introduction

Everything is made of light. We are the stars; and the stars are us. When we see this, all of our senses are truly open and there is no need to interpret the world. In this moment, our full, unlimited potential is available to us. There is nothing blocking our way. . . .

—DON MIGUEL RUIZ, *THE FOUR AGREEMENTS*

My father, don Miguel Ruiz, a teacher and retired medical doctor, spent many thoughtful and transformative years interpreting our Toltec traditions to fit the world we live in today. The Toltecs were great women and men of knowledge who lived thousands of years ago in the area that is now known as south central Mexico. In the

Nahuatl language, *Toltec* means “artist,” and according to our teachings, the canvas for our art is life itself. I learned about the Toltec way of life through the oral traditions of my family, who (according to my paternal great-great-grandfather, don Exiquio) are direct descendants of the Toltecs of the Eagle Knight lineage. This knowledge came to me by way of my grandmother, Madre Sarita.

We call ourselves Toltecs not just because of our lineage, but because we are artists. Life is the canvas of our art, and the work of our tradition is to teach the life lessons that will help us create our masterpiece.

The Toltec tradition is not a religion, but rather a way of life in which our great masterpiece is living in happiness and love. It embraces spirit while honoring the great many masters of all of the world’s traditions. The whole point of all this work is to be happy, to enjoy life, and to enjoy the relationships with the people we love the most, starting with oneself.

I began my apprenticeship into my family’s tradition in San Diego, California, when I was fourteen years old. My seventy-nine-year-old grandmother, Madre Sarita, was my teacher and the spiritual head of our family. She was a *curandera*, a faith healer who helped people in her small temple in Barrio Logan, a neighborhood in San Diego,

with the power of her faith in God and love. Since my father was a medical doctor, the juxtaposition of the two forms of healing allowed me to see our tradition through different points of view.

I appreciated the power of my grandmother's words long before I had a firm grasp of their meaning. I also saw things that others could only describe as "magic" transformed into everyday happenings; miraculous healings were the norm for Madre Sarita. I still felt a strong pull from the outside world, though—the allure of hanging out with my friends, of being like everyone else. I moved back and forth between the Toltec world of my family and the mainstream world of school and friends, constantly struggling to find a way to combine my experiences and yet keep them separate at the same time.

Though she spoke no English, my grandmother gave sermons and lectures across the country. My apprenticeship began with translating my grandmother's lectures from Spanish to English. For many years, I awkwardly stumbled over her words, and my grandmother would just look at me and laugh.

One day she asked me if I knew why I stumbled. I had all sorts of answers: you are speaking too quickly, you don't give me a chance to catch up, some words don't have

a direct translation. . . . She just looked at me silently for a few moments and then asked, “Are you using knowledge, or is knowledge using you?”

I looked at her blankly. She continued, “When you translate, you try to express my words through what you already know, what you think is true. You do not hear me; you hear yourself. Imagine doing the same thing every single moment in life. If you are looking through life and translating it as it goes along, you will miss out on living it. But if you learn to *listen* to life, you will always be able to express the words as they come. Your knowledge has to become a tool you will use to guide you through life but that can also be put aside. Do not let knowledge translate everything you experience.”

I nodded in response, but it didn’t dawn on me until many years later what my grandmother was truly talking about. Throughout life, we constantly narrate, or commentate on, everything we do, say, see, touch, smell, taste, and hear. As natural storytellers, we continuously keep the plot moving forward, sometimes missing millions of subplots that are developing on their own. It is like taking a sip of wine and saying, “It’s a bit dry; it has definitely aged well, but I can taste the bark. I’ve had better.” Instead of simply experiencing the joy and flavors of the wine, we are

analyzing the flavor, trying to break it down and fit it into a context and language we already know. In doing this, we miss out on much of the actual experience.

This is a simple example of how we narrate life—explaining it, but, more importantly, justifying and judging it. Instead of taking an experience for what it is, we create a story to make it fit our beliefs. During Madre Sarita's talks, I had to completely shut down my thoughts, because if my mind's commentary got in the way I would miss out on her message. With this simple process, my grandmother showed me that if we only see the world through the filters of our preconceptions, we are going to miss out on actually living. After much practice, I eventually learned to close my eyes, shut out the world that existed outside my head, and translate *every single word* she said accurately.

Seeing beyond our filters—our accumulated knowledge and beliefs—does not always come naturally. We have spent years growing attached to them in various degrees, and they feel safe. Whatever we become attached to can begin to shape our future experiences and limit our perception of what exists outside our vocabulary. Like blinders on a horse, our attached beliefs limit our vision, and this in turn limits our perceived direction

in life. The stronger our level of attachment, the less we can see.

Think about your set of attached beliefs as a unique melody repeating itself in your mind. In a way, we are constantly trying to force our melody—the one we have become accustomed to hearing—onto other melodies, without realizing that often the melody is not our own, and perhaps it's not even the one we want to be playing. If we continue playing only what we know, never opening ourselves to listen to the other songs flowing around us, we are letting our attachment to our particular melody control us. Instead, choose to listen to other melodies playing. Perhaps you will contribute to them, adding a harmony or a bass line and just seeing where the music takes you. By letting go of your attachment to what you think the melody *should* be, you open yourself to the potential to create a unique and beautiful song of your own composition or a collaboration that can be shared with others.



In this book, I will teach you the Five Levels of Attachment. They are guideposts for gauging how attached you are to

your own point of view, as well as how open you are to other opinions and possibilities. As the level of attachment increases, one's identity, the "who I am," becomes more directly linked with knowledge, or the "what I know."

Knowledge and the information we perceive are distorted and corrupted by our narrators—the voices of our thoughts that debate the rightness or wrongness of every action we take and every thought we have. When we believe in something so strongly that we lose the awareness of our Authentic Self within the stories and comments of our internal narrators, we are allowing our preconceptions to make our decisions for us. Therefore, it is important to be aware of where we are on the scale of attachment with any particular belief. With awareness, we can regain the power to make our own decisions.

It is my hope that you will engage this book to measure how attached you are to various beliefs and ideas in your life that create your reality, your Personal Dream, and contribute to our collective reality and the Dream of the Planet. Only with this deeper awareness of yourself are you truly free to pursue your passion and experience your full potential. The choice is up to you!