



*"Burning contracts is an emotional practice that helps you identify unconscious agreements and behaviors, and release them consciously."*

~ Karla McLaren MEd

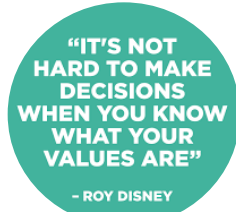
# TEARING UP CONTRACTS

IDENTIFY 'CONTRACTS' (RULES AND THE 'SHOULD's/SUPPOSED TO's') TO 'TEAR UP' AND LET GO OF

This allows you to identify beliefs, rules, subconscious agreements, societal expectations and the 'shaming should's' that do not represent your authentic values, highest good, goals, or even reality. Once identified you can choose which of these 'contracts' are AUTHENTIC (aligned your unique values) versus which are based on INAUTHENTIC SHAME.

This practice is eye-opening and empowering. You will clean layers of old subconscious programming that impacts how you feel about yourself, your perceptions, relationships, triggers and behaviors. Bringing to light and 'Tearing up Contracts' is also something you may incorporate into your emotional health hygiene as you see fit, whether it be weekly, monthly, or even yearly. To start, it is imperative to understand Authentic Shame versus Inauthentic Shame:

## CONTRACTS YOU WANT TO STRENGTHEN AUTHENTIC (HEALTHY) SHAME



Based on your morals, values, rules and boundaries you agree to willingly and consciously. Authentic Shame guides you away from harmful and self-sabotaging impulses. Learn to be mindful of what shame feels like to you, so you can listen to it.

Authentic shame is healthy. In fact, once you realize what value or expectation you have violated (or about to violate), you will have identified why you are feeling the deep pain of shame. When you correct your wrongdoing, Authentic Shame will naturally lift with a sense of relief and self-forgiveness.

Examples: Honesty; compassion for others; eat well, don't yell at others, fitness regimen for ideal weight and overall health; maintain balanced boundaries

## CONTRACTS YOU MAY WANT TO 'TEAR-UP' INAUTHENTIC (TOXIC) SHAME



Subconscious 'agreements' that stem from childhood, societal pressure and others' opinions, expectations, cultural norms, rules, and control. Based on what you perceive others want you to be (perfect, good-looking, over-achiever, always happy, always 'normal').

Inauthentic Shame is focused on getting validation, approval, and acting a certain way due to fear of rejection, not pleasing family, not fitting-in, not being good enough, etc., rather than your genuine values desires. This gut-wrenching, fear-based shame is unrelenting and never satisfied, no matter how perfect or successful you are.

Examples: I need to always be nice; being nervous or sad is weak; I need to look or act perfect to be loved; I am never enough; I should be happy alone; only losers are single

## IDENTIFY CONTRACTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO REMOVE FROM YOUR LIFE

What **behaviors or choices** come to mind when you think of something you've been doing over and over, that has been *causing harm*, trouble, resentment, frustration or pain in your life?

What do these repeated behaviors or choices say about you, in your opinion?

What kind of harm, pain, resentment, or frustration has it caused? Describe.

Are these **behaviors or choices** aligned with living within your genuine value system, or is it something you feel you should be doing or not doing due to a fear or perhaps others' expectations?

What do you fear will happen if you continue these **behaviors or choices** over and over?

What could you do differently to feel good about this aspect of your life?

What do you fear will happen if you realize and choose a new way of behaving?

Who or what will be disappointed or what is at risk if you choose this new way?

What do you keep telling yourself you SHOULD be okay with but you're really not - whether it be in your relationships, career, friendships, family dynamic, etc.? What is the first thing that comes to mind? The second?

Who or what experience instilled this belief, in terms of what is acceptable or not?

Are you truly okay with this aspect or is it a 'contract' you've been trying to force yourself to agree to?

What don't you like about it? What do you like about it, if anything?

What do you think this says about you as a person and your values?

What **expectation or belief** do you have about yourself, whether true or not, that you can see has been *causing harm*, trouble, resentment, or pain in your life?

How could you change this **expectation or belief** in order to live more aligned with your values, needs and genuine desires in life?

## IDENTIFYING BELIEFS, PATTERNS, AND THOUGHTS THAT ARE NOT SERVING YOU

### EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU MAY WANT TO LET GO OF AND 'TEAR UP YOUR CONTRACT WITH'



**EMOTIONAL EXPECTATIONS:** How do you believe you're SUPPOSED to feel like? Happy all the time. Full of high energy. Never sad, disappointed, or hurt. Always hopeful. Never nervous. Perhaps you think you should trust everyone all the time, or that you should feel comfortable around strangers or even people who have wronged you. These are examples of unrealistic expectations that can leave you feeling let-down by yourself and your emotions over and over again.



**INTELLECTUAL RULES:** What do you think you're supposed to think? Are you more interested in concrete facts or exploratory imagination? Are you focused on making sure you think positive at all times. Only positive thoughts about your past and future? What does it mean to be a realist, a pessimist, or an optimist? Should you only think good about everyone in your family, friends, etc.?



**PHYSICAL RULES:** What beliefs do you have surrounding your appearance and your financial success? What do you need to look like in order to be considered acceptable, lovable, good-looking? How much should you weight? What should you be doing to impress others? What are you telling yourself about what is success versus failure?



**RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL EXPECTATIONS:** Are you living in alignment with your belief system or not? Are there aspects of your belief system that you do not agree with, yet you feel bad about not following? How are you supposed to pray and behave? Are you practicing your spirituality? Are you supposed to be peaceful all the time?



**RELATIONSHIPS:** How do you expect your partner to be? Are you critical of your partner or yourself? Are you a people-pleaser? Fail to voice your opinions or needs in fear of being rejected? Do you have patterns of being unable to trust even with those who proved trustworthy? Are you reactive? Ashamed to be single? Ashamed of having the desire to meet the right partner in life? Identify beliefs that may be sabotaging your relationships or causing distress.

Describe the **healthy** 'contracts' you have in your life right now (agreements that are in-line with your personal values and belief system that resonate with you). This isn't going to be a perfect list. The purpose is to get you feeling and thinking about your programming and subconscious agreements.

EMOTIONAL EXPECTATIONS:

INTELLECTUAL RULES:

PHYSICAL RULES:

RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL EXPECTATIONS:

RELATIONSHIPS:

How do these healthy contracts provide value in your life?

Describe your personal values and genuine beliefs surrounding the contracts.

What kinds of **unhealthy** 'contracts' do you have with yourself, that you may or may not have seen until now?

EMOTIONAL EXPECTATIONS:

INTELLECTUAL RULES:

PHYSICAL RULES:

RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL EXPECTATIONS:

RELATIONSHIPS:

What do you think would happen if you no longer agreed to these 'contracts'?

Describe any subconscious habits and beliefs that surround the contracts, and the harm it has caused you.

Describe your personal values and genuine beliefs surrounding the contracts. Do you want to instill a new contracts to replace the old... new 'guidelines' to live by that serve you well?

Use additional paper for more space if needed. Once you feel you have written enough to feel satisfied you may write a list of the unhealthy 'contracts' you want to no longer agree to. You may literally **tear up your list, or keep for your records to reflect on later**. As long as the intention is to allow yourself freedom from these contracts that do not serve your highest good.