

Contracts: Agreements

What are the contracts and agreements you are running right now? Which are you even aware of? What does it take for you to break them in an instant? Who do you break them for? How do you get snagged into other people's contracts and agreements and why do you put up with that happening? What permission do you give? Because you do give it.

We have lots of formal contracts and agreements with banks, building societies, credit cards, accountants, HMRC, services, Gyms, medical providers in the widest sense, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, marriages, landlords, employers, employees, clients and customers for example. You can probably think of lots more. And these we take seriously, affixing our signature sometimes without reading the small print. How to unleash, unravel, uncover these programmes running?

A baker's dozen of questions to think about:

- What would you love to do if ...
- What's the 'on hold' till you have time?
- When you look in the mirror who do you see?
- How do you know when you are being slippery / evasive / procrastinating?
- If you dared to demand it, what would that 'it' be?
- What is your best kept talent?
- Which part of you do you unconsciously or even consciously write out of contracts?
- Who always takes precedence even when you have promised yourself that they won't?
- Which piece of music sums up who you truly are?
- What filters are we using? What out dated programmes are we running?
- How do you know when you are on the verge of breaking a contract?
- How do we **agree to con** ourselves?
- Why is it so hard to shift the dial?

These are the tip of the iceberg ... the very tip of the tip. It's the rest that fascinates me.

Outcomes you might take away – if you choose?

- Clarity re which contracts you want to keep and those you want to let go
- Strategies, techniques and tools to help you with your contracting going forward
- Awareness of how to spot when contracts are out of alignment with your desires
- Ability to spot other people's contracts, how they chime or clash with your and how to negotiate the win win
- Know absolutely when you are trying to fool yourself that what you are agreeing to is OK

Contracts interestingly contains **con** and **acts**. What cons us? As a result how do we act and why? Agreements contains **agree** and **ment** [OK not spelt correctly for this purpose]. We agree and at the time we meant it. But did we either agree or mean it?

Consent it is said begins with obedience ... so the 'good girl' syndrome. Helena Kennedy says that 'consent is the authority we give to XYZ to have authority over us'. From an early age we internalise forms of authority, the rules by which we live. We develop ways of behaving, routines, patterns, habits all possibly relevant at a particular time which we forget to regularly check out if still applicable and de-clutter.

We shackle, indulge, sabotage ourselves consciously or unconsciously with the words we use. 'Just this once', 'Once I --- then I will ---', 'it's for the greater good' all are phrases capable of so much trouble. Compromises we'd never normally make suddenly seem reasonable and actions we'd never usually take become defensible. How did that happen?

Is the devil in the detail which we forget to check out? What exactly is the deal on offer? 'It will only take a few minutes of your time' is probably not true. Where do you sacrifice your beliefs, make compromises, take a detour? When does one capitulation become one too many? How high is the price demanded?

During a Radio 4 interview recently Professor Mary Beard when being asked about whether she and her male colleagues received equal pay said 'There's a problem but I don't really mind'. And she immediately said 'you've snagged me into saying that!'

What are your agreements, your contracts that you get snagged, segue, slide, leap into? What part of those contracts, agreements are you prepared to break consciously or unconsciously and at whose expense? Are there patterns that you can spot?

Illusions are such delightful things mainly because we convince ourselves to believe that they are true, facts, actual. Imagine this: you go for an interview and bring what you appear to do. That gets you hired because it's appearance, manner, expressiveness, interests, presence, smile, handshake. Then reality kicks in with what we actually can do which gets us fired as it is to do with knowledge, acquired skills, training, experience, education and credentials. So turn the clock back to the interview and focus on what we will do. This is all to do with attitude, beliefs, self-motivation, stability and persistence, maturity and judgement, capacity to learn, temperament and behaviour patterns.

Every picture tells a story and a picture is worth a 1000 words. What does this picture tell you about the contracts / agreements that have been made intentionally or unintentionally?



If illusion does begin it all what are the cons? What does con you that you fall for every time?

What are tr-aps? What is playing with the 'acts part'? Always wise to remember that words are never innocent. The tr-aps are fabulous in their simplicity and insidiousness. How do you spot them? Actually you probably love them so much that you will be desolate to let them go, bereft even!

The tr-aps are: the honey ones; the butterfly nets; the black holes. How do you spot them?

The **honey trap** is where you find yourself saying yes even though you know you don't want to do it, don't like doing it, don't have the time nor capacity to do it. The honey trap often starts with a fabulous buttering up of how good you are at whatever it is, it couldn't happen without you, your expertise / presence is what the client is demanding. Another angle could be 'take a moment to look at this' or 'it'll only take a few minutes in total' when a week is more realistic.

The **butterfly net** is when you suddenly find yourself involved in something, wonder how on earth you got there and can think of no way to extricate yourself. The more you try the more entangled you become. This one counts on you taking the line of least resistance always.



And **black holes** ... you'll definitely need a card to deal with these. Black holes are when we have indulged in particular behaviours for long they have become our accepted way of being. People think it is who we are and interact with us on that basis. We get grumpy all the time because deep down we know it isn't us. We get resentful, on a short fuse. The least thing triggers explosive, negative behaviour.

Back in the 60's The Animals sang 'but I'm just a soul whose intentions are good, Oh Lord please don't let me be misunderstood '.

So far this has been from the perspective of us and what they do to us with informal contracts and agreements as well as the ones we initiate ourselves. Switch perspective 180 degrees and ask how do we do this to others? Oooops!

How brave can you be? Choose to share some of the contacts and agreements you make with yourself and / or find yourself involved in. Once shared how can you explore potential choices available to you to shift outdated, outmoded/ no longer relevant / nor wanted / of no use. What if you could ... how relieved might you be to have the weight of not wanted contracts and agreements no longer on your shoulders.

Top tips as you get clearer and clearer about having what you want not what you find you have:

- Focus on what is right for you, that makes you feel good, is holistically supportive
- Compliment you lots and lots ... I dare you to
- See who people really are rather than the spin they present
- Give yourself permission to be creative and express yourself
- Laugh lots and lots
- Eat well, nourish your body and soul
- Be curious about what serves you best

What was an aha! moment for you? What resonated? How might you change your thinking? Being that we cannot change the past no control what happens in the future the only effect that works is being present in this moment, the present moment. What will you agree to and/or contract into by when and how will you be accountable to you? What will you do with what you have learnt?

And 2 participants in a Contracts: Agreements workshop said this:

"As an engineer, I had no idea what to expect at a Contracts event which was taking part in a law firm. It was a phenomenal surprise to explore the underlying contracts that we all make with ourselves. How when we design them we don't always think on the non-negotiable parts or what we always tend to leave out. That afternoon gave me the courage to review the contracts that I made with myself and identify how these defined my behaviour, to take action when necessary." **Patricia Patilla Sanchez Development Engineer Rolls Royce**

'Halina always makes me see things in a different way – more than once I've thought 'No – I don't agree with that' about something she's said only to find myself doing a 180 degree turn when I've reflected on it. I always come away from any discussion with Halina with a concrete, achievable method for changing things for the better – if you're in a thicket, Halina's wise words will always help you to navigate through.' **Kate Redshaw Burges Salmon**