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Silent Agreements: How to Free Your Relationships of Unspoken Expectations

Drs. Linda D. Anderson, Sonia R. Banks, and Michele L. Owens

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“Fear is a great silencer that restrains vulnerable engagement. . . . Silent Agreements unearth[s] this widespread phenomenon with great clarity and offer[s] a well-thought-out process that makes truth-sharing and healing possible.” —Harville Hendrix, PhD, and Helen LaKelly Hunt, PhD, authors of *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples*

Whether romantic, platonic, professional, or familial, the relationships in your life likely have bound you to silent agreements, the implicit “rules” of relationships that arise from unspoken beliefs and expectations that both parties hold. In their new book, *Silent Agreements: How to Free Your Relationships of Unspoken Expectations* (Rodale Books; Trade Paperback Original; \$16.99; on sale May 7, 2019), clinical psychologists Drs. Linda D. Anderson, Sonia R. Banks, and Michele L. Owens will help readers define the silent expectations in their lives by supplying the tools needed to work toward healthier communication.

Many silent agreements might sound familiar: “My significant other should recognize when I need their help,” or “My boss doesn’t offer me a raise, and knows I won’t ask for one.” Silent agreements arise from long-held beliefs people have about themselves and the world around them, starting from their earliest experiences, which are reinforced as we grow and mature. These agreements can hinder our relationships, remaining undiscussed because of fear, aversion to conflict, feelings of obligation, or guilt. And because neither party will address the issue, silent agreements can cause unhappiness and resentment on both sides.

With stories and exercises, Drs. Anderson, Banks, and Owens teach readers how to navigate productive “clear the air” conversations that can lead to healthier relationships. In *Silent Agreements*, you will find comprehensive guidelines on how to have conversations about the most difficult topics in all relationships, including:

-Sex and commitment

-Money and the workplace

-Family relationships and our health

Readers will learn how to resolve the land-mine issues in their lives by exploring their own motivations and breaking the silences we perpetuate—knowingly or unknowingly—every day.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

LINDA D. ANDERSON, PhD, is a professor, organizational manager, clinician, and consulting psychologist. She earned a doctorate in clinical psychology from Columbia University and has been in private practice for over 25 years, helping adults, adolescents, and children transform their lives.

SONIA R. BANKS, PhD, LCP, is a clinical and behavioral change consulting psychologist with over 25 years of experience in private practice and organizational impact. She applies research trends to relationship science in her work with adolescents, couples, families, communities, and organizational teams to support and build sustainable learning systems that advocate for their human potential.

MICHELE L. OWENS, PhD, is a clinical psychologist in private practice in New York City with over 30 years of experience. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Case Western Reserve University and both master's and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology from the Gordon F. Derner School of Psychology. She trains and mentors mental health professionals and presents workshops on subjects that include relationship enhancement, effective interpersonal communication, and living and working in a diverse world.