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## **THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE: Know What Boosts Your Value, Kills Your Chances, & Will Make You Happier**

By Cy Wakeman

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“The best way to be valued at work is to add a ton of value, and Cy Wakeman shows you exactly how to do it in today's fast-moving, technology-fueled workplace. She'll also guide you to getting your MOJO back as an employee. An invaluable tool for those who want success at work and at home.”

—**Marshall Goldsmith, *New York Times* bestselling author, *MOJO* and  
*What Got You Here Won't Get You There***

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While the American economy sputters along, the workforce is suffering a crisis of its own, with consecutive years of alarmingly high levels of job dissatisfaction. Gallup estimates that 69% of employees are disengaged or actively disengaged, and a recent survey by Right Management revealed that 86% of Americans are so dissatisfied that they plan to look for a new job in 2013. Employees feel overworked, underappreciated, and fed up.

To explain this widespread unhappiness, many have pointed fingers at the lingering cutbacks of the recession and the ill effects of our technology-fueled, always-on work culture. But according to mental health counselor turned workplace consultant Cy Wakeman, neither are to blame.

In her new book **THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE: Know What Boosts Your Value, Kills Your Chances, & Will Make You Happier** (Jossey-Bass; April 30, 2013), Wakeman delivers a tough reality-check: *you are the source of your own misery*, and only you have the power to end it. Grounded in the principles of psychology and her experiences as a mental health counselor, Wakeman argues that a person's unhappiness at work has nothing to do with their circumstances. Rather, it's a direct result of the drama they create in reaction to those circumstances.

After a successful career as a counselor, Cy went on to spend the next 18 years as a speaker, consultant, and trainer, working with over 200 companies each year to reduce drama in the workplace. Drawing on extensive on-

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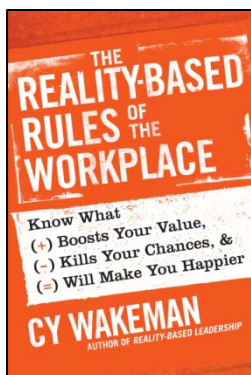
the-ground surveys, research, and one-on-one sessions, **THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE** reveals that the happiest and most successful people don't have better opportunities, better bosses, more empowering cultures, or the most extensive benefits; they simply refuse to be victims of their circumstances. Happy workers have high levels of personal accountability, defined as the core belief that you make an impact on your circumstances and can choose your own course. Wakeman calls them "reality-based" workers, and the key difference is that they accept their challenges as the conditions under which they must succeed – and spend less energy complaining about them. And these employees are not only happier at work, but they are drastically more valuable to their organization, as well.

"I conducted a study with more than 50,000 employees, and discovered that the people who were highly accountable were both happier and more successful than others, regardless of their circumstances," says Wakeman. "The success factor is a no-brainer. When you are a resilient, personally accountable employee who freely gives your talent and is willing to support the organizational direction without drama, you are a great deal to your boss, and you are the one that companies are looking to hire."

Wakeman acknowledges that the challenges workers face today are real, and they are tough. But rather than seeing those challenges as the things that must change in order to succeed, Wakeman equips readers with the knowledge they need to succeed in spite of them – and become happy, high-performing, reality-based employees who actually look forward to going to work. Chock-full with original research, practical assessments and tools, and real-life stories of people who have followed Wakeman's advice, **THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE** lays out the five realities that people must embrace in order to become happy and bulletproof at work (see attached). Along the way, Wakeman also helps readers calculate their true value at work, ditch the (often subconscious) drama, and kick the self-sabotaging behaviors that are making them miserable and holding them back from success.

"For too many people, work is a huge source of stress and unhappiness," says Wakeman. "I want to help them see that it doesn't have to be that way. Work isn't something to dread or survive. It can be a place where you live your passions and truly make a difference. Your circumstances are what they are, but your reaction to them is up to you. In other words, your suffering is optional."

With Wakeman's signature tough-love approach, **THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE** offers an indispensable guide to achieving career happiness and success by empowering readers to ditch the drama, take back control of their happiness, and turn the job they have into the job they've always wanted.



**THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE:**

**Know What Boosts Your Value, Kills Your Chances, & Will Make You Happier**

By Cy Wakeman

Jossey-Bass

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## **About the Author**



**Cy Wakeman** is a dynamic national keynote speaker, business consultant, author, and trainer.

After a successful career as a counselor, Wakeman has spent the past 18 years consulting with some of the biggest companies in industries ranging from manufacturing, banking, government, high-tech, and healthcare, to help them incorporate reality-based concepts into leader and employee training programs.

Wakeman is a highly sought-after conference headliner, delivering over 150 keynote programs and reaching a combined audience of

over 250,000 annually. She holds a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation from the National Speakers' Association, placing her within the top 3 percent of speakers worldwide. Wakeman also received the 2012 Outstanding Leadership Award from the World HRD Congress in Mumbai.

Wakeman's first book, *Reality-Based Leadership*, is a straight-forward and practical guide for leaders who want to reduce office drama and improve personal accountability with their teams. Her new book, *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*, looks at this issue from an individual employee perspective.

## **The Five Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace**

1. **DON'T HOPE TO BE LUCKY. CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY.** Your level of accountability – not your circumstances – determines your level of happiness. When you stop making excuses for why you can't succeed, you start looking for opportunities, create better results, and watch as more good things happen to you.
2. **DITCH THE DRAMA.** Most of you are not consciously trying to create drama, but unconsciously many of you do it all the time – by complaining, creating stories, and arguing with your reality. When you conserve the energy that used to be siphoned into drama, you will use it where it will have its highest return on investment – assessing the facts of your situation and choosing a response that adds the most value.
3. **BUY-IN IS NOT OPTIONAL. YOUR ACTION, NOT OPINION, ADDS VALUE.** When faced with a new task or project, top value comes from being able to deliver despite the challenges you see, not from pointing them out. If you are not the decision-maker, if no one asked for your risk/benefit analysis, give your leaders and coworkers the gift of getting over it and getting to work.
4. **CHANGE IS OPPORTUNITY.** People have become ridiculously averse to even the word “change” – let alone the concept. But in today's world, the minimum expectation is that you will not freak out when your cheese is moved. Let go of the idea that things should stay the same, and get flexible enough to flow seamlessly into what's next.
5. **SUCCEED ANYWAY.** Your challenges are not imagined – they are real, and they are tough. But these challenges are not the reason you can't succeed. They are the circumstances under which you must succeed. Accept them as reality and start focusing on your mindset and approach – the only two things you can control.

## **Other Topics Explored in THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE**

- Why your last performance review was a lie, and how to calculate your true value
- Research that the average employee spends two hours each day engaging in drama – drama that is making them miserable and putting their job at risk
- The truth about employee engagement, and why it's not your boss' job to make you happy
- The four factors of personal accountability that will deliver the happiness you want and the results your organization needs
- The one question you must ask your boss to improve your job security
- The five most-common reasons people hate their job – and how to stop using them as excuses

## **Advance Praise for THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE**

“I don't know how she topped *Reality-Based Leadership*, but she did. This is, simply put, a GREAT book! Every business needs to buy every employee a copy of it.”

—**Larry Winget, *New York Times* bestselling author, *Shut Up, Stop Whining and Get A Life and It's Called Work for a Reason!***

“Cy Wakeman's approach and methodology have made a profound difference with myself and my team. If you are interested in taking back control of your personal business success, read *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*. Every person within an organization can reclaim his or her ability to add significant value, and she will show you how.”

—**John McVeigh, president, O.C. Tanner Recognition Company Limited**

“This book is a must-read for anyone who has ever felt dissatisfied, unappreciated, or fed up with his or her job. In *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*, Cy Wakeman delivers (with tough love and humor) an incredibly liberating reality check: you are the cause of your own suffering, and only you have the power to end it. Wakeman compels readers to ditch the excuses, take back control of their happiness at work, and discover that the jobs they've always wanted were there all along.”

—**Chris Powell, executive vice president, human resources, Scripps Networks Interactive**

“It gets more challenging every year to ensure employees are highly engaged, and it's a critical concern for leaders in nearly every organization today. *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* reveals what's been missing from well-intentioned, yet often ineffective, engagement programs: an expectation that employees have significant responsibility for their happiness at work. Once we embrace the reality that engagement is tied to personal accountability, organizations will have a happier, more engaged workforce, and healthier bottom lines.”

—**Caroline Stockdale, senior vice president, human resources, Medtronic**

“In *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*, Cy Wakeman challenges us to take a look in the mirror, give up our self-defeating stories, and accept responsibility for our own success. With her quick wit and compelling stories, Wakeman turns doubters into believers who demonstrate their value and find happiness at work. She's the straight-shooting yet empowering mentor you wish you had.”

—**Philip Wilner, vice president and medical director, behavioral health, New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center**

“Cy Wakeman's new book is for every member of the workforce who wants to elevate his or her performance to a higher level. *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* provides invaluable tools for converting the energy spent on feelings of frustration, complacency, and hopelessness into fuel for finding happiness and achieving your fullest potential. Cy's philosophy and tools have been invaluable in helping our leaders learn to embrace accountability, and the positive response from employees has been overwhelming.”

—**Alyson Guthrie, chief human resources officer, Crowell & Moring**

“One of my biggest disappointments as a CEO is the significant number of good employees we have lost because some incident changed their attitude almost overnight. It is great to finally have a book that helps employees understand how management views them and that they can totally control that perception. The greatest benefit to *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* is that it teaches us all how to be more accountable in our own careers. Every college student should read this to prepare them for the real world and how to thrive in it.”

—**Mike Rydin, president and CEO, HCSS**

“In *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*, Cy Wakeman reveals that the key ingredient to both high performance and happiness is simple: personal accountability. With a no-holds-barred approach and practical tools, Wakeman helps employees discover a newfound sense of happiness and control in their work.”

—**Kim Ferrarie, senior vice president, human resources, Air Liquide**

“Cy Wakeman’s newest book is for every member of the workforce who wants to elevate his or her performance to a higher level of greatness. *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* provides tools for converting any disengagement you are feeling toward your current company into powerful action to re-engage and achieve your fullest potential. We are using Cy’s philosophy and tools in our leadership development programs, and the response has been overwhelming! I highly recommend this book if you are ready to challenge yourself to let go of any blockers that are preventing you from being your best.”

—**Ken Myers, senior vice president and chief human resources officer, Hospira, Inc.**

“*The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* is an essential guide to facing the real challenges you deal with every day and seizing the opportunities they represent, instead of feeling victimized. Cy Wakeman shows how you can adopt a no-nonsense approach to owning your career and becoming the kind of employee no organization would want to lose.”

—**Ed Bjurstrom, general manager, Gilead Sciences**

“*The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* is spot on! It provides a suite of tangible tools that empower employees to take control of their work life. We all want to determine our own destiny, how we contribute at work, and how we feel about it. This book is key to moving forward! The messages Cy provides are easy to understand and apply across environments.”

—**Shannon Bell, executive coach and organizational development consultant**

“If you are an employee or you have employees, *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* is a must-read for thriving in today’s marketplace. Cy provides simple steps to developing a culture where employees are contributors and drivers of your basic operating principles, and she provides tips on how to enhance business results by creating relationships that are meaningful and success-filled for employees, coworkers, and your business.”

—**Cindy Williams, organizational development specialist, Bayer CropScience**

“*The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* is a gem for anyone holding a job, and for those who evaluate the work of other people. Totally engaging, funny at times, and an easy read. This book is packed with questions to ask yourself and guidance toward the best, most productive answers to drive success for yourself, your coworkers, and your business. Cy has hit this one out of the park!”

—**Gordon Whitten, serial entrepreneur and innovation expert**

## **An interview with Cy Wakeman, author of THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE**

**Q: What is the reality-based revolution?**

**A:** You can have peace, sanity, and happiness at work, and still achieve amazing results that don't have to come at the expense of your personal well-being. It's a concept that is taking over the world.

**Q: Why is it own responsibility—not our manager's—to calculate our precise value to our employer?**

**A:** Most managers lie—not because they are bad people, but because they believe their employees can't handle true, honest feedback. For this reason, you can't expect accurate assessments from your manager. You can (and should) use your manager as a source of input as you evaluate your own value.

When you take responsibility for calculating your own value regularly, it becomes highly unlikely that you will get surprise negative feedback during your annual review. Taking personal responsibility for your value returns the ownership to you. I have found that this is the key to personal happiness. It helps you know what levers to pull to see the change you want in your life, without relying on others.

**Q: What is emotional expensiveness, and why does it carry more weight than any other factor in the new value equation?**

**A:** Emotional expensiveness is the total “cost” of you, in addition to your salary and benefits. It is your freak out factor, your drama quotient. Emotionally expensive people blame their lack of results on their circumstances or others. They resist change. They move beyond the facts of a situation to speculation and add a tremendous amount of drama. They use their opinions to shoot down ideas, rather than figuring out how to make things work.

Emotional expensiveness has a multiplier effect. One person's emotional expensiveness creates drama that affects everyone, making it a greater liability. When you think about the people that exhaust you, does it really matter how good they are at their jobs? Not typically. We would rather work with someone who is easy to work with and doesn't drain us emotionally. Organizations are no different.

**Q: How can boosting your value make you more successful and more fulfilled in your career?**

**A:** Once you know how leaders in organizations actually determine your value, you can take steps to improve that value. Rock star performers who constantly hone their skills and stay drama-free get noticed very quickly. If that doesn't happen, they are incredibly marketable. Really good people who have options are bound to be happier than less-than-stellar employees who allow their skills to fizzle out and become engrossed in stress and drama.

**Q: What can fans of your first book expect from *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*?**

**A:** Fans of *Reality-Based Leadership* will see that I've provided a road map for everyone on how to be one of the favorites. The rules of the game have changed, and I've helped to demystify those changes as they relate to being a valuable member of any organization. In *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*, I help readers understand that I am on their side. I want the world to be a happier place, and it starts with taking personal accountability.

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