



Reality-Based Leadership: Ditch the Drama, Restore Sanity to the Workplace, and Turn Excuses into Results

By Cy Wakeman

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Recent polls show that 71% of workers think about quitting their jobs every day. That number would be shocking-if people actually were quitting. Worse, they go to work, punching time clocks and collecting pay checks, while completely checked out emotionally. In *Reality-Based Leadership*, expert Fast Company blogger Cy Wakeman reveals how to be the kind of leader who changes the way people think about and perceive their circumstances-one who deals with the facts, clarifies roles, gives clear and direct feedback, and insists that everyone do the same-without drama or defensiveness.

Filled with dynamic examples, innovative tools, and diagnostic tests, this book shows you how to become a Reality-Based Leader, revealing how to:

- Uncover destructive thought patterns with yourself and others
- Diffuse drama and lead the person in front of you
- Stop managing and start leading, empowering others to focus on facts and think for themselves

Equipped with a facts-based, confident approach, you will free yourself from the frustrations you face at work and transform yourself into a *Reality-Based Leader*, with the ability to liberate and inspire others.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

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Amazon Exclusive: Q&A with Author Cy Wakeman



Why did you write this book?

I wanted to give leaders a huge reality check! Having worked with leaders and HR executives for more than twenty years, I found that the traditional philosophies, tools, and techniques leaders relied on were simply not working. We had led leaders to believe that their jobs were to create “perfect” work environments and basically coddle their employees, when in fact, the organizations that have thrived in challenging times focused not as much on creating stress-free, nirvana-like environments, but on “bullet-proofing” their people so that they are able to succeed regardless of the circumstances they face.

As I travelled the country speaking and consulting, I heard over and over again that the reason businesses were struggling was because they were faced with incredibly difficult circumstances. I just could not buy into this philosophy of helplessness. It seemed like a huge excuse for lack of great leadership. Don’t get me wrong; we are certainly in challenging times. But we have been in challenging times in the past and let me make a prediction—we will be faced with challenging times again at some point in the future. Here’s the

reality check—the fact that times are challenging is not the source of our pain. The source of our pain is the absence of great leadership based in reality. If current leadership is not creating the results or the quality of life that we would like, then these times call for a new type of leader. We need leaders who are willing and able to recreate mindsets in order to change circumstances and lead in a new and revolutionary way.

What is the biggest change that employees are facing today?

Actually, it is not what you might expect. The biggest change for leaders and their employees to adjust to is the fact that most of us have been replaced by Google. Our opinions just don't add the value they used to, and yet we insist on having input, giving our two cents, and shaping decisions when the real value we add is using our expertise to make the decisions work. Most people have simply refused to make this transition. How did we get into this mess? Well, human resources gospel has always been to make employees feel as if their opinions counted. After all, this is America, and democracy is a good thing, right? Not always. We know the value of democracy in a representative government, but in reality, what value does an opinion contribute to an organization? Most of the time, a single person's opinion adds zero value and actually drains resources. Non-decision makers offering their opinions usually derails the team into a search for consensus, rather than driving all efforts going toward implementing with excellence.

For 90% of people in any organization at any given time, their role is simply to be informed—not to make or comment on a decision. If you subscribe to the idea that everyone's opinion has to count, in effect you are handing out veto power to the majority while only a minority has the power to say "yes." This sets up a paradigm in which it's very difficult to take positive action. You also create a situation in which people feel buy-in is optional. This leads to resistance that can stall or even sabotage your plans. Reality-Based Leaders are clear that the highest value the talent can offer is to implement with excellence. They value action over opinion.

What recommendation do you make in the book and in your consulting that "shocks" leaders the most?

Readers are definitely most shocked and quite honestly very relieved when they hear me encourage them to play favorites in order to get great results. Somehow, in our quest as leaders to be respectful of legitimate differences in employees, it appears that we have become a very careful, hesitant group. A great number of "leaders" have begun to pretend that all employees are created equal and are delivering equal results and value to the organization—when the reality is actually quite different.

A number of leaders are colluding with their own employees—protecting them from the consequences of their own actions and mindsets. Many leaders allow employees to decide for themselves what mindsets they will adopt and what behaviors and actions the organization will compensate. Some leaders are the victims of emotional blackmail, falling prey to the many invalid conditions and objections placed on them by their own teams. These objections used by employees have worked well to keep their leaders from insisting on greatness, continuous improvement, adaptability, and all the attributes that contribute to an employee's success in today's changing times. These "conditions" have induced some leaders into a type of coma where they depend solely on a few great employees who they don't reward, because they're afraid that other employees will come to the realization that life's not fair.

In the book, I teach you how to be a great leader who plays favorites, rewarding actual results.

In the book, you challenge quite a few traditional HR practices such as the annual employee satisfaction survey. What can the harm be in asking employees what would make their workplace better?

Most leaders have jumped blindly on the "empowerment" bandwagon, working hard to give their employees the power to direct their own workflow. Great in theory; who would not want to be self-directing and free?

Unfortunately, those adopting this philosophy dangerously assume that those being empowered are also highly personally accountable. In fact, *empowerment without accountability is chaos*. Empowerment and accountability must go hand in hand—when we fund one without insisting on the other, resources are wasted and dysfunction reigns.

To make matters worse, leaders have blindly bought into the concept that engagement and happiness come from lack of stress or issues at work. Actually, engagement and happiness come from the level of personal accountability one exhibits in his or her own life. So instead of spending resources on surveys to find out how to change the circumstances of your employees, spend your time and energy on teaching your employees how to succeed in spite of their circumstances. Work to “bullet-proof” the people instead of attempting to make their world a cozier place. Once your people are resilient, learning-agile, and personally accountable, they are immune to the random “shocks” that come their way. Their engagement actually increases with this approach as they gain the confidence that they can succeed in spite of the facts, not from you softening their world.

Review

“One of the rare few outstanding business books...I loved it”

—From the Foreword by Larry Winget, author, *It's Called Work for a Reason!*

“Cy Wakeman deftly shows how Reality-Based Leaders embrace personal accountability—and empower others to do the same. This is a dynamic, winning book that all leaders and managers looking to make their organizations outstanding should read!”

—John G. Miller, author, *QBQ! The Question Behind the Question* and *Outstanding!*

“I haven’t been so moved by a business thinker and visionary in years. Cy Wakeman’s message has been heard before – that to truly succeed and grow, we have to check our egos at the door. But never has this counter-intuitive insight been so compellingly argued as in this terrific book.”

—Doug Smith, CEO, Ervin and Smith Advertising and Public Relations

“Cy Wakeman’s approach to *Reality-Based Leadership* is practical, relevant and exactly what today’s leaders really need. This is definitely a must-read for every success-oriented leader and manager.”

—Jeff A. Hurt, CEO, Southwest Credit

“Cy Wakeman is a brilliant story-teller and coach. She has a profound ability to tell a story that makes you laugh while at the same time cutting through your defenses to help you recognize your need to change. I have worked with Cy for years, and the lessons in this book have helped me create better organizations and a better me.”

—Jason Lauritsen, vice president, Human Resources, Union Bank and Trust Company

“You can’t afford to lead your organization without this book in hand! Cy Wakeman writes with candor, humor and unconventional wisdom about how we can be wildly successful.”

—Amy Dorn Kopelan, president, Bedlam Entertainment Inc, and coauthor, *I Didn’t See It Coming!*

“Cy Wakeman’s book delivers a powerful message. The bottom line- this is required reading for all leaders!”

—Russ Olson, President and CEO, Liberty Bank

From the Inside Flap

Recent polls show that 71% of workers think about quitting their jobs every day.

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- Uncover destructive thought patterns within yourself and others
- Diffuse drama and lead the person in front of you
- Stop managing and start leading, empowering others to focus on facts and think for themselves

Reality-Based Leadership also offers specific strategies to apply when working with teams, to break through resistance, conflicts, and excuses and solve long-standing problems.

Equipped with a facts-based, confident approach, you will free yourself from the frustrations you face at work and transform yourself into a *Reality-Based Leader*, with the ability to liberate and inspire others.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Johnnie Lewis:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book called *Reality-Based Leadership: Ditch the Drama, Restore Sanity to the Workplace, and Turn Excuses into Results*? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have different opinion?

Tonia Lee:

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive right now, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a guide your ability to survive increase then having chance to remain than other is high. In your case who want to start reading a book, we give you that *Reality-Based Leadership: Ditch the Drama, Restore Sanity to the Workplace, and Turn Excuses into Results* book as beginning and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

Della McDonald:

Reading a publication tends to be new life style in this era globalization. With looking at you can get a lot of information that can give you benefit in your life. Using book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. Lots of author can inspire their very own reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the guides. But also they write about advantage about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your sons or daughters, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some analysis before they write on their book. One of them is this Reality-Based Leadership: Ditch the Drama, Restore Sanity to the Workplace, and Turn Excuses into Results.

Jessie Davis:

Are you kind of hectic person, only have 10 or 15 minute in your day to upgrading your mind skill or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you have problem with the book as compared to can satisfy your short time to read it because all of this time you only find guide that need more time to be learn. Reality-Based Leadership: Ditch the Drama, Restore Sanity to the Workplace, and Turn Excuses into Results can be your answer mainly because it can be read by you actually who have those short time problems.

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