



Qualities of a High Value Player

(or, How to Rise
Above the Suffering
in Your Work Life)

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People have come to believe that suffering is now part of working life, and are suffering more than ever. Tough economic times have left fewer people to do the same amount of work. Jobs people used to love have become overwhelming; jobs they never loved have become intolerable. Success seems like an impossible dream as people strive to do more with less. They've seen good people get laid off and good jobs outsourced to cheaper workers. This is madness. It is not an imagination. But there is hope.

In some of the worst circumstances, it is still possible to find people who are performing well and are happy. This manifesto will provide you with some tips for how you too can be a happy, high performer—a high value player.

Assess Your Value, Not Only Your Performance

Organizations usually have a method for evaluating your current performance. It typically includes annual performance reviews conducted by managers and delivered to employees.

The information you receive at review time is important, but it only represents a portion of your actual value. Of course, it is imperative that you deliver on your objectives.

High value players are currently performing well because they are always:

- » Aware of their objectives and regularly course correct as the state of the business changes.
- » Initiating conversations about these objectives instead of waiting for their leader to do so.
- » Requesting feedback regularly to avoid being surprised at annual review time.

These are really good ways to manage your own performance and to take accountability for your results. However, there are other factors related to increasing your value.

One of those factors is your future potential. High-value players keep an eye on their future potential by:

- » Focusing on their own development—both inside the organization and outside, including reimbursed training and self-funded opportunities, required and voluntary. This helps them to get beyond the baseline.
- » Having a large network outside of their organization so they can accurately assess how they compare themselves to the performance of others in their industry.
- » Anticipating and not resisting changes that are coming to their industry by being aware of the future trends.

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The final but most important factor related to value is emotional expensiveness. This is the one thing that your manager is unlikely to mention to you but actually carries the most weight. High-value players increase their value by minimizing the drama they bring to an organization and by refusing to waste their energy on things like:

- » Judging the actions of their boss or peers. Instead they try to figure out how they can help—either by providing feedback or helping to clarify goals, roles or procedures.
- » Waiting for someone to change the circumstances around them. Instead they ask themselves, given the circumstances, “What do I need to do to succeed anyway?”
- » Choosing being right over being happy. Instead they focus on being effective and ask themselves, “What is the next thing I can do to add value?”

Your value is simply a combination of your current performance and your future potential minus all the drama or emotional expensiveness you bring to the organization. Boost your value by focusing on the impact of all three.

Understanding and focusing on your value is the first step to being happier. But know that there are some excuses that might get in your way.

EXCUSE #1: My boss is a jerk. It is likely that you will have a poor boss at some point in your career. It is not realistic to hope that you will only be blessed to work for stellar bosses. Choose to be happy and change your mindset instead of hoping to change your boss. What do I mean? Think of all the reasons why you might be in the situation at this time for your own growth and development. Use the time to learn how to manage up. Practice and hone your skills by figuring out what is important to a client (your boss is your client) and delivering on that. If nothing else, take good notes and learn what not to do as a leader. Take personal accountability wherever you can and own the results you experience with your boss.

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EXCUSE #2: My co-workers are difficult/idiots/etc. Like your boss, your coworkers are humans and it is highly likely that you will have some that are difficult to work with. You must decide to ditch the drama. Rise to the occasion and make an effort to resolve issues with your coworker directly instead of trying to include anyone else as a mediator when you have only made half-hearted attempts to resolve your issue with him or her directly.

EXCUSE #3: My team is dysfunctional. We are actually lucky because team dynamics are not innate. You can work to strengthen and improve them. Many times we think group issues come from personality conflict but most of the time issues come from a lack of clarity. Instead of personalizing conflict, professionalize it. When you are confronted with difficult co-worker situations, that is one of the best times to clarify goals, roles and procedures. Be sure to think about ways that you can get what you want AND what your co-worker wants. This is not a time to settle in on your wants and desires and behave in ways that result in only you winning. High value players nurture team dynamics and realize that they add value by being a team player instead of trying to be the star.

“The most valuable and happiest people are the ones who waste zero time on excuses, pointing fingers or blaming ... They decide to succeed anyway.”

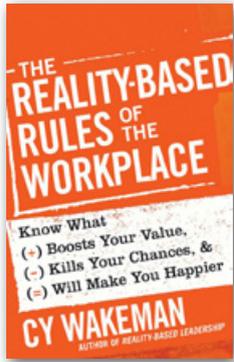
EXCUSE #4: The culture at my company is hostile/toxic. It may take years to change the culture of an entire company. But within a larger culture there are microclimates—smaller teams of people working together. Your work climate is up to you and the people you are working with in your immediate circle. So get started working on that.

Stay in your lane and focus on the things you can affect. If you have given all you have to give, high value players know when to walk away. But I caution you from walking away thinking that you will not encounter a poor boss, difficult co-worker, or dysfunctional team ever again. You may. That is why it is extremely important that you practice ditching any drama you bring to the table where you are, so that you don't carry it with you to your next opportunity.

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I can guarantee you will have difficult circumstances and will have to work with difficult people. The most valuable and happiest people are the ones who waste zero time on excuses, pointing fingers or blaming, but instead look within and do the work necessary to create their own happiness by changing their mindsets and approaches. They decide to succeed anyway. 📌

Info



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Cy Wakeman is a dynamic, well-respected national keynote speaker, workshop facilitator, author, and trainer. Her background combines four successful business start-ups with 18 years working and consulting in manufacturing, banking, government, high-tech and healthcare. Cy has honed her Reality-Based Leadership philosophy as a consultant to top executives and organizations seeking to thrive in difficult times. She is a sought-after conference headliner, delivering over 150 keynote programs annually, and holds Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation from the National Speakers' Association.

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