



# The Answer to How Is Yes: Acting on What Matters

*By Peter Block*

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People keep asking ""How?"" as a defense against living their life, says best-selling author Peter Block. In this witty, insightful award-winning book, Block shows that many standard solutions and improvement efforts, reinforced by most of the literature, keep people paralyzed. Here he places the ""how to"" craze in perspective and teaches individuals, workers, and managers ways to act on what they know. This in turn allows them to reclaim their freedom and capacity to create the kind of world they want to live in. Block's ""elements of choice"" - the characteristic of a new workplace and a new world based on more positive values - include self-mentoring, investing in relationships, accepting the unpredictability of life, and realizing that the individual prospers only when the community does.

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## **Editorial Review**

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The new approach to change management that is presented here will completely flummox control freaks. Block posits a refreshing series of truths that, if adopted, will transform workplaces into journeys of meaning. The best-selling author of *Flawless Consulting* (1981) and *Stewardship* (1993) insists that we ask the wrong question about accomplishing the important things in our lives, particularly in our place of employment. We too often ask "How?" which focuses too closely on the practical way of getting something done and is actually a subconscious expression of society's emphasis on control of people, time, and cost. Instead, our concentration should be focused on "Why?" In other words, we need to pay attention to what really matters to us personally, from heart-felt commitments in our private lives to the creation of projects in the workplace. To be able to act on what matters, explains Block, we must reclaim specific qualities, such as intimacy and idealism. Then we can tackle purposeful work as if we were social architects seeking engagement and change. Provocative and stimulating reading. *Barbara Jacobs*

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From the Publisher

"Once again the best writer on life in the workplace turns conventions on its head. Substituting the why and what questions for the how questions should help all of us experience the freedom, success, growth, love, fun, and beauty in the workplace." —Dennis W. Bakke, President, The AES Corporation

"Amazing! Just when I need to open myself to new ways of thinking, Peter Block opens up the next compelling image...the very path I need to explore next. Thank you, Peter, for the questions, paradox, confrontation and ultimately 'answers' that keep me alive and growing." —Kathleen D. Dannemiller, Dannemiller Tyson Associates, authors of *Whole-Scale Change: Unleashing the Magic in Organizations*

"This is the most important book Block has ever written, and we need to take him seriously (although he is, as always, quite witty.) If enough people say 'Yes' to the teachings in this book, we'll be able to stop floundering toward the future and create lives and work that are meaningful contributions to each other and to the future. Please say 'yes.'" —Margaret Wheatley, author of *Leadership and the New Science* and *Turning to One Another*

"This is a journey of self-discovery much like the *Inward Morning* of Thoreau and in spirit not unlike the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau—cast in the contemporary mold of organizational culture. [Block's] charm lies in his engaging style, seducing you to listen, mesmerized, as did the Sultan to Scheherazade. Here are the brilliant and sensitive ruminations of a wanderer on a journey in search for his voice, only to discover that it is the voice of everyman and everywoman speaking through him." —Peter Koestenbaum Philosopher, Consultant, and author of *The Inner Side of Greatness*

About the Author

Peter Block is an author, consultant and speaker who helped initiate the interest in empowerment and whose work now centers on ways to bring service and accountability to organizations and communities.

He is the author of three best selling books: *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used*, Second Edition (1999), *The Empowered Manager: Positive Political Skills at Work* (1987), and *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest* (1993). His most recent book, *Flawless Consulting Fieldbook & Companion: A Guide to Understanding Your Expertise*, was released in November 2000.

Block has joined with the Association for Quality and Participation to create The School for Managing & Leading Change. This unique program takes place over several months and is attended by teams from the public and private sector too learn how to redesign their workplace. (For information on the School, call 800-733-3310.)

Block is a partner in Designed Learning, a training company that offers consulting skills workshops. These workshops were designed by Block to build the skills outlined in his Flawless Consulting books.

He has received several national awards for outstanding contribution in the field of training and development. He serves on the Boards of Directors of the Association for Quality and Participation and Connecticut Public TV and Radio, and the Advisory Council for Zefer Corporation.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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