



Living in Balance

October 2011 *The International Newsletter of Workaholics*

“Our primary purpose is to stop working compulsively and to carry the message of recovery to workaholics who still suffer.”

(from The W.A. Preamble, page 3, “Workaholics Anonymous Book of Recovery”)



W.A. is growing

You probably haven't looked at our website recently to notice the new meetings that have started. There are now 44 meetings in 22 of the states in the US. There are also 18 meetings spread around the world. Here is a list:

USA meetings:

Arizona (2)
California (10)
Colorado (20)
Washington DC (1)
Florida (2)
Georgia (1)
Illinois (5)
Louisiana (1)
Massachusetts (1)
Maine (1)

Missouri (1)
North Carolina (1)
New York (3)
Ohio (2)
Oregon (1)
Pennsylvania (3)
Tennessee (1)
Utah (1)
Washington (2)
Wisconsin (1)

Other countries:

Australia (2)
Canada (2)
France (1)
New Zealand (4)
Portugal (1)
Sweden (1)
UK (6)
Germany (1)

There are also close to 40 other potential meetings where people have ordered “Starter Kits” with the hope of getting something going.

Although the number of meetings is growing, an even greater number of Telephone, Voice Chat and Email meetings have developed for people who don't have a local meeting to attend:

Telephone:

Saturday (2pm)
Sunday (7PM)
Thursday (5:30 PM)
Friday (7:30 PM)
Monday (7 PM)

Voice Chat:

Sunday (10 AM)
Saturday (7:30 AM)

Email:

Finding Balance
Tools and Principles

Meeting Development

Workaholics Anonymous is offering mentorship to meetings that are just starting or that are having trouble keeping going. We have formed a committee called "Meeting Development", which has a list of people in the fellowship who are willing to confer by telephone with people in these situations. We believe that meetings are a foundation for recovery and are missing in many communities. Where there are no meetings and someone is trying to start one, it is a lonely place to be, so any support we can give is of great value. If you have any enthusiasm for this, please volunteer your service as a mentor by emailing: [newsletter "at" workaholics-anonymous.org](mailto:newsletter@workaholics-anonymous.org) The time requirement would be minimal, but the service very worthwhile.

A healthy increase in contributions:

Since our last newsletter, there has been a surge in 7th Tradition contributions. So far this year, we have received \$5650.; of that total, \$3,297 came in response to the special fund raising effort. This will help W.A. to bring our website up to a professional level, whereby we will be able to connect the many aspects of our organization and program electronically and to make changes in the information offered accurately and easily. Thank you, WA contributors!



2011 W.A. World Conference in Austin, Texas!

Sponsorship & Service - How it Works



This year, the WA World Service Conference will be held Friday, October 28th through Sunday, October 30th, 2011 in Wimberley, Texas at the 7A Resort, with an optional Pre-Conference day on Thursday, October 27th. For more information see our website: workaholics-anonymous.org

Conference Details:

- **Location:** 7A Resort See www.7aresort.com for MapQuest directions or facility information, call (512) 847-2517
- **Meals:** Special meals may be arranged but we will need the information with your reservation and cannot guarantee this without prior notice as of October of Conference.
- **Accommodations:** 30 rooms are available for double occupancy, 10 for single in the 3 Lodges we have reserved. There will be additional space available beyond the Lodge accommodations but room and bed configurations are variable in this additional space. Some family rooms can be accommodated but be sure to book early for these accommodations. Linens, towels and washcloths are provided. Double rooms have two queen beds and single Rooms have queen beds in the 3 Lodges we have reserved.
- **Transportation:** The nearest airport is Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS). Public transportation is limited in most Texas markets as most natives have cars and horses. The Austin host committee will make their best efforts to provide free ground transportation for those who need it and to insure smooth ground transportation arrangements for all others attendees but it is imperative that you provide good contact information and stay in touch with them regarding your travel plan.
- All major rental car companies operate at the Austin Airport. Cabs are also available and the one way fare set by the City of Austin for all cab companies is \$104 as of January 2011. They have not raised this rate since 2007 and will accommodate up to 4 adults. Shuttle companies are cheaper in groups of 10 or more but require that all passengers board at the same time and this will require planning. For those attendees that need free transportation, the Austin host committee will make their best efforts to accommodate all requests but you must give proper notice of your needs for this to be practical. All others that do not wish to travel as individuals can expect to pay around \$50 or less round trip but this too will require that you make your plans known to the Austin host committee so that cabs and shuttles may be configured for the best utilization. You may contact us at waconference2011@workaholics-anonymous.org

Conference Schedule Outline: This is a summary agenda and a detailed agenda will be made available later in the year.

<u>Thursday, October 27:</u> <u>Pre-Conference</u>	<u>Friday, October 28</u>	<u>Saturday, October 29</u>	<u>Sunday, October 30</u>
1:00 pm Registration	8:00 Breakfast (Pre Conference)	8:00am Breakfast	8:00am Breakfast
2-5 pm Meetings and activities	12 Noon – Lunch (Pre Conference)	9am-12pm Meetings	9am-12pm Meeting & Closing
5 pm Dinner	3-5 pm Registration & Early Bird Meeting	12:00 pm Lunch	12:00 pm Lunch
7pm Meetings	5:00 pm Dinner	1pm-5pm Meetings	
	7:30 pm Meeting	5:00pm Dinner	
		7:30pm Meeting	

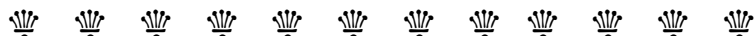
Questions? Email us at “at” workaholics-anonymous.org conference 2011

Please consult our website: workaholics-anonymous.org, for more complete information regarding various Conference Package Options and how payment can be made by mail or electronically.



Signs you're working too much:

- **You try to enter your password on the microwave**
- **You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years**
- **When you make phone calls at home, you dial “9” first**
- **You email a worker at the desk next to you to ask if she is ready for lunch**



God, help me

Asked to write an article for the WA newsletter, I sit here, quite frankly, a bit stumped. I did none of the billable work I had planned to do over the weekend, and am seriously considering waking up in the wee hours to get a grip on some of it. I have done it again - set up a situation where I need to hammer out a bunch of work, and dash between clients to juggle to meet my commitments. Some things will fall through the cracks. The week ahead would be much smoother if I had only paced myself.

I meet with my WA sponsee tomorrow, Monday. What the heck am I doing with a sponsee when I keep doing stuff like this? How can I possibly help her? How can I help anyone? This article should share my WA recovery, experience, strength, and hope. I am so NOT a WA success story. I am clearly still in the disease.

I was late to my last meeting, on Thursday, due to work. I arrived feeling very stressed out and overwhelmed. Much of what I heard were the stories of my fellow Workaholics engaged in struggles so much like mine. Yet, I felt as though I were exhaling in relief the entire meeting. Most were not sharing a tales of spectacular recovery. Instead of dragging me down, I felt uplifted. I was not alone. I was not insane. My struggles in this arena are foreign to my husband, and to many of my friends, but not to this group. Thinking back to that feeling on Thursday of bathing in sweet relief, I realize that I don't need to have perfect recovery to provide support and comfort. I certainly have heard and seen wonderful life changes in WA members, and even shared my own successes. Recovery from my own peculiar patterns of work addiction is my goal and I believe that WA is the path to a better life for me. But even while engaged in my own ineffective/adrenalin spin-cycle, I can help a fellow Workaholic by sharing. And it's certainly the right time for me to get some perspective by listening to my fellows.

As a sober member of AA many years, I have seen many newer members struggle with step one. How grateful I have always been that I admitted my powerlessness and dove straight into the solution in 1992. I had my own spectacular recovery in that program, where I continue as an active, contributing member. And yet somehow in WA I attempt again and again to seize control over my addiction. Rarely do I drop to my knees - even metaphorically - and give it all to my higher power. Yet when I do the rewards are profound.

Despite my poor step work, WA has changed me. Like water dripping on stone, I like to think. Every meeting I attend, every time I close my eyes and say, "God help me", every time I share with another Workaholic, there is incremental progress. Sometimes it is two steps forward and one step back. My life is not where I want it, but it is far from where it was.

My sobriety was a glorious reawakening. I was thrilled beyond words to regain my sharp mind. I put it to use and built a career on it. Not surprisingly for this compulsive personality, I gradually drove myself into workaholism. I need not share that whole story here, but I will give one example. I had committed to a project, and a deadline that was immutable. As I got further into the project, I realized that the amount of hours needed to complete it was staggering. I did not ask for help. I did not attempt to delegate any of it. Instead, I worked for days and days on end, getting little sleep. Finally, it was finished in the wee hours of the morning on the day it was due, but had to be delivered to an office over

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three hours' drive away. It was far too late to secure a courier. Unwilling to reveal the reality of the situation, I was on the road at 5 a.m. after very little sleep and delivered it myself. I was beyond exhausted. The crown of my head was tingling; an odd sensation brought on by working for many days with little sleep. Unfortunately, this was a familiar feeling. I should not have been behind the wheel. I arrived back at my office after driving for seven hours and did not tell anyone that anything unusual had happened. I claimed I was ill, went home and collapsed.

My husband was angry and hurt that I was again completely unavailable and not participating in our marriage. It only got worse. One day, as I was working late, as usual, he called me at work. I asked him what he was doing. He said, "Do you really want to know?" I said yes. He told me that he was reading about workaholicism, and that he was at a website with 20 questions. I asked him for the site URL. On the phone with him, I looked at the first few questions. I swallowed hard and told him I had to call him back. I had no idea before that moment that there was such a thing as WA. I was quite obviously a workaholic, and that knowledge gave me a glimmer of hope. There was a solution. I was at my first meeting the next day.

I meet my sponsee on Mondays after work. It's a struggle for both of us to tear ourselves away from our offices. We met at 5:30 p.m. I don't go back to the office when we are done. I delegate tasks often now. Sometimes I turn down work. I joined a Dragon Boating team. I have a life with my husband again. I have new friends, and we do things together. I don't do work over Thanksgiving and Christmas, and I rarely work on weekends.

This past spring, I was laid off from the job I had for 10 years. A co-worker and I decided to start our own business doing the same kind of work on a contract basis for different firms. I am doing well enough to pay our bills, and I find myself thrilled with the freedom. I have clients now, not an employer. I feel empowered. My husband was very supportive of the new business, asking only that I continue to go to WA. Which I obviously need.

Which brings me back to my present pickle. I have not managed my time wisely over the last few weeks, and now I am faced with a dogpile of tasks. I feel overwhelmed and paralyzed. I don't know what the solution is, but I know where to start.

"God, help me."

- from Carol K.



Really Listening

When I read the “Tools” of WA, something seems missing in the wording of this tool in our documents. So, I would like to add a tool called “Really Listening”, based on my experience since joining WA.

Often, when I think I am listening, there is another agenda in the back of my mind that gets in the way of understanding. One of the characteristics of my workaholism is that I have lived my life in a mindless hurry, always thinking about “the next thing”. This makes really listening impossible. In my life, this has created misunderstandings and failure to connect to employees, friends, family, my spouse and parts of myself. In finally letting go and slowing down, I can begin to listen more accurately

I tried to figure out what the great hurry had been all about and decided it was insecurity. My “egoic” self was afraid that I needed to move fast to protect itself from exposure of my faults and inadequacies. It was a way to avoid taking responsibility for my poor actions and reactions by pretending my behavior was only a sketch of what I really intended. It was a weak strategy.

Slowing down allowed me to focus my whole attention, and thus to see others in a new way: more sensitively and accurately. When I am really listening in this way, my private agenda fades away and my ego backs out. Only then I am able to connect what is being said to important inner personal values and experiences, so that my response is clear of my own fears and prejudices. When this happens, my understanding becomes real and some surprising changes occur. First, my ego loses its fear and hurry, then compassion seems to well up out of nowhere, which never happens when I’m busily involved with my own affairs. With the ego tuned out and compassion flooding in, I am in a unique state of mind, very alert, focused and calm. For a person like me, who has been rushing through life for years, this is a profound experience. In my personal relationships, it has opened some wonderful opportunities for closeness and growth.

Here is a real life example of how this has worked:

My wife and I have had a long running problem with our varying needs/desires for cleanliness around the house. My wife has always needed for her surroundings to be neat and clean. My past includes being a “boy” and also a woodworker (dust) and a gardener (mud). This brought us to our household with very different baggage and perspectives.

We have had a number of confrontations about these differences, with little resolution. It seemed that each had to give up his/her deep needs, she for cleanliness and order, me for not wanting to change clothes on coming in. One of us would be giving up everything, while the other gets it all. Halfway measures would satisfy neither of us. In our latest attempt to reach peace, my wife said (once again), that it seemed to be an act of disrespect for me to bring dirt into the house. My immediate reaction was that it wasn’t lack of respect that sometimes I forgot to take off my shoes. It felt like obedience or face the consequences of her bad humor.

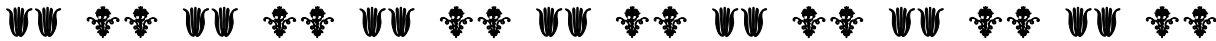
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But, I suddenly heard the word “respect” in a new way, not as criticism of me, but as an expression of need on her part. I had been hearing the word but only connecting it to feeling bossed around, failing to see it as a plea for what my wife really needed. I had found a kind of “translation key” that allowed me to do more than just hear, but to understand. I needed to find a way to relate my wife’s needs to one of my core values of wanting to be respectful of everyone and to receive it myself. It felt like a key fitting into a lock to release my resentment and defensiveness. In my old “sort of” listening mode, I had been missing the core of my wife’s message and how it dovetailed with my own need for respect.

This has not made my performance perfect, but has motivated me to do a lot better and feel better about it. In my mind it was as if something from another part of my mind, a Higher Power perhaps, was enlisted to help me see.

- from a member of our fellowship



We need a new Newsletter Editor

Your editor is planning to turn the job over. I have been at it for two years and want to allow new people to offer their insight and energy to the newsletter and the WA program. The newsletter is published four times a year and all activities can be performed at your computer without overly technical requirements. No prior experience needed, just your enthusiasm and creativity. The position also involves serving on the Board of WAWSO for a two year term, with several telephone Board meetings per year and attendance at our annual conference. If you would like to know more about this, please contact: newsletter “at” workaholics-anonymous.org



“A habit cannot be tossed out the window; it must be coaxed down the stairs a step at a time.”

- Mark Twain

Editorial:

I have been on the WAWSO (Workholics Anonymous World Service Organization) Board for six years and have seen many rewarding changes in our scope, reach and technology.

Six years ago, we were unsure as to how many meetings there were, if they were active and who were the contact people. As I remember, there were about 30 including one in the UK. Today there are 1/3 more in the US alone, with 18 in other countries. Our literature is being translated into German, Spanish and Portugese.

Back then, there was no database to track members, meetings, WSR's, donations, etc. Today, there are over 1000 in our fellowship who are open to being contacted with news and programs. There are now over 2000 who have subscribed to the WA eNewsletter. There has also been not one breech of confidentiality and anonymity in using the database.

Six years ago, our website had just been born, was still thin in content and did not provide a way for people to purchase our literature, make donations, meet others seeking to start a meeting, study our suggested meeting formats and a lot more we now have in place or in planning. Right now we are embarked on a strong upgrade of our website, to produce a professionally designed platform to connect members to the Board, each other, to news and literature.

My time spent on the Board has been a wonderul opening experience for me, learning how to use the 12th Step in relating to others, our organization and the public. Some of the results of my being on this Board have been learning patience, humility, to allow others to move at their own pace, to listen hard to understand, to pace myself to work in a sane manner and to find the satisfaction of serving. It is now time for me to make room for others to experience these benefits and to bring new enthusiasm and creativity to WA, the Board and to "Living in Balance". Thanks WA for this opportunity and thanks to all who contributed to the newsletter!

Harry W. (former) Newsletter Editor



The story I tell myself

The story I tell about my life and which I tell to myself, is clearly made up of bits and pieces dragged up out of an unsorted pile. It cannot be accurate about things so long ago. It is a story that would have me believe I was defective and incapable of change. Perhaps I have been tricked into believing it because of the frequent telling.

- from a member of our fellowship

Thank you, members of our fellowship, for your sincere and lively contributions. WSR's, please bring this to your meeting and urge members to tell us about their struggles, successes and reflections.

Living in Balance invites WA members to share your experience, strength and hope, as well as JOKES with the WA fellowship around the world. Each of us has something to share that can help another workaholic to abstain from compulsive working one more day. Please send your submittals by email to: newsletter "at" workaholics-anonymous.org Include your contact information and let us know if you would like your first name and initial included as author. Your contribution will make this newsletter more alive and improve your recovery by helping others

Note that materials submitted are assumed to be intended for publication, are subject to editing and become the property of WAWSO, which may publish them in any format in any Workaholics Anonymous literature.

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