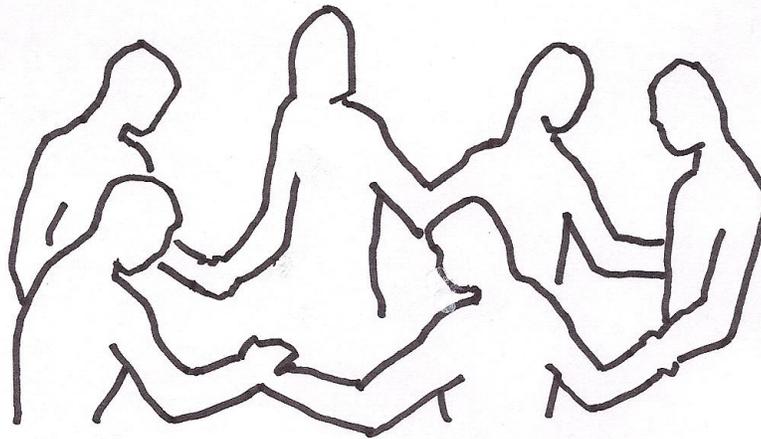




Living in Balance

April 2011 The International Newsletter of Workaholics Anonymous

Help us reach workaholics who are still suffering !



Carrying the message

In our work-drenched society, amazingly few people have heard of us, other than ourselves. This is the challenge: to get the word out and to encourage meeting formation so the feelings of isolation, stress and helplessness can be healed. Workaholism is treated as a joke in our society and is not understood or appreciated as a serious addiction both in the form of over-working and work anorexia.

Passing the basket

If you have sought and found recovery through our program, **please contribute to our very first fund raising effort** dedicated to letting people know that help is available. Your donation will help:

- Create public service announcements for radio and TV (goal \$ 3000.)
- Provide our books as part of our “starter kits” (goal \$ 2000.)
- Create a presence at other 12 Step Conferences to raise awareness of W.A. (goal \$ 3000.)
- Create scholarships to help others to attend our annual conferences. (goal \$ 2000.)
- Provide face-to-face mentoring to struggling meetings (goal \$ 3000.)

We cannot do these things without your help! Your donations to W.A., large or small, offer the opportunity for service, a cornerstone of the 12 Step Programs. You may donate by using the enclosed envelope, or use a credit card on our website: workaholics-anonymous.org. Donations are tax-deductible

and a receipt will be provided. For more information about this fundraiser, please see our website: workaholics-anonymous.org

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>Friday, October 28</u>	<u>Saturday, October 29</u>	<u>Sunday, October 30</u>
<u>Pre-Conference</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 waconference2011@workaholics-anonymous.org

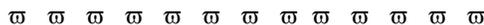
Please consult our website: workaholics-anonymous.org, for more complete information regarding various Conference Package Options and how payment can be made by mail or electronically. Register early and you will be eligible for various discounts.

A limited number of *Partial Scholarships* are available. Please email your request to facilitator@workaholics-anonymous.org to WAWSO Requests must be received before September 15, 2011 to be considered. No exceptions will be made. Notifications of scholarship awards will be made not later than October 1, 2011.



“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”)



Note to Spanish speakers: There is now a Spanish language website: [12pasos @adictosaltrabajo.org](http://12pasos@adictosaltrabajo.org) with an email address of: www.adictosaltrabajo.org The site is stil being built, but we wish them good fortune in moving ahead.

Greetings to a new meeting:

Delray Beach, FL “Serenity in Balance”; Thursdays at 6pm

Telephone meetings:

There are now 6 weekly telephone meetings and 2 on-line voice chat meetings; see our website for particulars.

News from London:

Just a few lines to let you know how we got on with running our first convention last Saturday afternoon, 19 March in London.

After the event, when chewing the fat over a coffee, it occurred to us to share our experience, gratitude and share how we did it. If I remember rightly, it started with having a £100 surplus in our 7th tradition pot and a suggestion to do something with it. A few of us volunteered to be on committee and we met a few weeks later over a pizza. We came up with some WA recovery principles for ourselves which went something like this (imperfect recall will of course serve well enough)....

We decided not to do any emailing, no minutes bar a few action notes for ourselves, to rotate chairing our chats (the whole thing came together in 3 meetings & a few short calls) and to delegate out, in essence; to DO as little as possible and let it unfold. We chatted about what mattered to us in our WA recovery, which is how we came up with the themes for the afternoon: 'There is always enough time', 'How work can be play', 'Good enough is good enough' and later we added 'Living Flowly: living the programme'. Four super-competent WA women, all fully capable of running it single handed, found ways to pass tasks on and only take on one maybe two actions each time.

We agreed to announce the necessary service posts for the event - and encourage takers to get the help they needed. Long story short... you can probably guess that all the tasks taken on were done beautifully. We had 'Stuart's cafe'- with Celia's lovely cakes', abundant literature supplies (thank you Anne and George, many hands setting up easily & effortlessly, beautifully done flyers & affirmations (Chris) and tons of tulips (me).

We had four fab speakers; George, Chris, Pat and Claire, selected readings (thank you Gemma) with some great sharing from the floor. Thirty-three attended including several newcomers and some from out of town. We had made a generous spending plan - all came in £2 under AND we collected £84 for our 7th tradition. It was a serene and joyful afternoon practicing WA tools and HP looked after everything. It really was a blessing.

Maggie S
WA Tuesday Night London

c d c d c d c d c d

From a member of our fellowship:

Hello fellow WA program friends! I am learning balance is central to my life, my day, and especially my weekend. I made a decision to not work on weekends 8 months ago (even just a little). I also try to schedule something fun for Friday nights to create a transition time and fun activity between work and recreation (dinner with good program friends usually, sometimes Spanish dancing, yes this program works, I actually have time for some very nonproductive dancing). I go to a 12 step meeting I love Saturday morning and a Yoga class that is a powerful part of working Step 11 for me. Higher Power is healing me in what I saw as unhealable areas.

continued on page 5

with the physical movement and stretching and being in the moment of this yoga class, which I sign up for over and over again. It is a beginner's class and I love the simplicity of it, I am not pushing myself in this class as I have in other relaxation activities in the past, I am just enjoying myself and healing. I eat a vegan diet and my body is happier than it has been in years. And I am authentically present for a partner for the FIRST time in my life. This is hard for me as my work addiction has always previously provided a huge protective blanket between myself and any partner. This dating sober (from work addiction) is very new and I do have to limit my exposure (time spent with) to another person to keep my anxiety levels down as I learn how to be with myself, while being with another person in an emotionally intimate way, and stay conscious (not astrally project) all at the same time. It's like bicycling backwards while chewing gum. Feels totally weird most of the time, but way fun for those few moments where it feels normal for a second, which comes to me more and more lately. I am so grateful for the program's ability to allow me to try the newness and unsureness and rewards of recovery over the safety of my so debilitating, and so self abusive, work addiction disease. Thanks to every one of you for carrying message to me in your support of this miraculous fellowship. Gratefully, Gene'



Listening as an action plan

When I am most involved with my personal drama, I am the least in touch with compassion for others. It's like breathing in and breathing out, I can't do both at the same time. When I am listening to another person, really listening, it is like an inward breath, and with this tide my own agenda drops away. Compassion is allowed to flow in uninvited from a source I can only regard as from a Higher Power. It may have been in me all along, but was hidden from my knowing. For me, listening is an action plan for getting out of my ego. When my ego has receded into the background, I pay attention to what is going on around me in an awake and aware state. This has provided more love, relationships, joy and serenity.

- anonymous



Recovery

What is recovery? I've asked myself this question more times than I can count—and each time I somehow come up with a different answer. My first experiences in grappling with struggle in my life began years ago when dealing with anorexia. At that time, I developed a rather calculated lifestyle, one that led me through rigid routines and perfectionist expectations day after day. I experienced my health drastically declining, but even so, felt trapped by thoughts that made it hard for me to resist particular habits. There a point when I recall feeling completely numb inside. I had lost touch with my emotions and my sense value for living. It was at this point that I began journaling. Seeing my thoughts on paper was a useful alternative to a mirror to “look” at myself.

Reflection, therefore, etched the beginnings of my *recovery*.

This experience instigated my passionate interest in learning about and understanding what recovery means and how it is lived. I spent significant time reading others' stories of recovery—searching for answers to guide my own journey. Between listening to others' perspectives and reflecting on my own, many new

continued on page 6

ideas inspired me to frame my circumstances differently. This process, of course, took considerable time and through it I encountered a number of challenges. Just as I felt as though I was doing well, my old habits paid me an unwelcomed visit. There were times when I felt as though two voices were speaking inside of me. I tried putting these voices into conversation through my journal writing, which allowed me to view of the dialogues that create tensions throughout recovery. Through this practice, I learned to become more forgiving of myself in moments of struggle. In fact, I would say that the challenges I faced kept my recovery alive—they reminded me that life in *recovery is ongoing*.

My ongoing commitment to recovery has continually allowed for me to face challenges in my life that otherwise would have gone unrecognized. One year ago, I was fortunate to run across WA's *Book of Recovery*. I explored the book simply because the title intrigued me, as did the concept of "workaholism." Prior to this encounter, I had never considered work being an addiction. Out of curiosity, I ordered the book and began reading stories from various WA members. It shook me in seeing how much others' experiences paralleled with those of my own. I experienced my work similarly to the ways I lived with an eating disorder. But the primary difference between these two struggles was how they were received by others in my life. Contrary to anorexia, my work habits were applauded by others, and in fact, landed me a position in a doctoral degree program. Beneath the applause, however, I was living a life in desperation for acceptance. Since becoming involved with WA, my understanding of recovery has continued to evolve. My fellow members, in particular, have allowed for me to experience myself very differently. Throughout my recovery from anorexia, there were few others willing to offer me support. Therefore, I practiced recovery alone. I believed for a long time that I could sustain my own recovery, which was of course, until I experienced it with others. When attending my first WA conference, I experienced how good it felt to receive acceptance from others—not for what I did, but for who I was as a person. Receiving this acceptance is unlike any other feeling that I can describe. Through it, I have learned that *recovery is enriched by others who allow for us to see unconditional value in ourselves*. I am grateful for the people of this fellowship who allowed for me to experience, yet again, a new view of recovery—one that I can share and continually reflect upon with others.

- from Laura R.



Blindsided

Often I continue with thinking and behaviors that I am trying to change, but if there were an easy way to make the necessary changes, I would already have made them. There is a phenomenon that when an optician shines a bright light obliquely into my eye, I suddenly can see the capillaries that feed the retina, which I did not see before. When I asked why, it was explained that the brain filters out this scrim as it has decided that this is useless information. My brain was making this decision on its own. A way of putting this is that I only see what I want to see and am unable to perceive the rest. This applies to looking at my problems. Merely "willing" to see does not make a difference, I need to get a new perspective. I believe that in life new ways of seeing happen when I am not applying will and logic, but leave myself open to something else (Higher Power? intuition? free association? luck? take your pick). When I entered WA, the Steps felt challenging but I took them on, sensing that I needed to struggle with each Step in order to make it meaningful for me. Out of this struggle, new ways of seeing appeared that only now became visible.



A workaholic's progress

Chapter 1

I came from a family where I felt safe. I somehow knew I was planned and wanted. Although there was little open expression of love, I knew it was there. So what was my problem?

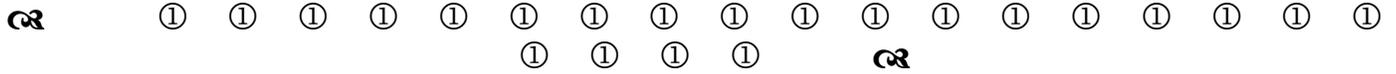
I showed up early as an ADHD child, so I was a handful and stretched my parents' patience. In addition, my "filters" were inadequate to protect me from overload. I felt overwhelmed with feelings of anger, frustration, self-pity, jealousy and injustice, which I was unable to modify. My mother later said I was "sensitive", which is to say that my responses seemed exaggerated. I feel a great empathy with autistic people as having a similar inability to filter or dial down the volume of what is coming their way.

I hated feeling controlled. One of my earliest memories is being made to take a nap (age 3 or 4) and being placed in a crib with the door on the other side of the room securely closed. I was weeping and angry. I discovered that if I shook the bed a certain way, I could get it to slide on the floor a half-inch toward the door. I couldn't allow myself to stop crying, as that would have been a complete surrender to this injustice. With each sob, I managed to nudge the crib toward the door. I don't remember what happened, but I am left with the recollection of being powerless, abandoned and exhausted. My parents must have been at wit's end. Where did this monster come from? Looking back, I believe that my mother was not really interested in children until they were old enough to play cards. This is not a criticism, but merely a statement of fact. My mother knew how to play, just not child's play. My father seemed to have had no childhood of his own and did not know how to relate to an emotional child. My outbursts bewildered and repelled him. My older brother and I were very different, both as children and as adults. He and my father seemed to have a lot in common and I was jealous. I now see that at a very early age, I gave up on my father and transferred my need for a male figure to my brother, Bob, who was three years older. In the beginning, he wanted none of this, but I didn't give up trying to get him to be my pal. Along with my younger brother, of whom I was intensely jealous, we made an unstable triangle that often left me out in the cold.

I received very little punishment, but instead was introduced to shame very early, and I took it to heart. Soon, my parents did not need to shame me, I did it to myself. With this mechanism operating, at the age of nine, I was primed for a childhood trauma when a fire in our house resulted in the death of my younger brother. I thought I should have saved him, and was ashamed of my jealousy and stricken with guilt. I was completely distraught and was all alone. I had isolated myself from my parents and my brother Bob was incapable of talking about it. The effect of this tragedy was so great that my parents could not deal with it in the open. I can't fully understand what kept us together. In all my time at home, no words were spoken about what we had experienced. The rest of the family seemed to keep on functioning, but I was a mess. I wet the bed, I was failing the 4th grade, had no friends and had no adult that I could talk to. I still wonder that I did not despair, but something in my makeup gave me a deep down optimism. I knew it would be not be easy, but I would survive. I was incapable of using the controlling "help" my parents offered, feeling sure that it would not help me. My inability to communicate my inner turmoil made me a mystery to my parents, so it was a small wonder that they did not understand me. This led me to turn inward, sensing that the only person who could help me was ME. This may be the truth, but at that age I had little experience and confidence to draw on. I knew that I was intensely lonely and needed to find friends. It was actually a big step, as I had always relied on my older brother to break trail for me. This became less and less workable as he and I grew up and our styles and interests diverged.

continued on page 8

It has taken me many years to understand that love alone does not fix these problems. It may add patience, provide stability, even optimism, but it can't fix things that are broken. I was filled with guilt and loneliness and the confusion of an attention deficit brain. The truth is that no one outside could fix this. I learned very early to get some relief by doing "art" projects, closely observing nature and reading everything I could get my hands on. Intense concentration or activity gave me distraction from what was an almost intolerable inner anxiety. So, I was a budding workaholic at the tender age of ten.



Life is like a borrowed lawnmower:

- It's a thing designed to be used.
- Don't use it in ways for which it's not intended.
- Listen to it to head off problems.
- Take care of it.
- Be prepared to return it on a moment's notice.



Thank you, members of our fellowship, for your sincere and lively contributions to this issue! 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. Please submit your materials before June 20th, 2011.

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.

Workaholics Anonymous World Service Organization
PO Box 289, Menlo Park, California 94026,
Telephone: 510-273-9253 Website: workaholics-anonymous.org

