

The Signposts of Workaholism

1. We find it hard to love and accept ourselves. Work has become our means of gaining approval, finding our identity and justifying our existence.
2. We use work to escape our feelings. Thus, we deprive ourselves of knowing what we truly want and need.
3. By overworking, we neglect our health, relationships, recreation and spirituality. Even when we are not working, we are thinking of our next task. Most of our activities are work related. We deny ourselves the enjoyment of a balanced and varied life.
4. We use work as a way to deal with the uncertainties of life. We lie awake worrying; we over plan and over organize. By being unwilling to surrender control, we lose our spontaneity, creativity and flexibility.
5. Many of us grew up in chaotic homes. Stress and intensity feel normal to us. We seek out these conditions in the workplace. We create crises and get adrenaline highs by overworking to resolve them. Then we suffer withdrawals and become anxious and depressed. Such mood swings destroy our peace of mind.
6. Work has become an addiction. We lie to ourselves and to others about the amount we do. We hoard work to insure that we will always be busy and never bored. We fear free time and vacations and find them painful instead of refreshing.
7. Instead of being a haven, our home is an extension of our workplace. Our family and friends often arrange their time with us around our work, vainly hoping we will finish it and then can be with them.
8. We make unreasonable demands upon ourselves. We aren't aware of any difference between job imposed and self imposed pressure. By over scheduling our lives, we become driven, racing to beat the clock, fearful that we will get behind, and binge work in order to catch up. Our attention is fragmented by trying to do several things at once. Our inability to pace ourselves leads to breakdown and burnout. We rob ourselves of the enjoyment of conclusion and rest.
9. We tend to be perfectionistic. We don't accept mistakes as part of being human and find it hard to ask for help. Because we believe no one can meet our standards, we have difficulty delegating and so do more than our share of the work. Thinking ourselves indispensable often prevents our progress. Unrealistic expectations often cheat us of contentment.
10. We tend to be over serious and responsible. All activity must be purposeful. We find it hard to relax and just be; we feel guilty and restless when not working. Because we often work at our play, we rarely experience re creation and renewal. We neglect our sense of humor and rarely enjoy the healing power of laughter.
11. Waiting is hard for us. We are more interested in results than process, in quantity than quality. Our impatience often distorts our work by not allowing it proper timing.
12. Many of us are concerned with image. We think that looking busy makes people think we are important and gains their admiration. By seeking others' approval of us, we lose ourselves.