

STORYLINE

From Workaholics Anonymous

DECEMBER JANUARY FEBRUARY
2017-2018



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

CONTENTS FOR THIS ISSUE

SHARING: TRUSTING MY NEW WAY OF LIFE; BUSYNESS VS PRODUCTIVITY (page 2)

SHARING: CLUTTER AND UNDEREARNING; CLUTTER AS A DISTRACTION (page 3)

SHARING: RECOVERY TOOLS; WORKING JOYFULLY (page 4)

SHARING: OVERLY SERIOUS AND OVERLY RESPONSIBLE (page 5)

SHARING: THE GUILT WENT AWAY; SERENITY (page 6)

SHARING: GOD IS MY EMPLOYER; SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES; TAKING CARE OF MYSELF (page 7)

SHARING: USING WORK TO ESCAPE PROBLEMS (page 8)

CONTACT INFORMATION: EMAIL WSO (page 9)

EDITOR'S COMMENTARY (page 10)

WA LITERATURE EMAIL GROUP (page 11)

NEW PHONE MEETING TUESDAYS (page 11)

MISSION STATEMENT (page 12)

SHARING: TRUSTING MY NEW WAY OF LIFE

I have learned in my youth how to be "addict" with work and activities. I did not know, of course, that I was learning an addiction. I became addict when my parents were addicts and I thought it was the way of working and of living. I see that for me "workaholism" was the "only" way of working I knew.

Practicing the WA suggestions helps me to learn really how to work and practice activities with sanity.

When my mother was still living, I was so proud of my recovery, she was telling me all the time that I was "crazy". The more I was demonstrating recovery, the more I felt guilty listening to my mother. Our ways became polarized.

So I can understand these words: "being afraid for my job progression and security if I start to act in the healthier ways". Today I trust my "wellness" rather than my old patterns of "badness," a shift from what I have done my whole life

--Thank you so much,
--Helen

SHARING: BUSYNESS VS PRODUCTIVITY

I'm so grateful for WA. I am reminded today that I often mistake *busyness* for *productivity* and success. Something for me to think about. Slowing down is difficult for me.

--John D.

SHARING: CLUTTER AND UNDEREARNING

Does any one else have issues with clutter and under earning? It seems like I chronically underearn so I can justify obsession with work maybe?

There's hope: I tangibly get more accomplished when I connect w Higher Power and spend quality time with my family.

--Thanks,
--Monica

SHARING: CLUTTER AS A DISTRACTION

For me my clutter serves as a constant distraction. It also keeps up the workaholic way of always being too busy to do the things that are important in my life, or things about which I am scared about the outcomes.

Clutter was also a way for me to keep people out of my life, because if my house is so messy and I can't invite people over. Clutter is also a way for me to keep alive negative self thoughts all the time. I have found a need to drastically declutter my life both physically in my home office and car, as well as spiritually in my thoughts, keeping them focused on myself. And decluttering my time allows space for connecting to my higher power.

--JC

SHARING: RECOVERY TOOLS

I always feel happy when I see that the WA tools help me in situations which otherwise would have made problems for me in my life. I think also the fact that WA suggests recovery tools, which I take as authorization to work in new ways. The way the tools are working for me is so strange because when I practice these tools in order to get out of my addiction, I really feel better than ever, even better than before I had my addictions, unless I had the addiction already in my youth, which is likely. Thank you so much, WA.

*--gratefully,
--Helen*

SHARING: WORKING JOYFULLY

I am new and identified a lot with the things I heard in a meeting about working compulsively vs. joyfully. Especially, the ones: "effective on the first attempt and working smarter not harder and delaying tasks without worry". I tried it last week and I noticed that by not caring about the quality of my work or whether I finish or not, actually made me so happy, whereas before it would make me so scared and afraid.

I just did 50 % of effort and I didn't complete things I would usually have completed, but I felt so free and light-hearted! And nothing bad happened - the world didn't end, I was not fired, on the contrary: My manager was as mildly pleased as always and as he can be – as a workaholic himself!

I wanted to share how amazed I am with this program and my new way of life at work – its like a parallel world out of my dreams and I can't believe I didn't do this earlier, how wonderful work can be if I manage to stay in the right frame of mind, as described in the idea about working joyfully. I am willing to go at any length for serenity.

*--Thanks for reading
--Greetings from Tunis
--Anna*

SHARING: OVERLY SERIOUS AND OVERLY RESPONSIBLE

I have been overly serious and overly responsible all my life. Everything I did felt so important "for the image of myself," because I was feeling so bad inside myself, I was so scared to feel ashamed of myself that all what I did was the image of myself towards me and the others. Everything had to be perfect so nobody could tell me that something was not good and then no way for me to feel "ashamed." This "perfectionism" that nobody could not tell me anything was a kind of protection for me, as I was too terrified that the results of what I did and what the others would say would be the "proof" I was the bad girl I was thinking I was. Life was very serious and I was very serious and responsible whenever I did anything.

Today I see that this is going away slowly. I am accepting the results of what I do, I am slowly accepting that I am human, with weaknesses and defaults, and making errors, but also accepting that I have assets, and resources. When I was young I was so sure that I did not have assets, everything was "bad" behind the façade of this perfectionism. Life has humor now, and it is taking less energy for me to practice my WA recovery. I must say that I am just practicing, as I am just beginning, but it is important that I not be hard on myself, to be gentle when I slip into my workaholism, my need to be perfect and to please and not disturb anyone. This signpost is the description of my life. The only thing I can say is that when I practice the WA program all this is going away progressively.

One day at a time, sometimes one hour at a time, I feel that life is a lot less serious than in the past. But....about feeling responsible....I think I still feel too responsible. I would like to use humor more often. I know that humor is a way to take some distance with situations, sometimes I still feel furious or angry. And I know that it is not necessary. Afterwards I feel sad because I have reacted strongly, too strongly, too seriously.

Still I see big difference in comparison with the past. I feel more confident towards situations. Perhaps it is towards people that I should use more humor, and feel more serious when something is not going like I would have liked.

--Helen

SHARING: THE GUILT WENT AWAY

I'm surprised that I still initially feel guilty when I prioritize relationships, spiritual growth, creativity and playfulness over work. It's weird because after I do do much, and these activities make life more enjoyable, but that gut reaction is still there.

This weekend I planted my first veggie and flower garden, which I was wanting to do for weeks. I enjoy the creative experience of thinking up what will be planted, considering how to get the soil into a healthy state and designing the layout of the garden. This meant I didn't attend to two other voluntary commitments or help a friend, because I'd done about a day and half of volunteer work earlier in the week on top of full-time work. Once I made the decision to do my gardening this weekend, it all made sense and the guilt went away. I feel very excited now to see how things will develop.

After having said that, I did take a call on Saturday night from a recovery friend. It was really helpful for me (and hopefully for her) to confirm how I'd applied the recovery tools (e.g. prayer, talking without others, sponsorship, the steps, meetings and service) to get me through difficult times.

--Cheers,
--Tia

SHARING: SERENITY

Thank you, Tia! I must say that I sometimes still feel "guilt" when I balance my day like WA suggests for me. More and more I balance my day the best I can, and I see this feeling going away, but then it comes back.

I think about "HALT", if I am Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired, I have to pay attention, because my old patterns of life are quickly coming back into my life without my thinking about them. They come back automatically, and that is why I need to practice this balancing as often as I can, every day, one day at a time, and slowly serenity is coming into my life.

I may always feel guilt but I shall be able to let it go of it more and more easily. I am learning to let pleasure be in my life, including the pleasure of thinking about myself, and just "being myself," being alone or being with other people, doing things or doing nothing.

--Gratefully,
--Helen

SHARING: GOD IS MY EMPLOYER

Regarding the topic "God is my employer," whenever I get wrapped up in fears around my work and around my future, I find great relief to whisper or think this sentence because it gets my intensity out of the current dilemma, of whatever sort. And it has been true for me, so far in my life I have always managed somehow - even in times when I thought it was impossible to survive. Miraculously, it always somehow worked out, even if it meant changing the toxic job and being unemployed.

God was always there for me and still is, and all I need to do is ask for the intuitive right thoughts and to follow his will, not mine. What a relief. I always think I have to control everything and run the show. But I don't. I don't need to know the outcome anymore in order to do the next right thing.

I also like this phrase:

"A man once asked God for a favor and God had three possible answers:

- 1.) Yes,
- 2.) No, not now
- 3.) No, I have something far better planned for you"

--Anna

SHARING: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

"God is my employer" helps me make choices on spiritual principles, rather than fear or control.

--JC

SHARING: TAKING CARE OF MYSELF

I had planned a reunion with my family for my parent's anniversary. It was a very stressful time to leave work. I was thankful to HP and my recovery buddies to help keep my focus on taking care of myself as a break away from the pace, enjoying myself at such a wonderful monumental occasion, and taking time to rest. I had some painful thoughts of guilt and feeling selfish but I am learning to process and share those feelings. I got responses suggesting I trust the competency of colleagues while I was away taking time to replenish my soul and well being with a much needed break.

--Kate M.

--Chicagoland

SHARING: USING WORK TO ESCAPE PROBLEMS

I have been using work in order not to cope with people. It was my way to fly away from things I did not like. I remember that I was so happy to have my work when my mother was "on my back." I could not tell her that I had to have my life, as that was not possible with her. My life was "her." But I could tell her I was working. Work was respected by her, and work was a good tool for me to use to escape from her. I remember also at the time, I continued using my work when I had problems with my friends, and I told myself "i love my work, it is the best way for me to avoid problems with my friend."

In the same way but perhaps more "positive," I used work in order to please my dad. He was out all the time as a workaholic himself, and I was so sad being without him. Work had been a way for me to please him and to escape my sadness of being alone. With my boyfriends, work has been often the subject of our discussions, because I could not talk about anything else with them. Work has been a way for me to escape from my problems in all my relationships.

In one word, work has helped me to escape from myself all the time. I was never "honest" with myself and the others. Work was there all the time as a coping mechanism and an escape tool, in ways similar to how I used alcoholism to escape my anger, fear and sadness.

I see that the best way for me to feel better is to be honest with myself here, during the face-to-face meetings, and to practice the balanced tools of WA. Slowly I am learning to cope with my problems in another way than with work. And the best consequence of this recovery is for myself, the fact that the WA tools shows me in practice that I can be satisfied in my life and I can even have pleasure in my life. I did not know satisfactions and pleasures in life before. Perhaps is this which help me feel better, and cope with life.

Escaping from life all the time with work rather than addressing my challenges made me think that life is always difficult. I thought life was so hard, that it was hard to live. In WA I find tools and resources for resolving my problems. Rather than working all day long, I know today that I have choice: I go on with my old way of living or I practice my new way of life that I am learning in WA. I love WA. WA is giving tools I did not know before. These tools are making my life better, one day at a time and with help of my High Power, and my friends in recovery.

--Gratefully,

--Helen

CONTACT INFORMATION: EMAIL WAWSO

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EDITOR'S COMMENTARY

Storyline is the quarterly newsletter of Workaholics Anonymous, published in order to share our experience, strength and hope with each other, and to announce information about our fellowship.

We welcome shares, stories, commentaries, quotes, and poems: anything original that we can reproduce.

Please submit what you have to share and encourage others to do so as well.

Send us your own work, and if you see something you like in your email group written by someone else, please secure permission from the author and send it in or include their email address so we can secure their permission.

We continue to feel grateful to the Finding Balance email group for sharing their experience, strength and hope with STORYLINE. Because of their generosity, this issue discusses perfectionism,

recovery tools and recovery experiences, turning to God as my employer, and more. We welcome

other contributions. STORYLINE depends on all of us!

--Shelley, Chicago

ANNOUNCEMENT: WA LITERATURE EMAIL GROUP

Are you interested in reading selected pieces of WA literature regularly and share about it?

check us out here: https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/wa-stepping_into_recovery/info

ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW PHONE MEETING

New WA phone meeting to be held on:

Tuesdays 5:15pm (PT) 8:15pm (EDT)

starting August 15, 2017

(605) 468-8037 Access Code 118778#

The meeting will be reading the entire WA Book of Recovery Second Edition.

Questions, call or text: Leya (818) 235-6746

STORYLINE: OUR MISSION

- To produce a quarterly publication of news about WA in a way that serves as an example of balance between service and our program.
- To provide a space for people of the fellowship to share their experience, strength and hope with the broader membership.
- To provide real stories from real people to those in our fellowship who do not have access to a local meeting.
- To bridge the gap between the fellowship and the WA Board, and aid in replenishing the Board with new members as the trustees' terms run out.

STORY LINE invites WA members to share their experience, strength and hope with the WA fellowship around the world. Each of us has something to share that can help another workaholic to abstain from compulsive working. Please send your submittals by email to: storyline@workaholics-anonymous.org, with **SL** in the SUBJECT LINE. Include your contact information and please also let us know if we can include your first name as author. Your contribution will make this publication more alive, while improving your recovery by helping others.

Note that materials submitted are assumed to be intended for publication, and are subject to editing to provide clarity and conformity for the newsletter. They become the property of WAWSO, which reserves the right to publish them in any format in any Workaholics Anonymous literature. The tentative deadline for submissions for our MARCH APRIL MAY issue is: February 15, 2018.

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