

STORYLINE

From Workaholics Anonymous
DECEMBER JANUARY FEBRUARY
2015-2016



“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: THE TOOLS OF WA (page 1)

SHARING: SIGNPOST TEN (page 3)

STEPWORK: SIX STEP LETTERS (page 4)

SHARING: RECIPES FROM AN UNRECOVERED COOKBOOK (page 5)

MEDITATION: SELF-ACCEPTANCE (page 6)

MEDITATION: TIME AS A GIFT (page 7)

MEDITATION: FELLOWSHIP (page 8)

STORY: A MOMENT OF GRACE (page 9)

ANNOUNCEMENT: TELEPHONE MEETING (page 10)

EDITOR'S COMMENTARY (Page 11)

CONTACT INFORMATION: EMAIL WSO (Page 11)

ANNOUNCEMENT AND INVITATION: WA MEDITATION BOOK (Page 12)

MISSION STATEMENT (Page 13)

SHARING: THE TOOLS OF WA

The “Tools” of WA have been very helpful to me. They are practical, down to earth ways to aid in managing an otherwise compulsive life. Since finding WA years ago, I have also found some other tools that have been particularly useful in levering me out of persistent attitudes and behavior. I offer these here.

1.

Make the problem a friend, not an enemy. By building a wall between ourselves and our problem, we lose the opportunity to learn from it. It can be painful or depressing to bring it out into the light of day, but by accepting it and bringing it closer we detoxify it and lower our fear. This way we can move beyond it and get on with our lives.

2.

Slow down and pay attention. When we are rushing to get results, measuring our output to justify our existence, we lose track of the things that matter most, including time with family and friends, constructive feedback from associates and the rest we need to feel serenity. When we really pay attention to others and abandon the myth of multitasking, we can offer ourselves and others a window into who we really are.

3.

Give ourselves praise for even small improvements in our outlook and behavior. By focusing on our shortcomings we become rigid and unable to be creative, compassionate and forgiving. When we notice only our failings, we are deepening our habits and increasing our low sense of self worth. When we celebrate even small successes, we are breaking old habits and adding to our recovery.

4.

Pay careful attention to inner feelings, they can tell us things that our brainpower cannot. These messages are not in words and communicate with us in ways that our verbal and matter-of-fact brains can miss. Workaholics are often overly rational and miss important information. We struggle with problems worrying and hesitating, but when we finally see our way clear, we find that our feelings had arrived there long before.

5.

Don't repeat old unsuccessful strategies. We tend to try the same thing over and over, thinking that this time it will work. This is our willfulness getting in the way, which is what got us into overworking in the first place. If we can stop trying so hard, giving space for a higher power to come to the rescue, we will discover new attitudes and patience that will lead us toward the serenity we seek.

6.

Get a new look at our problem by making some structural changes. Change the location of the desk, the timing of routines, our facial expression when we look in the mirror. These are changes that are easy to make as a first step toward recovery. This can give our brains a chance to look at things differently. What we need is a fresh take on our problems and shortcomings which are often just in a rut.

7.

Gaining self-esteem is a two handed game. We cannot repair low self-esteem in isolation. Self-esteem comes from being trusted and accepted by those we respect. Only by earning and receiving trust do we come to believe we are truly OK. Receiving praise and rewards that are not offered truthfully leave us only more aware of our isolation. "People pleasing" is a fruitless effort, as we are seldom appreciated for the right reasons or in the right amount. Many of us are seeking to fill an inner void of isolation by working long hours and trying to avoid being judged but this draws us away from the very thing we need.

8.

Get connected. Reach out to friends and family. Making new friends enlarges our knowledge of humanity and ourselves. We find we are not alone. The long history of mankind shows that starting with very primitive societies, loneliness is seen as unhealthy. When we see a smiling baby, only a few days old, it is obvious that we are built to relate to each other.

9.

Get close to nature. In nature there are no workaholics. Rain or shine we can benefit by getting away from the hot buttons that turn on our workaholicism. Here we can find harmony and renewal that does not struggle to stop time. By concentrating on the very act of breathing we get into a rhythm that clearly exists only in the here and now.

10.

Write a mission statement. This is a way to re-think what our core values are. This is commonly used by businesses to help in measuring choices, to sort out conflicting goals and to set standards for success. For individuals it can be helpful in clarifying how to use the Serenity Prayer and in setting our borders and the extent of our compassion.

11.

We need to ask ourselves: "Is this the way I want to spend the rest of my life?" Each day is the first day of the future, but with our nose to the grindstone, it is easy to forget that today is precious and pretend that "there is plenty of time" to change course, to start repairing relationships, and to stop seeing life as a job. Procrastination is a terrible waste of our time on earth. Acknowledging our mortality brings the need for change into action.

--from Harry W.

SHARING: SIGNPOST TEN

Signpost 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.

This is a good description of what I was and can still be. I know over-responsibility very well. I have taken responsibility for everyone in my life. The reason was that I needed to avoid conflict, because I believed that conflict created separation and abandonment. That was in the past. I thought I needed to take care of everyone and please them. I had created a “false self” and I believed that self was truly me. Today I know it was not the “real” me I had created, I recognize I believed I needed it in order to survive.

Now I try to let go of this “over-responsibility”, the over-responsibility kept me procrastinating and not doing what I needed to do. I try to take one day at a time and listen to my true self and body. I fully practice the WA recovery program. I no longer see everything as a life or death issue, I no longer try to control the results of everything I do, I relax when I need to, and I no longer keep working all day long. All that was done to hide myself. I live now for “the right purpose,” and when I play I try not to turn my play into work. In my daily action plan, I include things to laugh about, and that helps me a lot.

*--Love in fellowship,
--Helene*

Per his sponsor's suggestion, Andrew wrote up letters to some of his character defects to say good-bye. Perhaps this will inspire other STORYLINE readers to work STEP SIX in this way. Submit your letters to STORYLINE. Andrew says he would also love to hear from you at: abc@mail.com

STEPWORK: STEP SIX LETTERS

Dear Perfectionism,

You're not a team player, I'm going to ask a HP to remove you. You've gotten in the way of daily practices like Steps 10 and 11, you make a lot of mistakes with your friend Impatience, and your desk is a mess.

On a more personal note, our relationship was inappropriate as coworkers. I've changed the locks and your things are in the yard. We won't be seeing each other anymore, and certainly not hanging out.

Sincerely,
Andrew, from Raleigh-Durham NC.

Dear Pride,

I know that you have been conspiring against me for years with Fear, and it breaks my heart. I've changed my name and joined the witness protection program. By the time you receive this a Senate hearing should be well under way. I have Protection now. When (not if) you infiltrate my life again, I will have spiritual principles like surrender to block you. Say hello to my little friend humility.

Sincerely,
A connected guy, Andrew,
from Raleigh-Durham NC

Dear Impatience,

You are only slowing down my recovery so I'm going to have to let you go. Your firm promised results but a look at the numbers shows only a few minutes less on the road and huge consequences, like stress and sloppiness. I think you've been stealing. I won't let you hurt me or my family. I'll see you in court.

Sincerely,
Andrew,
from Raleigh-Durham NC.

SHARING: RECIPES FROM THE UNRECOVERED COOKBOOK

cookbooksforaddictsondemand@wewillserveyoubetter.org

1. THE WORKAHOLIC COOKBOOK: How to create delicious meals that will make your family believe you slaved for hours in the kitchen, especially for them, while answering all your emails, run a load of laundry and book some more appointments for the next few days.
2. THE WORKANON'S COOKBOOK
How to cook meals that won't spoil even if they are heated up again and again and again because the workaholic in our lives called hours ago saying they were leaving work "right now", but haven't arrived home.

--Contributed by Anylength

The following meditations have been submitted to our new meditation book. Perhaps you would write your meditation and submit it to the Committee (please see the invitation on page 12) or to STORYLINE.

MEDITATION: TIME AS A GIFT

Characteristic Eight: We can refuse responsibility or requests. We can say 'no' without feeling guilty. We nurture ourselves and give from our overflow. Book of Recovery p 179. Characteristics of Recovery.

When we give a gift of money to a loved one, they can do with it whatever they want, as it is now theirs to spend. We might wish for them, however, that they would spend it on themselves in a way that was pleasurable, fulfilling and nurturing. So it is with the gift of time from our higher power.

We have each been given an unknown number of years alive on this earth, and they are ours to do with as we wish. It may well be that it is *not* our higher power's will that we spend them in struggle, exhaustion and sacrificing the beauty of the moment in a straining to 'accomplish' ever more. Our higher power may be wishing us serenity, joy, and freedom.

Higher power, please help me to treasure your gift, and spend it wisely, recognizing each beautiful moment for the treasure that it can be.

--Morrie H

MEDITATION: SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Signpost 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. *Book of recovery, p. 7.*

When I was a child, I was fearful, shy and rather quirky. I had difficulty fitting in and feeling comfortable.

I would fantasize about having superhuman qualities - great strength and fearlessness - achieving feats that would bring recognition, admiration and gratitude from others.

As I grew up, I continued to dream of the same - recognition, gratitude and admiration, and so I tried to hide my true self. I thought if I could just appear to be the same as other people, but better, I might be acceptable. So I concealed my fears, my shame, my weaknesses, my differences, my quietness, my quirkiness and my individuality - even from myself, much of the time.

When I share these parts of myself in recovery, I find they can be my greatest strengths. They enable me to find deep self-acceptance. When I expose myself to others, I give hope to them, and I help them get in touch with the softer, inner parts of themselves, the parts through which we feel love and connection.

We may have fantasized about being loved for something false - an image we believed might be worthy.

We can now allow ourselves to be loved for who we really are, with our beautiful and vulnerable souls recognized and then cherished by our fellow human beings.

Higher power, please give me the courage to present to the world my true self, in all its strength and vulnerability.

--Morrie H

MEDITATION: FELLOWSHIP

*Tool of Asking: We realize we don't have to do everything ourselves.
Book of Recovery, 1st Ed, page 12.*

I didn't think I was controlling. I minded my own business and was very careful not to unduly influence others. I wasn't realizing that my self-sufficient and self-contained lifestyle was a way of controlling my environment, and controlling the extent of other people's influence on my life.

Asking for help and surrendering outcomes can be frightening. Living with the unpredictability of other people's spontaneity, shortcomings, and humanity can also be frightening, especially if we are more comfortable with control.

However, we *can* learn to trust. Our trust may be first in a higher power, or trust in life. Rewards come from surrendering, along with relief from our burdens and stresses. We learn to let go, and let the magic happen. We experience the riches that letting go brings. We surrender to the magic of our community, and the love that being a human being amongst other human beings can engender.

Higher Power, please help me to surrender to the love and fellowship that is available around me. Thank you for the miracle of loving companionship.

--Morrie H

STORY: A MOMENT OF GRACE

The other day I was making an effort to clean up my desk which has previously been declared a "permanent un-natural disaster zone". (un-natural because even nature couldn't make it that bad and keep it that bad for this long).

Anyway, half way through I realised I had misplaced a piece of paper that was rather important. It had some official number on it I would have to pay to replace. I felt myself getting all wound up and panicky and the adrenaline was starting to pump through my veins. Entry: my partner!

He wanted my attention for something and as per usual he started talking about it straight away. And this is the point a little miracle happened. Instead of being all annoyed about the disruption when I had this important piece of paper to locate. I stopped and had a moment of grace.

I lifted my hands up to stop him, looked straight into his eyes, and said: "I just realised I lost an important piece of paper. I am feeling all panicked about it and my head can not absorb what you are trying to say to me. Please give me a moment to put aside my panic so I can give you my full attention".

Then I inwardly assured myself that the piece of paper was somewhere in this pile of stuff in front of me, that I would find it eventually and even if not, the replacement cost would not break the bank.

Then I was able to look at my partner and give him my full attention, without "secretly" rummaging around and looing at stray bits of paper with one eye. I gave him the information he needed and he was quite happy, even offering to help me find my piece of paper.

It was an unprecedented occurrence that I had this moment of grace where I was able to stop and then shift my focus fully on my partner. My usual behaviour would have been to be annoyed with him that he had to ask me anything in the first place and not giving him my full attention.

I can see progress in my life now, thanks to the WA program. I have worked the steps to step 8 and am looking forward to make a lot of living amends where I can chose to give others my full attention, looking them into the eyes, and not have to do 6 other things simultaneously.

--Anylength

ANNOUNCEMENT: TELEPHONE MEETING PLANNED

I'm one of your fellow World Service Representatives for Workaholics Anonymous, and also a workaholic, named Cari D. from Los Angeles, California, USA, representing the Sunday 4pm (PST) phone meeting.

Earlier this month at the WA conference we made some exciting strides forward in our fellowship involving the World Service Representatives. The representatives who were able to attend had an informal meeting and agreed that we should continue having a yearly in-person meeting at the conference, and also have two other meetings during the year by telephone. The goal of this is to represent the members of our WA groups more effectively and to channel group conscience of our fellowship.

Our first telephone meeting is planned for [Saturday, February 6, 2016](#), at 9 a.m. (Pacific Standard Time). The telephone number this WSR meeting is [\(712\) 770-4010](#), using the access code of 678336#. (For more detailed instructions please contact Carl at the email below.) Because many world service representatives have not yet been selected, this call will be open to anyone in WA, world-wide, who is potentially interested in the business of this meeting.

We tried to pick a time that would allow as many members as possible to be awake and able to attend. Because we're dealing with international time zones, that means it is very early for some and very late for others. Unfortunately, it's impossible to have a time that's perfectly convenient for everyone, so apologies for that. At the first meeting we can discuss switching times or having a rotating time of day in the future.

The purpose of the meeting in February is to start to figure out what World Service Representatives actually do, how we do it, and how WSR's can be of service to our fellowship and our groups. We can also check in about ideas or concerns of the members we represent, and get to know each other a little. Basically, we are making this up as we go along, so if anyone has something they would like to talk about in February let us know, so we can address it.

We also discussed trying to make the conference, or at least the business meeting, available to our WSRs through video conferencing in the future. That way anyone who cannot be there physically would still be able to participate in group conscience conversations and decisions.

A lot of other exciting stuff happened at the conference, but I'm going to try to keep this email shorter by not going into it right now. Thank you to WSR's for your amazing service!

Gratefully, Cari D. 323-578-4373
ecaridaly@yahoo.com

EDITOR'S COMMENTARY: NEW FEATURES

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 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. Send contributions for to: storyline@workaholics-anonymous.org, with STORYLINE in the subject line.

We dropped our STORYLINE REFERENCE LIST because of concerns about naming non-conference approved literature, but our readers have submitted new features for this issue to enhance our recovery. Andrew has written good-bye letters to some of his character defects. Anylength has submitted recipes from an "unrecovered cookbook." Morris has submitted meditations which may reappear again in our new yet-to-be published meditation book. This is our most creative and imaginative STORYLINE yet while I have been editor. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

Please know that STORYLINE invites your help not only stories, shares, and other written contributions, but also for administration editing, assistant editing, proof-reading, and outreach to get more contributions. Let us know if you are available to help with any of these or with other tasks of your choosing. We truly support abstinence from overworking which is part of sobriety, but note that reading the submissions and collaborating with others can enhance your sobriety. I find working on STORYLINE, doing work that I love, to be interesting, creative, and gratifying.

-Shelley, Chicago

CONTACT INFORMATION: EMAIL WAWSO

For any Program issue, concern, initiative, suggestion, etc.:

Bruce A. facilitator@workaholics-anonymous.org

Lia F. secretary@workaholics-anonymous.org

Drew D. treasurer@workaholics-anonymous.org

For general information: communications@workaholics-anonymous.org

For meeting and WSR assistance: Bob wrsupport@workaholics-anonymous.org

For WA Literature volunteers or corrections: Amber literature@workaholics-anonymous.org

For eNewsletter and Outreach: Michele outreach@workaholics-anonymous.org

For STORYLINE: Shelley storyline@workaholics-anonymous.org

For Meditation Book: MeditationBook@workaholics-anonymous.org

For literature ordering questions: Sandi fulfillment@workaholics-anonymous.org

For technology matters: Ken technology@workaholics-anonymous.org

General mailbox: wso@workaholics-anonymous.org

ANNOUNCEMENT AND INVITATION: NEW MEDITATION BOOK

The W.A.W.S.O. Literature Committee is creating a meditations book. We would like all the meditations to come from the fellowship, so . . . **We need your help!**

All members are welcome to write and submit meditations for publication. These can be submitted individually, or as a group. Consider having a writing play day for your home group. Not only would this activity provide opportunities for reflection and meditation, but it would also allow group members to make contributions to a book that will serve the needs of the whole fellowship.

A suggested meeting format for writing meditations is available at the WA website. For more details about submitting meditations, please visit: <http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org/page.php?page=bookofmeditations>

Also, a suggested meeting format for writing meditations is available at the WA website at: <http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org/pdf/MeetingTypes.pdf>

We look forward to receiving your meditations!!
Have fun with us!!

Your trusted servants,
W.A.W.S.O. Literature Committee

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, are subject to editing to provide conformity for the newsletter. They become the property of WAWSO, which may publish them in any format in any Workaholics Anonymous literature. The tentative deadline for submissions for our next issue is: February 15, 2016.

Workaholics Anonymous World Service Organization

PO Box 289 Menlo Park CA 94026

Telephone: 510-273-9253

www.workaholics-anonymous.org storyline@workaholics-anonymous.org



