

A BRIEF GUIDE

The Preamble*

Workaholics Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover from workaholism.

The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop working compulsively. There are no dues or fees for WA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. WA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stop working compulsively and to carry the message of recovery to workaholics who still suffer.

The Twenty Questions

1. Are you more drawn to your work or activity than close relationships, rest, etc.?
2. Are there times when you are motivated and push through tasks when you don't even want to and other times when you procrastinate and avoid them when you would prefer to get things done?
3. Do you take work with you to bed? On weekends? On vacation?
4. Are you more comfortable talking about your work than other topics?
5. Do you pull all-nighters?
6. Do you resent your work or the people at your workplace for imposing so many pressures on you?
7. Do you avoid intimacy with others and/or yourself?
8. Do you resist rest when tired and use stimulants to stay awake longer?
9. Do you take on extra work or volunteer commitments because you are concerned that things won't otherwise get done?
10. Do you regularly underestimate how long something will take and then rush to complete it?
11. Do you immerse yourself in activities to change how you feel or avoid grief, anxiety, and shame?
12. Do you get impatient with people who have other priorities besides work?
13. Are you afraid that if you don't work hard all the time, you will lose your job or be a failure?

14. Do you fear success, failure, criticism, burnout, financial insecurity, or not having enough time?
15. Do you try to multitask to get more done?
16. Do you get irritated when people ask you to stop doing what you're doing in order to do something else?
17. Have your long hours caused injury to your health or relationships?
18. Do you think about work or other tasks while driving, conversing, falling asleep, or sleeping?
19. Do you feel agitated when you are idle and/or hopeless that you'll ever find balance?
20. Do you feel like a slave to your email, texts, or other technology?

If you answered "yes" to 3 or more of these questions, you may be a workaholic or on your way to developing the compulsion.

The Tools of Recovery

Listening—We set aside time each day for prayer and meditation. Before accepting any commitments, we ask our Higher Power and WA friends for guidance.

Prioritizing—We decide which are the most important things to do first. Sometimes that may mean doing nothing. We strive to stay flexible to events, reorganizing our priorities as needed. We view interruptions and accidents as opportunities for growth.

Substituting—We do not add a new activity without eliminating from our schedule one that demands equivalent time and energy.

Under-Scheduling—We allow more time than we think we need for a task or trip, allowing a comfortable margin to accommodate the unexpected.

Playing—We schedule time for play, refusing to let ourselves work non-stop. We do not make our play into a work project.

Concentrating—We try to do one thing at a time.

Pacing—We work at a comfortable pace and rest *before* we get tired. To remind ourselves, we check our level of energy before proceeding to our next activity. We do not get "wound up" in our work, so we don't have to unwind.

Relaxing—We do not yield to pressure from others or attempt to pressure others. We remain alert to the people and situations that trigger feelings of pressure in us. We become aware of our own actions, words, body sensations, and feelings that tell us we are responding with pressure. When we feel energy building up, we stop; we reconnect with our Higher Power and others around us.

Accepting—We accept the outcomes of our endeavors, whatever the results, whatever the timing. We know that impatience, rushing, and insisting on perfect results only slow down our recovery. We are gentle with our efforts, knowing that our new way of living requires much practice.

Asking—We admit our weaknesses and mistakes. We realize we don't have to do everything ourselves, and we ask our Higher Power and others for help.

Meetings—We attend WA meetings to learn how the Fellowship works and to share our experience, strength, and hope with each other.

Telephoning—We use the telephone to stay in contact with members of the Fellowship between meetings. We communicate with our WA friends before and after a critical task.

Balancing—We balance our involvement in work with our efforts to develop personal relationships, spiritual growth, creativity, and playful attitudes.

Servicing—We readily extend help to other workaholics, knowing that assistance to others adds to the quality of our own recovery.

Living in the Now—We realize we are where our Higher Power wants us to be—in the here and now. We try to live each moment with serenity, joy, and gratitude.

The Twelve Steps*

1. We admitted we were powerless over work—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood God*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Became entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood God*, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to workaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Traditions*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon WA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for WA membership is a desire to stop working compulsively.
4. Each Group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other Groups or WA as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the workaholic who still suffers.
6. A Workaholics Anonymous Group ought never endorse, finance or lend the WA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every WA Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Workaholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. WA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Workaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the WA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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