

Living in



Balance

Summer 2003 The International Quarterly

Newsletter of Workaholics Anonymous

There Is Still Time—Upcoming World Conference Program Set *August Timelines for Lodging and Registration Approaching*

Workaholics Anonymous World Conference 2003

September 12-14, 2003 at the Mercy Retreat
Center in the Forest Near San Francisco

OUTLINE OF PROGRAM

Friday, Sept. 12

Registration starts at 4:00 p.m.
Social Hour, Get Acquainted 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.
Dinner 6:00
Free time 7:00
WA Gratitude Meeting 7:30-9:00

Saturday, Sept. 13

Early walk, meditation, Tai Chi, etc. 7AM
Breakfast 8:00
Beginning of Silent Auction 8:45
Keynote Speaker, Sally L. 9:00
Work and Relationships, Panel 10:00
Money, Prestige and Power, Panel 11:00
Lunch 12:00
Writing Our Stories 1:00 p.m.
WA Step Meeting 1:00
Creating WA's Recovery Book/The 12 Steps 2:00
WA Speaker Meeting 2:00
Free Time 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.
WSO Business Meeting, Open to All 4:00
WA Tools Meeting 4:00
Free Time 5:30
Dinner 6:00
Conclusion of Silent Auction 7:00
Free time, Sunset walk 7:00
Play and fun 8:00

Sunday, Sept. 14

Early walk, meditation, Tai Chi, etc., on your own
7:00 a.m.
Breakfast and room checkout 8:00
Conclusion of WSO Business, Open to All 9:00
WA Speaker Meeting 9:00
Talk by Father Tom 10:00
Closing Circle 11:00
Lunch 12:00 noon

Please Join Us at the WA World Conference

There are already almost two dozen confirmed registrations and more are coming in by the day! From Oregon and Germany, from Florida and Arizona, California and New Jersey, folks from all walks of life in WA recovery are preparing to converge on the San Francisco Bay area September 12-14th for the WA **World Conference**. This biennial event features keynote speakers, step and story meetings, writing sessions, fellowship, and fun in the hills above the Bay. We would love to have at least one representative from each meeting at the conference!

There are two **upcoming timelines** for sending in fees and registration: For those who would like to reserve lodging and conference fees, the due date is August 7th (\$230). For those preferring meals and conference only (\$125) or Saturday only (\$50) sign-up, the due date is August 30th for registration and fees. Each meeting has one vote on any decisions coming before the WA members.

For many years we have had a few members in Germany who receive WA mailings and newsletters and participate in the elections. They call their groups AAS - Anonyme Arbeitssüchtige (<http://www.arbeitssucht.de/>). They are planning to send two representatives to the September conference!

In a nurturing and restful forested retreat setting in the hills near San Francisco, come gather with WA's from around the world to **strengthen your program**, share experience, strength, and hope, and renew your spirit. For questions, contact Ken at 650-856-0343. Please fill out the registration form online at our **new WA website** or and send your checks to WA at the address on page 2 of this Newsletter:

www.workaholics-anonymous.org

Inside This Issue . . .

Tool Review: Service

Three one-year Service Positions Open Up

Step Study: Step Four

Gentle and Thorough Inventory. . . working Step 4

Board Notes: World Conference and More

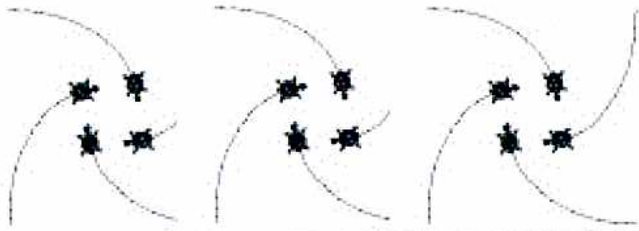
The Latest and Greatest from the WA-WSO Board

About Workaholics Anonymous

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

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop working compulsively. There are no dues or fees for WA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. W.A. 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.

Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are personal and belong to the person who shared them. Take what you like and leave the rest. They do not necessarily represent official opinions or policies of WA-WSO.



About The WA Newsletter

This newsletter is published four times a year and is sent to all active WA groups in the US & abroad and to all "loners" who subscribe. Suggested subscription fee is \$8 per year payable to the WA World Service Organization. Meetings are also welcome to subscribe! Please keep your group's address and contact information current with WA-WSO. We are eager for your stories, articles, artwork, book reviews, and submissions. Electronic submissions can be sent via email. Submission timeline for the Autumn Issue is September 30th, 2003, and for the Winter 2004 Newsletter, November 30th, 2003. Thank you!

Workaholics Anonymous World Service Organization

email: wso at workaholics-anonymous.org
web: www.workaholics-anonymous.org

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Menlo Park, California 94026-0289
510-273-9253**

Book Review:

The Overworked American

Author Juliet Schor (1990)

Review by a San Francisco Member

The Overworked American is full of interesting information about the way work patterns and habits have changed over the past few centuries. I was particularly fascinated by the changes in attitudes about housework, child-rearing and personal hygiene. The advent of labor-saving devices actually increased the number of hours spent on housework because standards of cleanliness increased so much. As recently as the middle of the last century, it was common for Americans to put on a clean outfit once a week; electric washing machines made doing laundry so much easier we started changing clothes much more often - and thus creating mounds of laundry. While most of us can't imagine going back to earlier ideas about cleaning, this book challenges our assumptions about what we "must" do to keep up with the modern world. The author has an interesting discussion of the relationship between our consumer culture and overwork. My only criticism is that she dismisses workaholics as incurable, rather than seeing them as victims of the same cycles of excessive work as everyone else. Overall, I thought this book was well worth reading.

Take Back Your Time Day

Modeled on Earth Day, Take Back Your Time Day is being held by a national nonprofit group. The idea is to raise awareness about the epidemic of overwork in the US. The first day is this year on October 23, 2003. For more info, go to: <http://www.simpleliving.net/timeday/>

Treasurer's Report

In the first 6 months of 2003, World Service received contributions of \$3213.26. These have included 7th tradition contributions and reservations for the World Service Conference in September. We have paid out a total of \$753.59, for newsletter expenses, telephone, government filings, and administrative costs. We currently have \$5449.12 in the bank, much of which will be paid to the Mercy Center in August to cover the costs of the conference.

Newsletter Themes

The Theme for the Fall Newsletter (published right after the World Conference) is WA in Action and Step 5. The Topic for the Winter Newsletter is Serenity. We are also recruiting contributions for a regular "Our Meeting," with highlights from different WA meetings. Please send us your ideas and articles!

Step 4 in Workaholics Anonymous

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The following questions are meant to be helpful to the recovering workaholic who is ready to work the 4th step. It is easier at this point to have a sponsor or to be working the step in a group with others who have worked the 4th step. These questions are meant as a guide. It is best to have worked the first three steps; turning our will and our lives over to a power greater than ourselves helps enhance the "fearless" part of this inventory.

The inventory begins by listing our present resentments, guilts, and fears. In this step as we name our attitudes and write about our patterns, both helpful and unhelpful, we begin to understand ourselves better. As we move through our 4th, 5th and 6th steps, and as we practice the other parts of the program—meetings, action plans, meditation, surrender, and getting help—we will notice we have become freer of these character defects and more appreciative of our strengths. The promises of true serenity and a healthy, balanced life will be ours.

Many of us have begun by using the guidelines in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 64-71. We write our answers. The following are a set of questions to be used as a guide.

RESENTMENTS

1. We begin by listing our resentments, fears, and shame. The columns described in the Big Book are very helpful. Part of an example follows:

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| I am resentful at: | the cause, event: | Affects my: |
| Sam, my boss | fired me | self esteem, finances, pride |
| My partner | bugs me about work | control, feel criticized |

2. What were the patterns of resentment and anger in my family of origin? (e.g. silence then rage, retaliation, passive resistance and acting out, blaming others, etc.)
3. What are common triggers and my patterns of expressing anger?
4. What is my definition of healthy expression of anger and resentments? In what ways have I been respectful and assertive with my anger?
5. How have resentments taken up space in my daily thoughts?
6. Can I express anger without blame or criticism?
7. Am I a conflict avoider, pleasing others at any cost?

FEAR

1. How do I experience fear? List any patterns of fear, worry, immobilization, procrastination, and anxiety you have.
2. Is there a family history of fear and anxiety?
3. Where has self-reliance failed me?
4. What do I trust? How has the experience of surrender, prayer and meditation lead to an increase of serenity?

SEX

1. Reviewing my past experiences, have I been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate about my sexual behavior? Have I taken health risks? Have I aroused jealousy?
2. Do I take my considerations about sex to my Higher Power for guidance?
3. Do I use work to avoid sex? Am I too depleted by work to have a healthy sexual relationship? What has been my pattern of work and worry and how has it affected my sex and love life? Am I jealously possessive?
4. Can I now enjoy non-manipulative sex?

SHAME

1. What gets in the way of me being a limited human being who makes mistakes?
2. Can I make mistakes and be imperfect and still be loveable and forgivable?
3. "We are as sick as our secrets." List any major secrets.

OTHER QUESTIONS

1. What am I grateful for?
2. How am I perfectionist? How does it feed my patterns of procrastination?
3. For what have I begun to forgive myself? What are some of the origins of my behaviors?
4. Whom do I still need to forgive?
5. What percentage of my thoughts are negative—fearful, resentful, self critical, judgmental? Am I sensitive to criticism? Make a list of examples of self-hatred and self abuse.
6. Do I trust others or situations to work out?
7. How has pride affected my workaholism? How has my ego affected my work addiction?
8. As a balance I need to feel proud of my achievements and contributions. Make a list. Let the self-critic rest.
9. Begin to make a list of my positive attributes: generous, caring, recovering....
10. How have substances such as caffeine, recreational drugs, nicotine, and/or alcohol been a pattern to my workaholism?
11. How have food, debting, and/or gambling been a factor in my workaholism.?
12. How do I set limits on my time and energy?
13. Am I power hungry? How do I react when I don't get my own way?
14. How do I try to keep control of situations and people? What is my pattern and what was the pattern in my family?
15. In what ways have I been honest? What ways am I dishonest?
16. Do I let the needs of others take over while ignoring my own needs?
17. Have I been unavailable to my children or partners?
18. What is my relationship with time? Frequently late? over scheduled? How does the reality of time ignored serve me?
19. How have I avoided taking responsibility for my behavior? Denial? Blame? Distraction, Dishonesty? Rationalization? In what ways do I admit mistakes?
20. What is my relationship to money? Am I debting? Am I a money anorexic?

Please feel free to email the WA Big Book Committee with ideas, feedback, and stories.

Fourth Step Tools—Gentleness, Coping Skills, and Character Assets

I offer three tools that my sponsor shared with me that helped me with my fourth step.

Gentleness Collage

Before I began my fourth step writing, my sponsor gave my Higher Power and myself an art project: making a Gentleness Collage. The assignment was to gather images, words, ideas, and yes—activities, that were ways I could be nourishing and gentle with myself. I got out crayons and pens, prayed, crafted words on paper, cut out images from magazines, drew, and glued. Some of the things in my gentleness collage included:

- Sitting in the garden
- Taking a nap
- Walking in the nearby park
- Picking a bouquet of flowers
- Taking a soothing bath
- Reading from *A Gentle Path through the Twelve Steps* and *A Woman's Book of Comfort*
- The qualities of kindness, compassion, fun, and joy
- Images for inspiration and HP

I placed my Gentleness Collage in a prominent place in my room. My sponsor suggested I be or do something from the collage after each time I worked on my fourth step. My Gentleness Collage became my companion through my step writing, reminding me that the Fourth Step wasn't a litany of how bad I am (as my developmentally arrested inner addict tended to think) but a neutral snapshot of all resentment, anger, lingering feeling, and fear that stood in the way of my conscious contact. It was a great way of practicing what was to become a living amends to myself, of being internally gentle with myself and cultivating a climate of compassion inside—a practice that I still learn into today.

“Negative Coping Skill” Re-Languaging

I had a difficult time with the language of “character defect” both because my 1990s English language brain is only a cousin of the language of the original *Big Book* authors, and because I am a survivor of intense verbal abuse that I had internalized. “Character defect” seemed like character assassination instead of loving compassion, connecting with a sense of rigidity and fixity for me. My sponsor offered the phrase “negative coping mechanism” or “negative coping skill” as a substitute for “character defect.” This alternative language helped me approach my extensive inventory with compassion for myself, with a sense that the behaviors were understandable coping skills that helped me survive tough situations that had outgrown their usefulness and had come to harm and hinder me from full living. Additionally, my sponsor suggested I log entries of my “assets” (“character assets”) as well as my defects (“negative coping skills”), since the metaphor in the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous* talks about taking a thorough inventory, as of a store, noting what's present and available not only what's missing or 'rotten on the shelf.' So I added a column (see below for complete list) of assets, which my sponsor had me use two ways. One, if the entry were about an asset or positive-feeling situation, I wrote the asset in the last column. If the entry were about a fear or anger, for example, with an underlying negative coping mechanism, I would not only note the negative coping mechanism (e.g. illusion of indispensability) but also the potential character asset that could be involved were I to have a healthy response or presence in a given situation (e.g. faith). As throughout my fourth step, there were times I got stumped on what to put in these particular columns, and so I asked my sponsor for help and filled them in when I was doing my fifth step. In this way, my fourth and fifth step were a real learning opportunity for me in healthy living and positive possibility!

Extra Columns

I found as I did fourth step writing that on some items I had feelings and feelings about those feelings, layers thick, so my sponsor and I added some columns (which it turns out, are remarkably similar to the *Codependents Anonymous Big Book* columns). Also, my sponsor also had me add a column next to “character defect” for “character asset,” as described in the section above. All in all, here are the columns I used:

- Person** (can include myself)
- Feeling** (e.g. anger, fear, shame, gratitude)
- Issue**
- Affects my** (select one or more: security, ambition, self-esteem, personal relationships, sex relations)
- My Part**
- Negative Coping Skill** (aka “Character Defect”)
- Character Asset** (Potential or realized, also sometimes “Positive Opportunity”).

Here's the extra columns for extra-emotionally squishy items, all these are breakouts of the first three columns above (from the *Co-Dependents Anonymous First Edition Big Book*, pages 44-45)

- Person**
- My codependent behaviors and reactions**
- My feelings that drove those behaviors**
- Consequences to the person, myself, and the relationship**
- My feelings about my behaviors and consequences.**

I am so grateful to my sponsor for helping me learn to work my fourth step with compassion and gentleness!



WORLD SERVICE NEWS

Exciting Service Opportunities: Three Board Vacancies *Two mid-term Openings and a New Position Created*



Three vacancies have unexpectedly occurred on the new, optimistic, and productive WSO board. Members who would like to do service for the fellowship are asked to contact Ken D. by email at wso@workaholics-anonymous.org or by telephone at 650-856-0343 or by U.S. Mail at P.O. Box 289, Menlo Park, CA 94026. The positions, which have about one year of unexpired term remaining, are the Telephone Answerer and Letter Responder (TA&LR), the Email Responder (EmailR) and a new position of Recorder. This board started out with two people sharing the TA&LR position, one answering the telephone messages and the other responding to the letter mail. To some extent this was a duplication of services, and there was no clear system of recording or maintaining records. Who was to record minutes of board meetings never was clear, and their intercommunication added another level of difficulty and delay. In addition, it required that someone else provide duplicate copies of updates to the meeting referral list to both of them as well as to the EmailR and the Webmaster.

At its most recent meeting, the WSO board decided to return the TA&LR position to be handled by one person, who is to have no additional duties. The new Recorder position will also fill a necessary role. All the positions now have detailed job descriptions. Brief descriptions for the currently available positions follow.

These job descriptions are either new or revised and therefore are subject to change with further time and experience. Just as the present, active board felt a breath of fresh air when we saw the depth we have in our numbers and our collective WA experience, so we look to the fellowship for new participants in these three board positions. Members are invited to apply or ask questions about these positions.

Brief Job Description: Telephone Answerer and Letter Responder

Term: 24 months, July 1-June 30 two years later

The Telephone Answerer and Letter Responder shall:

- Pick up telephone messages no less often than once a week and respond to them in a timely manner. (Protocol for doing this provided.)
- Receive all U.S. Mail requests for information or materials and respond to them in a timely manner. (Protocol for doing this provided.)
- Receive new and revised information on WA meetings from the Registrar, and maintain an updated list of all currently active, registered WA meetings and the first names and telephone numbers of their contact people, for referral of newcomers.

- Refer newcomers to meetings if available in their area, using the Meeting and Contact List. Reply to Work-Anon information requests (Protocols for doing this provided.)
- Assemble and maintain copies of Meeting Starter Kit packets (Protocol for doing this provided.)
- Keep detailed receipts of all expenses for WA purposes and submit them to the Treasurer for reimbursement.

Brief Job Description: Recorder

Term: 24 months, July 1-June 30 two years later

The Recorder shall:

- Pick up the U.S. Mail once a week from the post office box or arrange for another WA member to do so and deliver it, by the fastest feasible means, to the Recorder.
- Deliver or forward letters addressed to specific board members to the appropriate persons.
- Open letters addressed nonspecifically to "Workaholics Anonymous," and distribute according to an available detailed work flow to the appropriate WSO Board member (Letter Responder, Registrar, Treasurer, Outreach, etc.).
- Write the minutes of WSO board meetings and the business portion of WSO conferences, and distribute copies to all board members as soon as possible after each meeting. File copies in the archive.
- Assist the Facilitator as needed to communicate with board and other members.
- Assist the Facilitator as needed in planning and executing the biennial conference and the biennial election in alternate years.
- Be responsible for keeping the correspondence and other records of WA intact and available as a basis for future operation. Maintain an up-to-date index for this archive so that actions of the boards and conferences can be revisited by members in the future.

Brief Job Description: Email Responder

Term: 24 months, July 1-June 30 two years later

The Email Responder shall:

- Pick up all incoming WA email messages (same mailbox) once a week and respond to it by email in a timely fashion. (Protocol for responses provided, including response templates.)
- If the message is addressed to a particular board member, forward it to that person.
- Receive new and updated information on WA meetings from the Registrar and maintain an updated Meeting and Contact List.



Work Addiction Related Reprints Available



Member in Palo Alto

This winter a letter came from Amherst, Massachusetts, offering free reprints of two articles on workaholism, one by Anne Wilson Schaef, the author who wrote *Meditations For Women Who Do Too Much* and *Meditations for Living In Balance*, and the other by Anne Wilson Schaef and Diane Fassel (the latter is co-author of *Working Ourselves to Death*). I took the bait and called the company. They make reprints of articles from popular magazines for general sale around the time the original works appear.

They have large numbers of leftovers of these articles and said they would send any number free except for postage and handling. I passed the word, and members of two west coast meetings were interested in putting up \$10 apiece for a stack. What they each got were about six pounds (rough count: 268 copies) of multi-page, glossy paper reprints. Half were "We're A Nation Of Addicts" from the March/April, 1987, *New Age Journal*. The other is "Hooked On Work!" excerpted from the 1988 book, *The Addictive Organization*, by Schaef and Fassel. You may also buy single copies.

These not being official WA literature, no WA money has been spent on buying copies. However, for those who are interested, the company that offers them is ODT, Inc., P.O. Box 134, Amherst, MA 01004. For a description of what they offer, you may visit their website at www.odt.org, go down the left column and click their web store, then click free article reprints and scroll all the way to the bottom. The articles by Anne Wilson Schaef and by A.W. Schaef and Diane Fassel are the last two items on the list.

Remember—The Election Process Starts Next January

Have you had a spiritual awakening? If you have, let the fellowship know. Do you feel grateful for the recovery you've experienced? If you do, share the good stuff with the rest of us and especially our newcomers. Do you have what suffering workaholics want? If you do, soon it'll be time to move into action.

Our full board this two-year term is putting the 1st and 5th Traditions into action with the newsletter, development of the WA Book, closer contact with the members, and service to newcomers. We need a deep bench in order to keep up the good work.

One of the ways you can make the 12th Step come alive is to send in your name or that of a fellow member (with her/his concurrence) to run for a WSO Trustee position.

Start now thinking of yourself as a candidate for Facilitator, Recorder, Telephone Answerer and Letter Responder, Email Responder, Treasurer, Registrar, Newsletter Editor, Literature Coordinator, Web Page Administrator, or Outreach person in case the position is open when NOMINATIONS BEGIN IN JANUARY, 2004.

More in the Autumn newsletter. . . .



Proposed Table of Contents Book of Recovery from Workaholism



Submitted by The W.A. Book of Recovery Editor
(*Asterisk signifies completed, approved literature)

Forward

Who is a workaholic?

*The signposts of Workaholism

*20 questions to tell if you are a workaholic

What is compulsive work and activity?

*The Definition

How has compulsive work and activity affected our lives?

Why are we here?

*Preamble of Workaholics Anonymous

What does recovery look like in a workaholic world?
(question answered by members at convention and meetings chat room etc.)

*The Tools and Principles of Workaholic Recovery

*The Twelve Steps of Workaholics Anonymous

*The Twelve Traditions of Workaholics Anonymous

How to find Workaholics Anonymous

*How to start a meeting

Our Gratitude to AA

Slogans

Meditations and Affirmations

Our Stories:

1. Living Flowly by V.
2. Keeping Busy for Life by K.
3. A Personal Story About Compulsive Activity and Work by B.
4. Consumed by Endless Projects and Activities by D.
5. All Worked up and No way to Let Go by S.
6. Too Depleted for a Relationship by A.
7. Deliverance from Denial by O.
8. Adrenaline Addiction by E.
9. My Story of Recovery by D.
10. A Workaholic's Story