

STORYLINE

From Workaholics Anonymous

MAR APR MAY
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"Our primary purpose is to stop working compulsively and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer."

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SHARING: TRUSTING MY HIGHER POWER

Promise 12: We find that our higher power helps us in a way self-reliance never could.

In my workaholic mode, I tried to control everything, and figure it all out ahead of time. I sure wasted a lot of time and energy doing that, especially since the outcomes I envisioned or wanted often did not manifest. Then I would be frustrated about that. Self reliance took me to places I do not want to return.

I experienced several years of panic attacks turning into overwhelm and then into all out work avoidance as I tried to cope. I did not know how to prioritize so I ended up putting too much time and energy into volunteer work, at the expense of my paid work. This led to me getting fired from a job in 2010. Although that was a hard lesson to learn, that situation turned out to be the bottoming out for me with my workaholism. I could no longer ignore that I had a problem. Even now, I am sometimes tempted to think I am no longer a workaholic so I don't need to keep up with WA recovery. Remembering back to when I got fired is all I need to remind myself that I don't ever want to be back there again.

That brings me to the alternative way of thinking and living that WA offers. Trusting HP is a critical aspect of my recovery. I really do love that, on my good days, I can move forward in faith and rest in the knowledge that all will work out for my highest good. I may not like everything that happens in any given day but *I will be okay*. In fact, more than okay. I can trust HP and the people in my life. Growing up, I didn't feel that I could trust many grown ups. I thus had to turn to self reliance. I am glad I no longer have to cling to that. I really am amazed that when I let go of worrying and fretting, especially in regard to my income and getting clients, as all unfolds in ways that meet my needs.

I have only been living in this kind of trust and faith for about a year or two and I am constantly amazed. Some weeks are leaner than my self reliant mind would like. However, when looking back at those times, I either had too much else going on or I was not feeling well enough for the additional work. HP really does know what is better for me than I do at any given time. I believe that HP/Spirit has the broader view of my life and often sees what's in my subconscious before I am aware of what is happening. In order to remain in these new states of being of WA recovery, I must be ever vigilant and call upon the tools of our program every day.

Thanks for listening/reading.

--Peace and blessings,
--Tisa

SHARING: REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

In the past I would never reach out to others - ever!!!

Recovery started to remind me of the times I tried to reach out to my parents for help. It was not often - there was something in the air at home that taught me that my parents were not the people to ask. They were busy or they were not able or I would get told off and it would become worse.

Over the last 21 years I have explored, little by little the subject of asking for help. First with my therapist - then with my sponsor and finally with my line managers. It is not easy and it takes me a little while to pluck up the courage and over come the need - shame bind that I have within. I still fall into the shame sometimes when I feel in need and want. But it is getting better.

I am learning that it is OK to ask for help. To discern the people to ask. I am also learning to embrace that need and want myself. I am learning also to discern if I can meet my need myself or do I need to reach out to others.

Reaching out to help others has also been a long process in recovery, as I have come to understand healthy helping. Before recovery I was all about helping and being there for others. I spent my days listening to stories while I supported and encouraged others in their ventures. I did not expect anything back -- I did not feel any value within myself to even ask.

Today I am learning to discern how much I can give and what that looks like and being aware of my needs and issues – exactly what I am finding difficult.

Sponsorship and being a sponsee has really helped this process. At the moment I have a sponsor in WA and I am aware of her holding a loving space for me. As I write this I am realizing that I have sponsored others for a long time, but I am also aware that a lot of my helping others happens at work and in my friendships, where I should not be giving as much as I do.

At times these two areas are out of balance and it is in my recovery that I am able to become aware and take action to put them back into balance.

Wishing you all a wonderful week ahead.

--In recovery and fellowship

--Helen

SHARING: IT'S OK TO FEEL THAT WAY

I think my mum is a big factor in my workaholism. Whenever I have rang my mum or approached her being upset or down or crying she has always taken on an attitude instead of allowing me to just be upset or giving me emotional support:

" Well if you're upset you should have been doing this and you should have done it in this way."

"What do you want me to do about it?"

"I never did that when I was your age, I was like this."

"Well, why don't you do this or do that?"

"If you're not going to take any of my suggestions why did you ring me?"

"If you'd have done this you wouldn't be upset."

" You need to do this (inserts her solution to solve the problem) or shut up!"

"If you had done this you wouldn't be in this situation."

"Well you shouldn't have done this or that, why did you do it?"

"I'll give you 30 pounds so you can go and do this (insert another solution to stop me crying)."

There was always the implication that it is not ok for me to just be crying and upset and that there is something that I needed to do and if something is wrong in my life it is because of something I am doing or not doing correctly and need to do better. Being upset equals you need to do or not do something to stop feeling upset, rather than just that you are upset and its ok to feel that way

--*Louise*

SHARING: MY FAVORITE SLOGAN

Underwhelm yourself. It keeps my day under the stress radar and creates time to live in a healthy rhythm.

--*Louise*

SHARING: BECOMING ONE ME

In my bad days, I tend to oscillate between two modes. Most of the time I feel like I'm in the fog, as I can't see my priorities, or my responsibilities, and I somehow just forget about everything and spend the whole time doing non-priority tasks or procrastinating using the internet at work. On the surface, this state feels comfortable because I kind of avoid feeling most of the anxiety I have. Then the anxiety becomes too big to be hidden, and then I go to another mode, which is making big plans.

I can start using the tool of making action plans. From what I hear around me, this tool really helps some people to have a healthy plan for their day and go on about their day with more serenity. For me it really helps me to at least get something done, but it tends to make me adrenalize a lot (at least until now), even if I don't put too many things on it. I tend to live my life only on paper and not in the real world anymore. Even if I take some quiet time, it feels like nothing I do matters, only the list. It is possible that I need more practice, but for now it is still very hard for me. And also, when I am in this mode, I am twenty times more efficient than in the procrastination mode, and yet, paradoxically, I have a lot more anxiety about not doing enough or not doing it fast enough.

Another thing I do is to try to make big plans for the future, not necessarily about work. My current objective is to meditate 30 min every day, prepare my own food for each day, do my 1 hour and 15 minute workout session three times a week.... things that I start again and again, one after the other, but it seems I never manage to keep doing these things, whereas I see many people around me who can with no visible difficulty. Also I used to start playing new music instruments, with a lot of excitement, and good regular practice, only to give up a few months or weeks later and maybe start another instrument.

All of this feels to me like I have different personalities, each of them with their qualities and defects. One is good at having fun and relaxing and enjoying the present moment, but bad at having responsibilities. One is good with responsibilities, but quite bad with self-care and relaxing. Another one is good at getting interested in different stuff but quite bad at self acceptance (especially around music skills for me). He is not so good at enjoying the present moment and is more obsessed with becoming a better person in the future. In my disease, these different "personalities" are in constant conflict. Simply getting up in the morning is a huge conflict between the me who is fed up being late for work and which always makes promises for the next day, and the me who is fed up with being tired right now and wants to rest and practice self-care.

For me, a lot of my problem comes from the fact that these different "me's" do not communicate with each other. There is no compromise between all these aspects. My mother taught me that responsibilities were everything, and play was nothing. The only times when I could play without her becoming angry was when she was too busy with her activity to pay attention to what I was doing. I learned that the only way to have time for myself was by sneaking away and go under the radar. She never set any rule or limit about playing computer, it was only implicit that it was a bad thing connected with laziness. As a

teenager I often went to bed between midnight and 4 am, because it felt like my day only started when my parents were asleep, because it was the only time when I was free. So in this case I learned that responsibilities had to take all my time. It was impossible to go on like this but I could not question this belief at that time. Playing is in contradiction with this belief, so the only way to play was to split my mind into the one that believes in responsibilities and the one who is free. It was the only way for me to hold contradictory beliefs.

My addiction tells me that there is a good me and a bad me, and that through exertion, the good me has to win the fight against the bad. But lately I have been feeling that when I have this attitude I encourage this splitting and polarization between these two me's. In my good days, I feel unified. In the morning, I know my responsibilities, I acknowledge my needs, and I am the only one who decides for my life and my parents are not there to watch. I naturally find the compromise that I think is right and there is no effort in that, I decide as one person, and not as two disagreeing persons. So I feel that the solution is to learn to become one rather than getting rid of some "bad" habits. What currently helps me to achieve that (very slowly) day after day is to recognize the moments when this splitting happens, to remember it is just an illusion, that this splitting happens to one single person who is the only me, to investigate this splitting and learn about it and how it feels like, so that I can recognize it better.

I need to share also that I am not very efficient at work these days. I am going back to procrastination mode and I start to achieve less and less. It would like to reach out more and call program friends.

--Ivan

SHARING: MY PRESSURE TELLS ME LIES

I am always under pressure that there is something I need to be doing to stop myself feeling down and that I can avoid feeling bad by doing stuff...pressure that I am not good enough as I am and that I need to do better

--Louise

SHARING: SUPPORT OF MY FELLOW WA'S

The aspect of WA recovery that especially stands out for me is the support of my fellows. Since workaholism is my primary addiction, I resonate with fellow WAers to my core. I trust you all in a very special way. I am grateful. I learn so much from people's shares in our meetings, whether face-to-face or email. I also have a few WA friends with whom I correspond regularly. This outreach tool is a lifeline.

Just recently one of my WA recovery buddies shared about a situation that turned out to be a trigger for her. That share has kept the topic of "triggers" in my conscious awareness. When a situation happened to me this week, I thus was able to pretty quickly realize that a big part of my stress was the past wounds that the current situation tapped into. In fact, the situation has some similar dynamics to what led me to get fired back in 2010, when I bottomed out with workaholism. I could no longer deny I had a problem. Framing and understanding a situation with the lens of being triggered has been instrumental in dealing with whatever is happening.

What has changed for me with WA? I have deeper trust in myself, HP, and my fellows. I look for new solutions rather than either turning to frenzied work or giving into the fears and anxieties of work avoidance. I trust my ability to make wise decisions. And my list of wise decisions includes knowing when to ask for help, when to slow down, and when to say no. I am glad and grateful.

--Thank you for listening/ reading.

*--Peace and blessings,
--Tisa*

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

As before, we are grateful for Harry's contributions and for the contributions from the finding balance email group FindingbalanceWA@yahooroups.com. We appreciate the honesty, vulnerability, and courage it takes for members to address their challenges and apply the program to their lives. If you are in an email group, please consider sending email shares directly to STORYLINE, storyline@workaholics-anonymous.org, either your shares or shares that others have written with their email address (we will seek their consent for printing), if you would like them to be included in future issues.

Please note that it is the tradition of STORYLINE to edit contributions for spelling, grammar and clarity. While some authors have expressed gratitude, others have complained that we are distorting their material. Last year we re-instated a policy of making the edited versions available to the authors before STORYLINE goes to press, so that the authors can raise objections to the editing of their contribution. As an author, has your work been changed, and if so, how do you feel about the edits? As a reader, do you appreciate the clarity of STORYLINE? Would you prefer the unedited version, even with spelling and grammar errors, in order to get more of the flavor of the author's intent? We would like readers and authors on STORYLINE to weigh in on this important issue at storyline@workaholics-anonymous.org, with your opinion and your preference.

-Shelley, Chicago

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, 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 JUN JULY AUGUST issue is: May 15, 2017.

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