

STORYLINE

From Workaholics Anonymous WINTER 2013-2014



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

CONTENTS FOR THIS ISSUE

STORY: MOVING FORWARD WITH UNKNOWNNS (page 1)

STORY: TRADITION TEN (page 2)

SHARING: FILLING A VOID (page 3)

STORY: RESTORED TO SANITY (page 4)

ANNOUNCEMENT: ANNUAL CONFERENCE (page 4)

ANNOUNCEMENT AND INVITATION: WA Meditation Book (page 5)

EDITOR'S COMMENT (page 5)

MISSION STATEMENT (page 6)

STORY: MOVING FORWARD WITH UNKNOWNNS

"One is never afraid of the unknown; one is afraid of the known coming to an end."

~ JidduKrishnamurti ~

This quote is so true. I always thought it was the unknown that I feared. No, it is the known coming to the end, as the Krishnamurti quote so aptly captures. I then have always turned to the work addiction to cover up those fears, along with feelings of inadequacy and shame for not being able to handle my feelings and difficulties. What a vicious, vicious cycle for almost three decades of my adult life.

Thanks to WA, this vicious cycle is going away. I got into WA at age 50, two years ago. I've really dealt with a lot of my compulsive thinking, that is, *stinkin' thinkin'*, which has ruled the workaholic behavior. At the same time, the tools of WA help me to make changes in my outward behavior, through taking one day a week off, having a set amount of hours for work activity each day, prioritizing tasks, and so on. All of this work in WA helps me grow in trust and confidence in HP, self, and others.

Working my program, the unknown does not scare me so much anymore. Even though I am NOT in control and I realize that I never was (the old feelings of being in control were illusions), that is okay today. I no longer have the time, energy, or inclination to over-plan, over-organize, and to worry all the time. It is much easier to "let go and let god", to focus on the present moment, and to focus on the next right step. I trust that all will work out for my highest good. Whenever I have really clung to this promise and gone forward in faith, all has unfolded in beautiful ways, wonderfully beyond my control and beyond my imagination.

I am moving forward right now with lots of unknowns. When I focus on the present day, I find that I have plenty to keep me occupied. My time is very full but not over-full. I can't thank WA enough. These miracles of my life are here because of the WA program and all my trusted fellows.

--from Tisa

QUOTE

"There are only two mistakes we can make along the road to truth: not going all the way, and not taking the first step".

--Siddartha Gautama, the Buddha

--from Harry W

COMMENTARY: TRADITION TEN

Friends at WA Storyline: I just wrote the below submission for a loop and someone suggested I submit it to STORYLINE as you were looking for stories on the Traditions. So here it is:

Tradition 10: Workaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the W.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

I love Tradition 10. We all come from such diverse backgrounds and have different world views and interests. But this Tradition tells me that no matter what I think "out there," I can recover in here, because here we have a singleness of purpose. Thus, we will not be drawn into having to ally ourselves with anything in order to be allowed here or in order to feel we belong.

We have a great unity here because we focus on our recovery work, and outside potential stressors stay outside. We can genuinely extend our hand to someone for recovery purposes without first asking, "Are you voting for the right party?" or "Are you supporting our other cause?" or "Is your God the same as mine?".

It would be terrible if I had come to WA looking for a solution to my workaholism and found that in order to recover I would have to adopt some viewpoints I don't agree with. Whether that would be religious views, political views, moral views or philosophical views, it might have spelled my not being able to remain here and recover.

This tradition also keeps our fellowship safe. Before Alcoholics Anonymous, The Washingtonians got into some very controversial stuff. They had helped a large number of Alcoholics to abstain, but they got involved in politics, which tore their fellowship apart. As you might have noticed, these days hardly anyone has even heard of them, because they do not exist anymore. The recovering alcoholics were left to fend for themselves.

Recently someone shared a distressing story. She had had gotten together with some neighbors to form a sewing circle. For months they met each week, did their craftwork and chatted. One day politics was brought up, as an election was coming up. It turned out this person was the only one who voted for a different party than all the others. During the discussion, the convivial mood of the circle was destroyed, and the following day she was asked not to come any more. How sad! The message here is that we need to keep this from ever happening in a WA meeting or in our fellowship.

We do this by having Tradition Ten. Whoever you vote for, whatever you believe in, who you choose to date are none of my business and it's not for me to judge you as to your value to WA recovery. We are all here because we need help -- unhindered by our outside beliefs.

We can learn from our mistakes and those of others. We have this very good tradition to keep us safe.

--from Anylength, member of WA

NOTE ON SHARING: *At meetings, time is generally allotted for individual sharing. No one speaks for WA, but we recover by sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other, that we may solve our common problem and help others recover. Please submit pieces from members who have shared on emails and at meetings. The names can be changed, to protect anonymity.*

SHARING: FILLING A VOID

In thinking about my addictions and the Twelve Steps, I have come to believe that I have been trying to fill a void or hole in myself that has been there a long time. I have been using my behavior and substances to fill this void, but they only work for very brief periods of time, and usually leave me with an even greater void to fill. I have heard the words: I am enough, I have enough, I do enough (that the void is a fiction or affliction), but the words alone don't seem to help. I feel that this emptiness has been with me forever and sometimes my behaviors have only deepened my sense of alienation.

All the Twelve Step programs suggest that I greatly increase my social connections and not to limit myself to people who share my addictions. This makes sense as an aid to "getting out of my head", which repeats what I and others have been telling me over and over. I'm beginning to see that this old script has become a set of assumptions about myself, others and the world in general. These assumptions are below the level of consciousness and are out of my reach in terms of evaluating or modifying them. I am not aware of what is down below and trying harder does no good. It feels like being in handcuffs with no key.

Some of these assumptions are: that I am guilty until proven innocent, that my mistakes are unforgivable, that if I am just being myself I am unlikable. This is where I need to turn to others. They are not wearing my set of tinted glasses. If I listen carefully, both to myself and these others, the assumptions can be unmasked, but only if I can give up defending them as though they were the true foundations of who I am and what I can become.

--from Harry W.

STORY: RESTORED TO SANITY

Step Two is a good one for me right now. I never felt so insane as I did with my bottoming out with workaholism. For the first time in my life, I got fired from a professional job in 2010 when I did not make two vital deadlines. I don't blame my supervisor for firing me: I did wrong. I could not complete my paid job deadlines because I was too wrapped up in my volunteer work.

I so clearly see that now but did not "get it" in the midst of that craziness and the insanity. In the past, I had always been able to pull myself together at the last minute and accomplish any deadlines that came my way. I think I had the combination of getting older (I was 49 at the time) and taking on way too much. I guess I had never been so crazy with my workaholism before.

I started getting back into that insanity last November when I had three huge deadlines so I worked too hard in the actions that I was doing. I also had the crazy thinking, especially some irrational, unfounded fears that one of my clients was going to fire me. That fed into my frenzy and craziness in trying to meet unrealistic deadlines. I paid the price. I ended up sick in bed for three weeks in December. At that point, I had no choice but to listen to my body.

I almost got myself back into the crazy thinking now with wanting to take on a month of study later this year. "No can do" with my current commitments. I am sad about this lost opportunity but am so, so grateful for listening to myself and my HP regarding the situation. Sharing the struggle with a dear WA recovery buddy helped me work through the different aspects and layers of the situation. No way around it: taking on that extra situation was insanity. So, I made the choice to NOT apply.

I believe that Spirit resides within me as well as in an external HP. I mention that for Step Two, as I really did believe in the Spirit within me with this situation as well as the guidance of HP. Actually, before I even started the discernment process around this possibility, I already knew my answer. It was just hard to accept that I needed to pass on this one. I think HP has tried to help me out lots in the past but I did not listen. I was not ready to believe that I could be restored to sanity. I now KNOW that I can, because HP has indeed done that. I am grateful.

—from Tisa

ANNOUNCEMENT

WA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
July 31-August 3, 2014
Sierra Retreat Center
Malibu, California
for more information:
www.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

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

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 are grateful for all the submissions for this issue, including thoughtful pieces on tradition ten and step two.

We are looking for volunteers to help with the publication of STORYLINE. We can use help with encouraging submissions, updating our distribution list, and other tasks. We also have an opening for a co-editor or assistant editor. Please let us know at sjschicago@juno.com if you are interested in helping in any way.

Storyline is created by all of us...we welcome shares, stories, commentaries, quotes, and poems...anything that we can reproduce. Send your contributions for future editions to: storyline@workaholics-anonymous.org, with STORYLINE in the subject line, and send your email address to receive future issues by email.

--Shelley, Chicago

STORYLINE: OUR MISSION

- To produce a quarterly publication of news about W.A. 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, 2014.

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