

Keeping You Informed On Career Issues

By
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Street Journal

When Devotion to Work Becomes Job Obsession

In the age of the PDA, laptop and cell phone, it can be difficult distinguishing between a workaholic and a person who simply is dedicated to doing a good job.

Workaholics devote excessive time to their jobs and sometimes become anxious when they can't, says **Bryan Robinson**, author of "Chained to the Desk: A Guidebook for Workaholics, Their Partners and Children, and the Clinicians Who Treat them" (NYU Press, 2001).

When devotion to work becomes unhealthy, side effects may include fatigue, sleep disorders and stress-related ailments, including heart attack and stroke, says **Diane Fassel**, author of "Working Ourselves to Death: The High Costs of Workaholism and the Rewards of Recover" (Harper Collins, 1990). Relationships with family or friends may also suffer, she says.

"I can be in a synagogue, supposedly praying and repenting on holidays, and I'm thinking about work," says **Irv Flax**, 63 years old, a director of Gorfine, Schiller & Gardyn PA, a regional accounting and business-consulting firm in Baltimore.

Some workaholics put in such long hours they can't see family or socialize. When she was an elementary school principal, **Gina Gardiner**, 53, of Hornchurch, England, says she worked 75 to 90 hours a week. "I got a great buzz out of my work," says Ms. Gardiner, who later founded Recovering Workaholics. She says her dedication to work kept her from meeting people and sustaining romantic relationships.

Here are five common traits of workaholics. If you have all five, you're probably a workaholic, Dr. Robinson says. Some workaholics may just have a few to a great degree.



1. Preoccupation with work.

Workaholics are typically unable to "turn work off," says Dr. Robinson, who calls himself a recovered workaholic. Working from home after the work day ends is common. So is checking a BlackBerry often throughout the night and weekend.

Work may dominate a workaholic's conversation in social settings, says **Alan Langlieb**, director of Workplace Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Mr. Flax says he talks about taxes, business and financing at social events. His wife, **Nannette**, worries that people who listen are just being polite. "Most of the time, I'll walk by and give him the evil eye or grab him," she says.

Workaholics are often uncomfortable using sick days or vacations. Removed from work, Dr. Robinson says, they can experience psychological and physical withdrawal symptoms such as depression and headaches.

2. Discomfort delegating.

Many workaholics are poor delegators because of their need to control, Dr. Langlieb says. They convince themselves only they can handle the tasks they should be delegating, says **Gayle Porter**, associate professor of management at Rutgers University, in Camden, N.J.

3. Neglect other aspects of life.

Often, workaholics put work before their families and personal lives. Mr. Flax says his daughter made a wish at her bat mitzvah several years ago for him to be home more. He says he began coming home for dinner more often, although he then returned to the office afterward.

4. Merge other parts of their lives into work.

Workaholics may try to create businesses based on their hobbies. Mr. Robinson tried to turn personal relationships into business endeavors. "Every friend I had, I'd say, 'Let's write a book together,'" he says.

5. 'Sneaking' work.

Workaholics, like other addicts, often try to hide their addiction. "If you find you have to lie to people about where you are or what you are doing, there is a problem," Ms. Porter says. ●



PBA Heart Fund Contribution Guidelines

In an effort to help the families of law enforcement, corrections, and correctional probation officers who are killed or disabled in the line of duty, Florida Police Benevolent Association (PBA) has established a charitable arm which is called the *PBA Heart Fund*. Because the *PBA Heart Fund* is a 501(c)(3) organization, contributions are tax deductible. Monies donated to the Heart Fund are used to provide death benefits to the families of officers killed in the line-of-duty and disability benefits to officers who are permanently disabled because of an in-line-of-duty injury.

Aside from individuals who may want to donate with the tax deduction in mind*, political campaigns may dispose of surplus funds (after the campaign is over) by donating some or all of the surplus to the *PBA Heart Fund* [s. 106.141 (4) (a) 2., Florida Statutes]. And, of course, other entities (e.g. not-for-profit corporations) may also donate to this cause. The address is:

Florida PBA Heart Fund
300 East Brevard Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

More information about the Heart Fund may be obtained by calling Florida P.B.A. at **1-800-733-3722**.

*Receipt for donations will be provided upon request.

"Support Law Enforcement" Tag Tops 24,000 Sold!

By Ken Kopczynski

Sales for the PBA "Support Law Enforcement" tag have reached over 24,000 and will soon be over 25,000. In the last edition of *Roll Call* (February 2007), I reported that over 20,400 tags had been purchased. We had two recent months with new sales and renewals are totaling over 1,000 tags each month.

The proceeds from the tag sales help many officers and families when tragedy strikes through benefits paid out of the PBA Heart Fund (see info at right). ●

Florida PBA Executive Director David Murrell proudly displays one of the first custom PBA Support Law Enforcement Tags.

