

WeMentor Workaholism Quiz

by Nancy A. Meyer, M.A.

DATE: _____

Directions: Read each of the 20 statements. Circle the frequency (seldom, often, or never) with which you do the following behaviors. Go with your first response. Use the next page to score your results and assess the quality of your behavior to determine whether you are a workaholic, a hard worker, or somewhere in between.

Behavior Statements

Frequency of Behaviors

- | | | | |
|---|--------|-------|-------|
| 1. I work outside of office hours: | seldom | often | never |
| 2. I frequently cancel dates with loved ones to do more work: | seldom | often | never |
| 3. I postpone outings until the deadline is over: | seldom | often | never |
| 4. I take work with me on days off or weekends: | seldom | often | never |
| 5. I take work with me on vacations: | seldom | often | never |
| 6. I take regular vacations: | seldom | often | never |
| 7. My intimates complain that I always work: | seldom | often | never |
| 8. I try to do two things at once (multi-task): | seldom | often | never |
| 9. I allow myself free time and mind breaks between projects: | seldom | often | never |
| 10. I allow myself to achieve closure on tasks: | seldom | often | never |
| 11. I procrastinate in finishing the last loose ends: | seldom | often | never |
| 12. I set out to do one job and start on three more at the same time: | seldom | often | never |
| 13. I work during family time, or I don't schedule personal time: | seldom | often | never |
| 14. I allow calls to interrupt—and lengthen—my workday: | seldom | often | never |
| 15. I prioritize my day to include an hour of creative work, exercise, and play: | seldom | often | never |
| 16. I place my creative dreams before my work: | seldom | often | never |
| 17. I fall in with others' plans and fill my free time with their agendas: | seldom | often | never |
| 18. I allow myself downtime to do <i>nothing</i> : | seldom | often | never |
| 19. I use work deadlines to describe and rationalize my workload: | seldom | often | never |
| 20. Going somewhere, even to dinner, I am preoccupied with work. A cell phone, notebook, or numbers are with me at all times: | seldom | often | never |

Scoring

Examine the essence and quality of your work and life more closely. Connection to self gives us a sense of belonging, stability, consistency, and acceptance. When we disconnect from meeting our universal human need to connect to ourselves and others, we feel a range of emotions, from being afraid, lonely, sad, and angry, to an overall disconnection from our lives.

If you circled **often** for statements 1-5, 7, 8, 11-14, 17, 19, and 20, ask yourself if you are using work to fill a void that fits the workaholic category or if are you a hard worker achieving a vision beyond yourself. Or do you find yourself somewhere in between? Examining the essence and quality of your work and connection to yourself and others can empower you to take charge of your life and work in a new way.

Work destroys self-connection if we have **workaholic** tendencies. Anxiety, shame, or undiagnosed stress can manifest as a compulsion to work. Universal human needs (needs we all have) go unmet regularly and exacerbate the compulsion. When a compulsion to work replaces getting one's needs met, connections with others become disrupted, leaving us feeling inadequate, unstable, and unhappy.

Are you working zestfully to realize higher goals and meet needs regularly or are you working to replace the self-examination necessary to take charge of your life and be 100% responsible for your decisions, meeting needs, and behavior in relationships? Ask yourself a few questions to raise your level of awareness. What am I feeling? How do I feel about myself? Why am I avoiding or numbing my feelings? What am I afraid of, or what am I trying to avoid? What purpose is work serving me?

If you find yourself in the workaholic category (use the quiz results and the Workaholic vs. Hard Worker Table on page 3 to further assess the quality of your work), ask for help from a mentor to gain an unbiased perspective on your work habits, intentions, and motivations to set new goals. Your experiences are worth excavating. The world has enough toxic people, and if we don't meet our needs and curiously address what is under our compulsions, we will submerge into a world of narcissism, entitlement, and incivility.

The world needs **hard workers**. People who pursue higher goals with zest, dedication, and passion without compromising meaningful relationships and core values. Congratulations if you are a conscientious, hard worker! Continue to live a purpose-driven life and evolve as you learn more about yourself. Keep nurturing meaningful relationships. Healthy relating involves respecting agreed-upon boundaries, honoring commitments, and evolving as circumstances change. Reaching a higher vision takes negotiating and working together to realize shared goals. Focus and open communication are critical. Hard workers seem to be up for the challenge.

Ask those you trust for their assessment if you find yourself **somewhere in between**. Make the subtle changes you learned from the feedback they give you. We need help making behavioral changes because a skilled person can see things we can't yet see. If a loved one is resisting your desire for change, be curious to learn their motivation and determine what it will take to reach acceptance.

Observe the quality of your work over the next week. Track your feelings, especially when you feel affectionate, engaged, hopeful, confident, excited, grateful, joyful, exhilarated, and refreshed. Those feelings let us know when we are meeting our needs regularly for connection, honesty, play, peace, autonomy, meaning, and physical well-being—our seven universal human needs.

The idea of creating the Table on page 3 came from a Wall Street Journal article, "*Working for a Living or Living to Work? Some Help for the Workaholic Spouse*," by columnist Sue Shellenbarger (November 21, 2002). Check it out.

Workaholism vs. Hard Worker

Workaholic Traits	Hard Worker Traits
Cannot stop working without feeling anxious.	Can choose to stop working without ill effects.
Working to satisfy a compulsive need for approval. The compulsion becomes the driver or decision-maker, not you.	Work is an essential aspect of a purpose-driven life. The hard worker is the driver and decision-maker of their behavior, not driven by compulsion.
Becomes self-absorbed and self-centered; disconnects from self and others. Lacks bravery in meeting the 7-Universal Human Needs.	Asserts bravery and courage maintaining self-connection and taking steps to meet regularly 7-Universal Human Needs.
Common feelings triggering the compulsion are: stress, anxiety, anger, aversion, yearning, lonely, disconnection, inadequacy and disquieted—familiar emotions when one’s needs regularly go unmet.	Attentive to naming feelings and meeting needs regularly promotes feelings of connection, affection, engagement, hope, confidence, excitement, gratitude, peacefulness, exhilaration, refreshed, and joy. Familiar emotions when needs are met.
Perfectionistic and attached to outcomes of work efforts. External forces dictate workflow.	Tolerant of own mistakes and others’ mistakes. Can let go of outcomes and focus on the work.
Trusting only self to complete the work.	Feel empowered and takes 100% responsibility for one’s life work.
Loses control of work schedule.	Remains in charge of work schedule.
Core values are professed but not used as a guide to making decisions; the compulsion to work is in charge.	Core values guide decision-making and re-enforce the quality of your lifework.

TABLE

One other thing I want to leave with you. I am encouraged by the **hard workers** I have mentored during the previous 30 years. They are lifelong learners and brave in taking risks to improve the quality of their relationships and lifework. I know that hard work pays off and relational literacy equals life success.

“Relational literacy is the ability to understand and express healthy ways of relating: as social groups, as individuals, to animals and the environment, and even to ourselves. Our errors are our teachers; they guide us toward greater proficiency and greater awareness, says psychologist, international speaker, and bestselling author of six books Melanie Joy, Ph.D. In her book, *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work*, Melanie writes, “what matters most in this process is how we relate to our mistakes. Even a slight increase in relational literacy can lead to significant improvement.” Taking this quiz is a step in the right relational direction. Keep growing!