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long and stressful hours.

**Garrett Wagner** • Sep. 07, 2021



As much as things change, some things always stay the same. Even as we move into the so called “new normal”, one thing remains constant: working too much. Many accountants always have, and seemingly always will, work long and stressful hours. Unfortunately, for most of us who work these long hours, our mental state passes the level of enjoyment in what we are doing, and falls steadily into the what one would define as workaholic status.

Not only are we familiar with our annual long hours of busy season each year, many

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activities. It is the process of distributing and entrusting work to another person. Delegation is one of the core concepts of leadership

## Long road

The term workaholic, was first coined in 1971 by a psychologist, Wayne Oates, who defined the term as a compulsion, or the uncontrollable need, to work incessantly. Since then, and with much study and research done, workaholics have been labeled to contain an assortment of common traits. They are people who struggle to not work, and feel compelled to work due to internal pressures they place upon themselves. They have constant thoughts about work even when not working. They work far beyond what is required or expected of them. Does any of this sound familiar to you?

It is important to note that a key difference exists between workaholics and those who truly enjoy working. Now you may be thinking of someone you work with as you read this article and are wondering, are they really a workaholic or do they actually love what they do? To understand which side of the coin they land on, the key difference between those two definitions is the underlying motivation for the behavior. Workaholics are driven by negative emotions, like anxiety and fear, whereas those who love their job are driven by joy and excitement.

Unfortunately for many of us accountants, we fall into the real world and clinical definition of workaholics far too often. We are caught up in the cycle of deadline after deadline, always afraid to let someone down out of our own insecurities of letting people down or not getting the job done, even if the expectation we set for ourselves, or perceive others have set for us, are unrealistic. Alas, the high rate of workaholics in the profession is one of the aspects that drives millennials and younger generations away from being excited about becoming accountants. For those of us in this millennial generation, we have seen too many people we've

worked with putting in long hours without reward, and we don't want to have the

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often you work, starts with how you treat yourself. Once you accept that you can and need to change your own perspective, you then need to decide what at work you can and should delegate away. This is the easy part, because everyone, no matter how much they work, should be able to think of at least 5 things they do now that they can delegate away. Once you have decided what will be delegated away to free up your time for more critical purposes, then it is on you to make that plan happen.

When you delegate work away you need to do more than just sending a text message of "do this" to someone else. Communication is necessary, so sending texts to send away tasks probably won't work out for anyone. You will need to provide both clear instructions and guidance to the person you are delegating these tasks away too. The good news, however, is you can spend a little more time here doing some work to help you ease into letting go of more work.

Finally, the key to successfully delegating away tasks is to avoid the dreaded reverse delegation. This normally happens when the person delegating away the task feels an internal fear that if they don't do that task they will not be valued by others. It does not usually actually relate to a rational belief about the ability of others to get the work done, it is an irrational belief that if they don't do it, others will look down on them.

Will you be doomed to feeling stressed every day grinding away at yet another task, afraid to delegate the work away, or are you finally ready to change your behaviors? No better time has existed to make changes happen than today. As we deal with this time of disruption and adjust to the new normal on a daily basis, use this time of disruption to change your behaviors. Letting go of stress and work can provide you new freedom to do more of the things you truly love.

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