

## 10. Spouses Help Mates Work for a Living Instead of Living for Work

Rosemary Adams will never forget the moment she first understood the potential cost of being married to a workaholic.

As the wife of a salesman who worked 60- to 80-hour weeks, she was used to spending long hours without him. But when a heart attack brought on by overwork sent her husband Jeff to an emergency room a few years ago, she feared losing him altogether.

Being married to a workaholic is a high-stakes game. Amid mounting workloads and layoff fears, more family members are seeing loved ones plunge into a cycle of overwork. When hard work crosses the line into workaholism – a popular term for the compulsive drive to work above all else – the consequences for health, relationships and home life can be devastating.

In Ms. Adams's case, beyond her fear of losing her husband, she says, 'part of me was angry feeling that I can't believe I had allowed this to happen'. Sometimes, she had migraines from the stress.

Figuring out when your partner has crossed that line and dealing with it head-on can be crucial to saving your marriage and the health of both your partner and yourself. The emotional pain caused by workaholism must be addressed to avoid irreparable damage. That requires not only getting around the workaholic's ironclad defenses, such as 'I'm doing this because I care about you'; it also demands superb communication skills, plus the patience to remind the workaholic regularly of the life priorities you share.

Many spouses seem to catch the disease themselves. One wife of an overworking oil-company executive in Calgary, Alberta, grew discouraged at her husband's ever-longer absences. He rejected her ideas for vacations. To ease her pain, the wife herself plunged into a whirlwind of community-service activities, and her marriage soon ended in divorce.

Not every hard worker is a workaholic. Workaholics use work to avoid seeking a full, well-rounded life. They have a compulsive need for the approval and power that come with achievement. Over time, they lose touch with their emotions.

And the overwork habit endures regardless of external factors. While some people are working too hard because they are anxious about job security, a true workaholic behaves badly in any economy, says Chris Essex, a work-life trainer with the Center for Work & the Family, Rockville, Maryland.

Ben Porter, an executive coach with Leader-Works, Colorado Springs, says workaholics also tend to behave as though home is work and treat family like subordinates, showing little tolerance for mistakes – a painful dynamic for any family.

Divorce is a common outcome. Some couples find ways to heal without a split. The first step is to face the problem squarely. The ex-wife of the Calgary oil executive partly blames herself for her divorce, because she failed to address the widening gulf in their relationship. 'You can't let these things go on too long if you want to save your marriage'.

To open a dialogue, don't prescribe a solution, such as, 'Don't work so much', Ms. Essex says. The workaholic has bulletproof answers, including, 'I'm doing this for the family', and the conversation can degenerate into a power struggle. Instead, focus on expressing your unmet needs and negotiating a way to meet them.

Ms. Adams says her anger sometimes led her to criticize his husband's work habits. But she found that pushed him away – the opposite of what she wanted. Now, she takes a breath when she is upset, waits until she has calmed down, then negotiates with him for changes. She sometimes insists her husband turn off his computer for short breaks, such as a family trip to the ice-cream parlor.

Ms. Adams says, survival as a couple sometimes comes down to choosing whether to look at the bright side, or the darkness. She chooses to focus on the strengths of her relationship with Jeff.

## Első feladat

Olvassa el a "Spouses help mates....." című szöveget és töltsse ki a táblázatokat a hiányzó információkkal a példa (0) szerint.

<b>The effects of workaholism on health</b>	Mr. Adams	Ms. Adams
	1.	<b>0. migraines</b>
The effects of workaholism on	family life	social life
	2.	ruins relationships
Dealing with a workaholic to avoid emotional damage requires	3.	patience
A work-life trainer sees differences between	hard-working people and	true workaholic people
	4.	5.
The reasons people becoming workaholics are:	avoiding a full life and	6.
The solution involves some stages:	First stage	Next stage
	face the problem	7.

## Második feladat

Olvassa el újból a szöveget és döntse el, hogy az állítások igazak vagy hamisak, a példa (0) szerint.

	Statements	True	False
<b>0.</b>	<b>Ms. Adams many times was left alone by her overworked husband.</b>	<b>X</b>	
8.	The wife of an oil company executive became workaholic herself.		
9.	If you want to help a workaholic you must criticise him/her.		
10.	Ms. Adams helps her husband by partly taking his job.		
11.	Workaholics defend themselves by saying they work for the family		
12.	Ms. Adams is optimistic about maintaining her marriage.		