

# Preface

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This collection reflects the culmination of a forty-year personal and professional journey. I first became interested in work, health and well-being in the 1960s while a graduate student in the Organizational Psychology Program at the University of Michigan. Jack French, Floyd Mann, Sid Cobb, among others, had begun a number of research projects to examine these issues. Since then, I have conducted and reported several projects studying job demands and psychological well-being. In addition, I became interested in Type A or coronary-prone behavior and also examined its role in work and well-being. About ten years ago I became aware of pioneering research on workaholism started by Janet Spence and her colleagues and began to include their measures of workaholism components in a number of international projects.

As an ambitious, hard-working academic pursuing a career, I undertook these initiatives while simultaneously being a husband, father, son, brother and citizen, which brought into bold relief concerns about work and family, working hours and friendships, working hours and leisure, trade-offs and choices, and, as I became older and wiser, the importance of integration and balance in one's life.

My interest in workaholism or work addiction – the terms are used interchangeably – has caused me to consider why people work hard and why so many people work so many hours. This question is always raised for me when I leave North America and visit countries such as France, Italy and Spain where people seem to be enjoying their lives as much as we do and yet work fewer hours. One of my daughters, Rachel, lives and works in Munich and manages to get her job done and do well at her employer in spite of having six weeks of mandated vacation time. As a consequence, I have become familiar with a body of writing on working hours that existed quite separately from the writing on work addiction.

We know a lot about the effects of work addiction, that there are probably different types of workaholics, with some seeming to be satisfied and productive while others seem to be in distress, and that work can have many positive consequences. Unfortunately we know much less about the antecedents or causes of work addiction. Not surprisingly, we also do not know much about treating or reducing work addiction. Until we know more about the causes of work addiction and we develop and validate

a theory (or theories) of work addiction, we will have few things to say about its reduction.

It also seemed important to put work addiction into a broader societal context. There are dramatic occupational and societal differences in hours worked. It appeared likely that an understanding of factors in the wider societal environment in which people live, and work significantly longer hours, might help us to understand and explain work addiction as well. It also seemed likely that, although work addiction is a stable individual difference characteristic, it may well have its roots in a broader social and societal environment.

I have come to believe that bringing together these two bodies of research and writing – working hours and work addiction – will enrich both. I also hope that this book will generate further research and debate.

This volume is an edited collection of 15 conceptual and empirical chapters, written by distinguished academics and independent practitioners from six countries (Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the USA). The volume is divided into four parts. In Part I, 'Introduction', Ronald Burke first provides an overview of work hours and why people work hard, setting the stage for the more narrowly-focused chapters that follow. Then Lonnie Golden explores the distinction between long hours, overwork and overemployment to help in understanding workaholism. People work long hours because of structural, economic, social and behavioral factors, with not enough attention paid to social or behavioral factors. The four chapters in Part II, 'Definition and consequences of workaholism', examine definitions of workaholism or work addiction and what is known about their consequences. Barbara Killinger, on the basis of her considerable clinical and counseling experience, focuses on what she terms the breakdown syndrome. Lynley McMillan and Michael O'Driscoll develop an integrated definition of workaholism based on their own and others' research. Peter Mudrack defines workaholism in terms of specific behavioral tendencies such as engaging in non-required work and desiring to control others.

The chapters in Part III, 'Antecedents and types of workaholics', consider both the antecedents of workaholism and working long hours, as well as comparing different types of workaholics. Graeme MacDermid, on the basis of his qualitative research, highlights the subtle ways in which organizational expectations and culture increase one's work hours. Atsuko Kanai presents findings from Japan that link tougher economic conditions faced by organizations and increasing work hours and workaholism. The chapters by Ronald Burke and by Wilmar Schaufeli, Toon Taris and Arnold Bakker show that different types of workaholics exist, some faring well while others are in distress. One's motivations for working long hours as

well as one's behavior at work emerge as critical distinguishing factors between those who fare better and those who fare worse. Working long hours can be a satisfying experience for some.

Part IV, 'Addressing work hours and workaholism', covers various 'solutions' to long work hours and workaholism. Jon Messenger stresses the need to balance the needs of workers and employees. Gayle Porter and Robert Herring suggest, however, that reaching this balance may be difficult to achieve, given the needs of some employees and some organizations. Ronald Burke and Teal McAteer-Early also address the balance issue, this time in terms of one's career and one's personal life, career success and personal failure often characterizing those unable to find this balance. Mary Dean Lee and her colleagues, using both qualitative and quantitative data, report that professionals who choose to work part-time are both satisfied and effective in the workplace. Charles Chen shows how the use of rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) can be effective in lessening work-life balance concerns and ameliorating the effects of workaholism. Finally, Louis Fry and his colleagues show that spiritual leadership theory may offer a vehicle for reducing workaholism.

