

More Proven Strategies for Stopping Overshopping

First, **keep in mind** the following:

1. Shopping is an equal opportunity, all purpose mood changer.
2. You can never get enough of what you don't really need.
3. Shopping is not about *buying*, it's about *being*.

Then:

1. Be a private eye around your buying behavior. **Identify** the **cues or triggers** that lead to overshopping or overspending, e.g. a bad day at work, a fight with a spouse, feeling lonely, bored, or in need of reward, free time, or the holidays perhaps. Look for patterns and connections.
2. **Look at the consequences** of your overshopping. In what areas of your life is it costing you? Financially? Emotionally? Socially? Occupationally? Spiritually?
3. **Choose** someone in your life to be a **Shopping Support Buddy** and brainstorm together about how that person will support you to stop overshopping.
4. Expect that **you may very likely feel worse before you feel better**, since the anesthetic qualities that the buying supplied are now gone.
5. **Write down everything you spend** and assign each expenditure a necessity score, based on how necessary you deem it to be, from 0 to 1. At the end of the week, you'll be able to determine how much you could save if you were only buying things that were more necessary rather than less.
6. Make sure you **allocate some money each month for Heartsongs**, things that make your heart sing. Otherwise, you're putting yourself at risk for feelings of deprivation and a spending binge.
7. Consult one of the many online calculators that will help you to **see the high cost of credit card debt**.
8. **Take control of your cues** by avoiding them altogether, or limiting your exposure. If Bloomingdales is a cue, guess where you don't go?
9. Also **build in a pause** between your impulse to buy and your actual buying behavior. During the pause, ask yourself:
 - a. Why am I here?
 - b. How do I feel?
 - c. Do I need this?
 - d. What if I wait?
 - e. How will I pay for it?
 - f. Where will I put it?

10. **Use cash or a debit card**, without overdraft protection. Know what's in your checking account at all times.

11. Ask yourself: **What Am I Shopping For?** What underlying emotional needs have triggered my impulse to overshop? Instead of shopping, **employ life-enhancing strategies to meet some of these underlying needs**. If you shop because you're lonely, find another way to feel connected that builds self-esteem, not tears it down!

12. Make a list of your best reasons to stop overshopping. Keep this **Why Not Shop?** list with you at all times.

13. **Develop some media literacy** by learning to recognize the language of persuasion and subject it to a reality test. Is happiness really just the next purchase away?

14. **Cultivate mindful awareness**. Learn to quiet your mind so you can listen within.

15. **Visualize a big green monster** on 57th Street, or wherever your particular high risk location is. If you get too close, he's going to eat you!

16. Shopping is a way we search for ourselves and our place in the world. **Shop with a wide-angle lens**, and **search for the kinds ideas and experiences** that will cure your particular case of affluenza, luxury fever, or aspendicitis.