

MINDFUL SHOPPING ~ By Alex Parks

We've all been there, where did my money go? How can I save a few more dollars each week?

Me, I have tried budgets, but then it is a bit like a diet ~ I have a blow out and it is all over. You get demoralised and think "what is the point?". I've tried to track my spending but isn't that so tedious.

What works for me is mindful shopping, I like to have a few thought processes to justify a purchase and this is not just identifying wants versus needs, for me there are some more thought processes that I can take.

1. Out shopping for clothes, food, household objects etc. Ask yourself, "do I really need this"? "Is there something I already have that could do the job"? "Is there another ingredient in the pantry that needs using up" - work around your pantry.

Sure that vase is nice, but do I already have a vase that will make do? If it is a **MUST**, can I sell an old one I already have to make room for a new one? Me, I am too much of a sentimentalist so I know I will never part with an old one, so I have to really question myself at the buying stage!

2. I mentioned this briefly in point 1. But, what is in your pantry? I am terrible at this and this is something that I have been really making a concerted effort with. Each week build one or two meals out of what is in your pantry. Shop in your pantry before you go to the supermarket. I get excited about food and recipes, you open my pantry and you will find three types of lentils, six types of beans and so on. Those red lentils you bought to make a Moroccan Lentil Soup last month, make it again, find a new recipe or if they weren't a winner in your household swap them for an ingredient a friend doesn't want.

3. This is my favourite mindful shopping thought and this works for me more than anything else ...I value my labour against the cost of an item. I look at the price of an item, those fantastic jeans in the window with a price tag of \$200. My thought process is if I earn \$20 per hour then those jeans are ten hours at work. I say to myself, if after ten hours of work my boss handed me a pair of those jeans would I be happy? Chances are I wouldn't!

Mindful shopping doesn't mean denying yourself but it does mean having a few checks in place that work for you.



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