

A woman, her wallet, and the stories they tell

February 3, 2025 - Can happiness really be found in a new pair of shoes?

Who hasn't felt that sudden craving for something new—an almost irresistible urge to own something fresh, as if it could lighten a long, exhausting day or ease a moment of frustration? A pair of shoes spotted in a shop window, a shimmering accessory catching the light in a boutique... The illusion of an instant remedy, a quick fix for a weary soul.

But the moment the card is tapped and you step out of the store, the magic begins to fade, leaving behind a trace of regret: "Why did I buy this?"



Are our emotions pushing us to shop in an attempt to fill a deeper void? This thought crossed my mind today as I found myself mesmerized by the glow of a handbag I had never considered owning—until that very moment. A spontaneous desire. But was it a real need or simply a subtle attempt to soothe an inner emptiness?

Before giving in to temptation, I asked myself three essential questions:

1. What does this purchase truly bring me?
2. Do I already own something similar?
3. Can I wait a few days before deciding?

Taking that step back, I realized that the bag wasn't a necessity but a fleeting impulse. A whim I would soon forget.

This isn't uncommon. Stress, fatigue, a tough day, a disagreement... In a moment of weakness, our brain seeks comfort, and shopping becomes an instant gratification trigger, releasing a rush of dopamine—the pleasure hormone. Unfortunately, that high is short-lived, often replaced by guilt, and sometimes even financial strain.

A friend recently shared a clever trick: she sets aside a small "fun budget" each month, an amount dedicated to little indulgences that bring her joy without disrupting her finances. It's a smart approach that allows her to enjoy these moments guilt-free. After all, complete deprivation often leads to excess later on.

One strategy I recently discovered and found incredibly helpful is keeping a spending journal. Tracking every impulsive purchase, the emotion behind it, and how I

felt afterward has helped me become more aware of my habits and identify

the real reasons behind my shopping urges. This kind of reflection has been invaluable in building a healthier relationship with money.

What if, instead of shopping sprees, we embraced other forms of joy? A peaceful walk through a snow-covered park, a good book paired with a warm cup of hot

chocolate, or a heartfelt conversation with a friend. Taking care of our finances is also a way of taking care of ourselves. A more mindful approach to money not only helps reduce financial stress but also allows us to truly savor the things we choose to invest in.

Perhaps real luxury isn't found in possessions, but in the moments we grant ourselves—without regret.

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