



Session: Mindless Consumerism – Whose Money is it?

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Do you buy things to make yourself feel happy? Do you base your personality on the things you buy? Do you spend more money than you make? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you might be a mindless consumer. It's not at all uncommon to be a mindless consumer, but being one can lead to bad spending habits, bad eating habits, and debt. Here are some ways that can help stop you from being a mindless consumer.

Be Wary of Buying Holidays

Can you think of a time during the year when you're encouraged and even expected to buy more than usual? If you are thinking of Christmas, Valentines Day, Mothers' day, or Fathers' day, you are absolutely correct. These holidays have become highly commercialized and are losing more meaning and significance every year.

To avoid spending too much during these holidays and to celebrate them more mindfully, try to limit the number and extravagance of the gifts you buy. The best way to do this is to spend more of your time and less of your money on gifts. You can do this by writing more heartfelt cards, selecting more meaningful gifts, and spending time with the people you are giving gifts to. Doing these things will help put less significance on spending money and more significance on friends, family, and loved ones. The effect will benefit your emotional well-being, your relationship, and your finances.

Reduce Media Consumption

While you read the paper, listen to the radio, watch TV, and surf the internet, you're exposing yourself to thousands and thousands of advertisements. Most of the products and services advertised are not completely necessary and can even be harmful. Think of all the advertisements you see chips, soft drinks, fast food, and other products that promote an unhealthy lifestyle. These advertisements can make these products seem more enticing which can lead to an unhealthy diet and weight gain.

So how can you deal with this problem? The answer is to simply reduce the amount of media you consume. The most effective way to do this is to start doing something more productive with your free time. One thing you can do is to take on a part time job at a clothing store to make some extra money and to expand your wardrobe. You can also volunteer at a nursing home to make new friends and to give back to the community. Another thing you can do is to go to the gym and get in shape. Any one of these activities can help you live a healthier, and less consumer centered lifestyle.

Identify Problem Areas

The best way to stop being a mindless consumer is to identify your problem areas. Ask



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yourself the following questions to help identify your problem areas. What makes you spend your money? Do you have difficulty controlling your impulses? Does spending money makes you feel better?

If you know where your spending habits come from, you'll be better able to take control of them. Analyze your credit card and checking account statements to see how you spend your money each month. Consider creating a budget to help you spend within your means.

Don't Follow The Spending Habits Of Your Friends And Family

If your friends and family have bad spending habits, it is likely you do too. If this is the case, there are many things you can do to get on the right track. You can start by learning basic personal finance principles and how to use your money more wisely. After you have the knowledge to improve, all it takes is a little initiative and action on your part.

Take Pride In Your Savings And Investments

Saving and investing your money is beneficial for many reasons. Having savings gives you the freedom to do more and buy more without having to wait for your next paycheck. This can be especially helpful if you encounter unexpected emergencies in your life.

Having investments gives you the opportunity to grow your wealth exponentially over time. This is important because most of the things you spend your money will decrease in value over time. By having both savings and investments in your financial portfolio, you'll be putting your money to better use than by mindlessly spending it on the latest and greatest consumer products.

Reject The Need To Display Wealth Or An Appearance Of Wealth

Doing things like driving new cars, living in fancy houses, and wearing expensive clothing can all make you look wealthy and successful, but can leave you with mountains of debt. To avoid getting into this problem yourself, learn to take satisfaction from your wealth without having to show it off. Enjoy the benefits of saving and investing your money instead of wasting it on expensive and short lived status symbols like new cars, name brand clothing, and gourmet foods. And if you really must show off your wealth, do so in a financially savvy way. Avoid taking out loans, or racking up credit card debt for these items. Status symbols are more meaningful and satisfying to own if they were purchased within your means.