



To Buy or Not to Buy: Why We Overshop and How to Stop

April Lane Benson

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Are you a shopaholic?

- Do you use shopping as a quick fix for the blues?
- Do you often buy things that you don't need or can't afford?
- Do your buying binges leave you feeling anxious or guilty?
- Is your shopping behavior hurting your relationships?
- Have you tried to stop but been unable to?

If so, you are not alone. Nearly 18 million Americans are problem shoppers, unable to break the buying habits that lead them into debt, damaged relationships, and depression. If this describes you, or someone you care about, the help you need is here.

Drawing on recent research and on decades of working with overs shoppers, Dr. April Benson brings together key insights with practical strategies in a powerful program to help you stop overs shopping. As you progress through this book, you'll take back control of your shopping and spending and create a richer, more meaningful and satisfying life.

To learn more about the author, visit her website: www.stoppingovershopping.com

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Mikaela Sayyah says

This is a very well written book and an interesting, fun read about overshopping, the reasons behind it, and the actions that one must take to resist and let go of this constant urge. I recommend it especially for compulsive shoppers, but also for anyone, like myself, who is intrigued by this topic. This book leads you to discover a richer and more fulfilling life, and that overshopping just gives a temporary satisfaction and does not solve your problems. This book will definitely not bore you and instead allows you to want to read more and continue, as it absorbs the reader in with a thoughtful but also a humorous style.

Skylar says

Not the book I thought it would be. I thought it would be more about how businesses manipulate us through our psychology to increase sales, and it's that too, but it's really written for clinical-level shopping problems or if shopping is negatively impacting your life in some way. But there were still some very thought-provoking discussions and exercises, and I bet this would be an excellent book for someone seriously struggling with overshopping.

Nicole says

I read this book to better understand people's issues with shopping and how they can deal with their problems. The book is only for people who have that type of problem - there are lots of exercises and ways to get your shopping issues under control. I think it could help people to even admit they have a problem. If you are looking for a sociological in-depth analysis of why people end up with these issues, this is not the book for you. I feel better equipped now to deal with someone I know who clearly has this issue and I think this book will be useful for them. If you know any over shoppers, if they will listen to you, this book could be extremely useful for them. At least help them get started with change.

Violetgray says

This book would make a good infographic. Allocating it any more space than that it's laughable and would be a waste of bandwidth and/or paper.

While the book is not totally devoid of value, leaning on CBT practices and more know works ... it's just so poorly written. If you're unemployed 50k deep in CC debt...as are the heroes of some of the anecdotes... I doubt that breathing exercise will be the solution to your self worth issues.

Yumu?ak Top says

This book has journaling exercises in literally every other page. If you hate journaling like me, you won't get much out of this book.

Rachel says

Somehow I received the impression that this book was going to be more of a study on the societal pressure to shop, and not so much a self-help book... I feel that I can't give a proper review, as I am not the target audience for the book.

Because I am not an overshopper, it was hard to hold my interest in the book, although it seemed to be well-laid out and a basic, step-by-step guide to analyzing one's one tendencies to spend more money than one should.

I was interested in the stories of specific overshoppers and the mindset that caused them to overshop; they gave a good look into the reason that the book was written.

I received this book for free through the LibraryThing Early Reviewers program.

Theenemytoad says

This book helped me realize that I do not have a shopping addiction.

Tom says

This book, one of the only that I could find on the subject, does a really good job of looking at and helping the reader control overshopping through a cognitive behavioral therapy approach. I think this book is more relevant to everyone than other reviewers have suggested, especially in today's mass-consumption culture. I particularly enjoyed the discussion of triggers and outcomes that were very close to what I have felt on occasion.

Andrea says

If you love shopping, a little too much, then i definitely recommend this book. Reading this book and doing the exercise activities really helps educate us that shopping is not always the answer. April Benson wrote this book in such a way that is easy to relate too and helps you find out if you truly are a shopaholic.

Logan Hughes says

I found this book through Debbie Roes' Recovering Shopaholic site, and it lived up to the hype. It's a really thoughtful, grounded self-help book dedicated to helping you identify the psychological and emotional roots of compulsive shopping behavior, complete with exercises and case studies. While I don't feel that I necessarily have a compulsive shopping problem, I do shop more than I need to, and the book gave me plenty to think about.

Kellie Korte says

Although this book was, at times, a pain in the ass (lots of journaling and reflecting) I absolutely loved it and I'm not sure it would have been as effective if it did not prompt the reader to put lots of effort into it. There were many new concepts explored, new and different tools, and great new perspectives. I know recovering from compulsive shopping is a long journey, but I have seen MAJOR improvements in the time that I have been reading this book. I definitely recommend reading if you're serious about recovering.

Alexandra says

I am not a shopping addict, but i witness a lot of shopping addicts in my job and around my workplace (in the retail business) so I was interested to read more about the subject and the psychology behind it. Many of the behaviours mentioned in the book are exactly like so many of our customers.

I am also really into shopping mindfully so I did connect with a lot of the points in this book. This book was really a gem and it had some great tips. Many tips can also be applied to other addictive behaviours like food, alcohol, etc. It is an interesting read since North American culture is so consumerist.

Kirsty 📚📖♥? says

This book took me a while to read. It's a simple enough book and like some, not full of jargon and psycho-babble but it doesn't hook you in enough to be one you can't put down. I often put it to one side to go read something else.

I saw a review that said it was only for people with addictions to shopping and wouldn't suit anyone else.

Well, first the book is aimed solely at over-shoppers so that makes sense to me that it would only be suitable for those people (me formerly included). However for me I think the content would also be suitable for over-eaters and maybe other addictions as well. Not the whole book but you can fit it in to other issues. There are plenty of sections about re-building confidence, mindfulness (more on that in a second) and discovering just why you do the thing you do whether that is buying too much, eating too much, drinking too much..

There are exercises to do and a shopping journal to keep helping you track how you are spending money and hopefully start spotting patterns of behaviour. My favourite one is an exercise to find out your 5 biggest strengths and then use them in some way more positive than overspending. Examples used include a woman whose strength was creativity and joined some pottery classes. She then channelled her energies into making gifts. Other strengths may not be so obvious but it does give you some things to think about.

The bit that I found niggling was the chapter on mindfulness. I have no problem with it and have tried it myself. However it's starting to feel like the therapy du-jour and like every self help book has it tacked on in

an effort to cash in. It's just not original anymore to see it in a book and I'd like to see a bit more variety. Overall I enjoyed this book. It's not the best self help book I've read but it does provide some interesting insights into people's behaviour and I, for one, learnt a few things about mine.

Emerson says

If you're already familiar with cognitive therapy, the second half will be a lot of refresher. Otherwise, before the last half I'd already implemented what was in here and more that I extrapolated from it. Now, I have a working savings plan and have implemented more responsible spending. I've also learned to plan, and wait, for things I want and focus more on memory-making things that really matter, ultimately.

This is more than a workbook for spending. It gets to the root of WHY you do it - childhood events, neglect, insecurity, and so on. Then it helps you reason with that training and the reactions to it.

Alex says

Hm, mixed feelings on this one!

So for starters, I'd like to say that this book has a VERY specific target audience, that is:

- Older (35 upwards, I would say, maybe even older than that)
- In a longterm relationship
- In steady professional employment
- A parent
- Absolutely friggin' DROWNING in credit card debt

As I am a 24 year old who recently graduated from my post-graduate degree, with no dependents and (I am proud to say!) no credit card debt, this is not me. The only overlap is I'm in a long term relationship.

This having been said, the book isn't judgemental. Actually probably one of my favourite things about it is its non-judgemental tone: it's not even geared towards a specific gender, which I really appreciated. However, this book is geared towards someone in that lifestyle.

I have always considered myself (what this book calls) "an overshopper" (prior to reading this, I'd have probably called myself a "shopaholic" or "shopping addict"). I've always felt huge insatiable urges to shop, specifically for clothes. However, I have already put quite a lot of personal work into this and over the past year I have become a lot better at RESISTING the urges: what I now want to learn is HOW NOT TO FEEL the urges.

This book is definitely better as a guide to RESISTING the urges, and I think it would have been very helpful earlier in my journey. So if you're at Day 1 of No Shopping, probably read this and participate in the

journalling if you feel you need some help.

Probably the most relevant chapter to me was the final chapter, which discusses how to avoid relapsing, which I did really enjoy.

There's two chapters prior to the final chapter which TOTALLY lost me though and I think could have been eliminated. They are about meditation and mindfulness, etc etc. They were quite repetitive and what they were attempting to say could have been said in one page: they didn't really tie the points back to shopping.

One of my favourite things about this book was the (I presume, fake?) accounts of people doing the activities the book suggests (keeping money diaries, dress rehearsing shopping, etc) - I would have liked even more of those!

Like I said previously, **THIS BOOK ALSO ASSUMES YOU ARE DROWNING IN CREDIT CARD DEBT**. Like I'm talking thousands and thousands of dollars, created purely by your shopping habit. This ain't me. I have never really been one to shop on credit, and I currently have no credit card debt from my shopping. Obviously credit card debt is important to address in a book about overshopping but it would have been nice to address that you can still be an overshopper without credit card debt. It ties every scenario back to "you shouldn't buy this, particularly because of all your debt" which kind of just made me feel empowered **TO BUY** because I don't have debt?! Honestly, this book made me feel much better with money than I previously thought I was - specifically since I am only 24 and this book was angled to people who are more in the 50 - 60 age range with adult children!!!!

I also felt like this book could have been a bit more focused. The text sections were definitely non un-put-down-able reading. There were a lot of activity sections, some I liked, some which I didn't. The first few chapters were fascinating to me, and I honestly think everyone should do them: they encourage you to journal about how you were raised to perceive money, what you were taught about it, your earliest memories of shopping, etc. However, the journal activities lagged in the later chapters, and turned into vague suggestions or long descriptions of meditations: honestly, I stopped doing the journalling.

My final point is that, ironically, this book is probably worth buying. I got this book from my library (like I said, I've done well kicking my shopping habit!) but there's a lot of sections which encourage you to look back on them or write in the book itself (which obviously I can't do in a library book!). So if you really want to use it for its true purpose, which is as a self-help guide to overcoming a shopping habit, I would (again ironically) suggest that you buy this book. I noted down the bits I needed to write down in a separate journal but it would definitely be easier just to own your own copy.
