

# Shopping

## An interview with a compulsive shopper

Before reading this text, answer these questions.

- 1 Do you go shopping every weekend?
- 2 Do you know people who shop too much?
- 3 When does shopping become a problem?

Do you like to go shopping with your friends? Most people like shopping. It is a fun activity to do in their free time, especially on weekends.

Shopping is fun but when you shop too much it can lead to personal and financial problems very quickly.

Did you know that the average person spends 146 hours per year in the stores, surfing the net, reading catalogues and watching shopping channels on TV?

Some people go into a store, buy many things they don't need and then regret their purchases the next day.

What makes them do that? It's a difficult question to answer, that's for sure. We interviewed Melina, a **recovering** shopaholic, to understand this problem more.

### Express Yourself: How did your addiction start?

Melina: When I was seventeen, my mother died from breast cancer, and that's when it began. I was always afraid to die young like my mom so I decided to spend all the money she had left me. I went shopping all the time. I felt lonely and when I felt this way, I shopped even more.

### EY: How much do you buy?

M: Over the years, I bought so much! I have over 300 pairs of shoes, four spare rooms and six closets full of clothes! It's crazy!

**EY: Do you shop on-line too?**

M: Not anymore because I am working really hard to get this problem under control; but yes, in the past, when I was bored, I would go on the Internet and make crazy purchases.

**EY: Do you sometimes return things you buy?**

M: I return things that I don't need but when I go back to the shopping centre I see new things and then I buy even more. Stores are danger zones for me and I have to **avoid** them. I sometimes ask my friends to return the things that I bought. This way, I am not tempted to get new things. When I don't see them I am O.K. but it's too difficult for me if I am at the store.

**EY: What is the hardest part?**

M: When I see something on sale – I have to buy it!

**EY: Did this addiction bring financial problems into your life?**

M: Of course – it's because of the debt that I realized I had a problem. I have \$50,000 of debt on my credit card.

**EY: Why did you decide to see a psychologist for this problem?**

M: I just had a baby girl one year ago. I don't want my daughter to have the same problem as I have. I want to set a good example. My psychologist has helped me a lot with my shopping problem.

**EY: What trick did you find to reduce your shopping habits?**

M: Now, when I have the **urge** to shop, I do another activity. I meet a friend and we go to the gym or the cinema. Talking to my friends about this problem also helps me. What's more, I now have a spending plan. I know that I only have two hundred dollars to spend every month.

**EY: Are there other tricks that you suggest for people who have this problem?**

M: Yes, one important thing is to reserve the amount of time I usually spend shopping for another activity. I take more walks outside now. And another suggestion is to sell all the things that I have but don't need. This summer I will have a garage sale and **get rid of** everything. What I cannot sell, I will send to poor families.

**EY: Thank you for sharing your story. I am sure our readers will appreciate your honesty.**

M: I am happy I can help someone else.

**Smart**

### Words

**avoid** =  
to refrain from  
doing something

**urge** =  
a strong desire

**get rid of** =  
to dispose of