



Accept—don't reject

Greetings from the Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Support Group of Southern Africa

ADHASA

Helping the Community for 20 years!

The largest ADHD Support Group on the African Continent

This article targets people with ADHD and the information could help other people too.

Please make this newsletter available to anyone who could use it.

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# Keeping up with ADD

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## From Heather's Desk

On October 7th we celebrate the 20th **Birthday of ADHASA**. It's been a busy yet satisfying 20 years during which we have touched the lives of many. Keep contact with us to find out what we are doing in our special birthday year.

Impulsive behaviour is common amongst people with ADHD. Children and adults are frequently in trouble for their impulsive behaviour which can manifest in various different ways. For some it may be having a temper tantrum or saying unpleasant things; others do silly or dangerous things before they stop to think about it; for some it affects their ability to monitor their spending.

Money burns a hole in their pocket and it just has to be spent! Spending Dragons give some ideas of keeping that money in your pocket.

Heather

## Spending Dragons !

Spending Dragons is a name created for the things people buy on impulse - without seriously thinking about their budget, or how much debt they have.

But it can be much more than that and may refer to any one of several aspects involved in impulsively and unnecessarily parting with your hard earned cash. Spending Dragons may refer to the things that people buy on an impulse, it could be a situation that encourages your spending, it can even refer to the urge to spend that money! Think about it - what happens if you spend too much money? You end up worrying - money worries cause stress and distress. Credit card debt is often caused by unnecessary purchases - from urges to buy without thought, acting on impulse.



There is often a direct connection between spending and clutter: When you buy too much stuff, you add to the clutter that you must deal with in your life. You may even be spending on things you already have, but cannot find! Clutter can be a serious problem for you if you are disorganised.

It seems that most people have at least one or two areas in which they have Spending Dragons or urges to spend money impulsively. Spending Dragons can also be things such as clothes, fine wine, office supplies, decorations for the house, power tools, plants or books. They could be events or situations such as garage sales, eating out, birthdays, Christmas, auctions, a certain store.

The term Spending Dragons was coined by Coach Dana Rayburn. She was working with a client, Karen, who couldn't resist a second hand shop or pass up a garage sale, school sale or old age home sale. Karen's battle with these urges reminded Dana of a knight battling a dragon - hence the name Spending Dragons.

Karen justified her purchases by thinking that they were merely inexpensive supplies for the art classes she taught to children. However she was spending much more money on these supplies than she realised. Also, her garage was already cluttered with enough unsorted craft supplies to last her for years. So Karen was creating both organising problems and financial problems for herself.

Three steps to reduce spending:

1. *Become aware of your urges to spend.* Become aware of these strong urges so that you can avoid unnecessary buying. Slay your Spending Dragons by recognizing (a) the situations that cause you to overspend and (b) the feelings and emotions you have when battling your urges to spend.

2. *Devise ways to outsmart your Spending Dragons.*

• **Avoid** - Stay away from situations that fuel your urges to spend. Karen used avoidance very successfully. After stopping her car at a garage sale or auction she would take a moment to become aware of her Spending Dragon (or urges) and the feelings she was experiencing. Often she found that this awareness allowed her to drive away without getting out of the car. Before long she was able to avoid the situations that encouraged her to spend.

• **Distract** - Jessie's credit cards were maxed out due to her urges to buy cashmere sweaters at an adorable little shop she drove by each day. For Jessie distraction worked. Because there's a cosy coffee shop next door to the sweater shop, Jessie successfully replaced her urge to buy sweaters with a leisurely coffee break instead. She is still spending money but a cappuccino is certainly much easier on her budget than cashmere!

• **Put It Back** - This is the trick that works for me when I'm in the grip of my Spending Dragon of impulsively buying plants for my garden. If my Spending Dragon is in control when I'm shopping for plants, it doesn't matter that my flowerbeds are full; I want to buy **more. If I don't**



control my plant-buying urge, I come home with a lot less money, a boot full of plants and nowhere to plant them.

Now, before I go to the till to pay, I seriously review each item in my trolley and make sure there's a good **spot for it in my garden. If I can't** think of a suitable spot, I simply put that plant back on the shelf. I find it helps me a lot to talk to myself as I do so (and I apologise to the plants as I put them back, surrounding them with love for the next person)

• **Use A List** - Sometimes disorganisation encourages a Spending Dragon.

Shelley is a busy single mom and successful business executive who found herself stopping at their local supermarket numerous evenings each week. Without a list Shelley and her daughters bought all kinds

of things they really didn't need.

Shelley was dismayed at how much they spent on unnecessary stuff, and all the clutter it caused. With **Dana's help Shelley created a system** of writing a list of everything they needed. Armed with the list, they'd visit the supermarket only once a week to buy only what was on the list. Shelley was relieved at how this simple system slayed her Spending Dragon.

• **Cash Only** - Credit cards make it very easy to overspend. To control my Spending Dragon of overspending on clothes, I've learned to shop for clothes only when I've saved up enough cash.

• **Friends** - I've found when some people shop with friends they often buy much more than when going alone - for them shopping isn't a good social activity. With other people though, it is the exact opposite - **they don't buy when with friends.** Maybe they know their friend would disapprove! If that is the case, choose that person as your shopping friend!

3. *Question your purchases.*

Before buying anything, ask yourself some questions.

- **How often will I use this?**
- **Do I own anything else like it?**
- **Do I have a strong, immediate urge to buy this item?** If so, wait a few days to see if your urge passes.
- **What's the true cost of this item?**

If it means you end up paying credit card interest on your purchase it will cost far more than the purchase price. Stores often offer hire purchase agreements which mean that payment can be made over many months. With this system, you could end up paying R1066 for an item that was advertised at the price of R599. Spending Dragons usually accompany the buying of things that **you really want but don't need.**

With awareness and willpower (or self discipline) you can stop yourself from buying things unnecessarily.

Please note that Spending Dragons ARE NOT uncontrollable. However they can be financially devastating addictions such as gambling or major shopping sprees. Such serious problems require professional help which is available should you need it.

Your Spending Dragons Worksheet

- ✂ Write down the kinds of things you buy impulsively!
- ✂ In what types of stores or situations does your self-control vanish - leaving you spending more money than you intended?
- ✂ Describe the feelings you experience while in the grip of your Spending Dragons?
- ✂ Look over your past credit card statements and internet banking or cheque stubs. What patterns (such as buying Christmas gifts) can you spot that causes debt?
- ✂ What tempts you to spend? Is it getting a certain catalogue in the mail or going to a certain store or perhaps it's an on-line offer?

Review your answers to the previous questions. Now create your own personal plan of attack for how you will slay your Spending Dragons using the techniques of Avoidance, Distraction, Put it Back, Use a List and Cash Only!

Then enjoy knowing that you actually have extra money when you really need it.

By Lori Lea based on an article written by Coach Dana Rayburn (USA)

ADHASA happenings:

- July – **Launch of Educators' Guide**
- 23rd May – Adult Seminar
- 13th June – **Parents' Seminar**
- 14th September – ADHD Awareness Day
- 24th October – Teacher & Professionals Seminar

Please check our website for further details, [www.adhasa.co.za](http://www.adhasa.co.za).

CalmolinADD,



a complete supplement for over-active and inattentive children, has been endorsed by ADHASA and is available in our Happy Kids Shop.