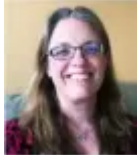


'I tackled my impulse spending'

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Helen Neale, 50, founder of online parent resource Kiddycharts, lives in Essex. She decided to address her impulse spending related to her attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) when she realised it was negatively affecting her business. Research suggests that neurodiverse people are more likely to be in debt and feel less confident about managing their money.



'I had a wake-up call in early 2023 that my impulse spending was becoming a problem when it began eating into the profit I was making from my business. I was diagnosed with ADHD last year, so I'm still learning about it, but I found out that impulsivity is a key trait and it manifests in different ways – in my case (and many other people's, too), it was with spending.

I've now learned I need to put in breaks before I spend and add in a few steps to help myself feel more in control. My key thing is to 'pause before pay'. For example, if I go online and am tempted to buy something, I have a break for 24 hours, where I'll go away and do something else.

I sleep on it, look at my potential purchase with fresh eyes in the morning and really think about the value it would bring me. It sounds incredibly simple, but it's actually very hard to do!

This strategy has really worked for me, though, and my business is now back on track. Books are my biggest weakness, but now, rather than buying new, I go to the library. I also had a habit of paying for online courses that I never actually did, but I've now completed a Level 4 diploma in Therapeutic Counselling, which helped me to understand myself better and feel empowered.'

MY MONEY LESSON: 'You have to make a connection between impulse spending and how it makes you feel. First, try to understand your weaknesses and triggers – my trigger is anything that appears to benefit my business, to the point where it can cloud my judgement. Then put the breaks in place: try a visual cue, such as a sticky note on your credit card saying 'Pause!' or making yourself take time away before you buy. Be as creative as you can with your breaks; I go and play with my cats or go for a walk in nature and really pay attention to the sights and sounds as I walk.'

HOW TO DO IT:

Removing your card details from retailers' sites makes it harder to impulse buy. Log into your account on the website and go to account settings or payment information. From there, you should be able to remove any card information you've previously provided. If you can afford it, put aside a small amount of money each month into a separate account for interests and weaknesses – which you can then spend guilt-free.

I've learned to put in breaks before I spend and add steps to feel in control