

Money Practice

The Pause Tool



pause

noun

1. a temporary stop in action or speech:

(to help us move from our reactive mid brain, who lives by the mantra of “gimme what I want when I want it,” to the frontal cortex, where executive thinking and consequences of our behavior live. By the way, our frontal cortex is what separates us from the animals...we can think things through and not just react!)

Questions to help us shift from mid brain reactivity to frontal lobe response when seeing an item to purchase that our eyes immediately desire:

1. What am I really purchasing here? Is it the item OR is it something else? Am I giving in to a superficial want, when what really wants to be satisfied is an underlying need? Underlying needs are things like...feeling loved, feeling like I belong, the need for a break in our day, the need to feel adequate. Often, if we feel inadequate in some way (often by comparing ourselves to others), an underlying need may not be getting met.

2. How am I feeling? Often, if we are hungry, angry, lonely, tired, sad, or in a negative emotional state, shopping offers us a dopamine hit to our brains, like a mood elevator. Be aware and don't go shopping when you are in a state as described. These negative states often have us spending more than what we intended and many purchases bought in this state end up being returned!

3. What are the thoughts I am having that are telling me I need this item? Are you experiencing rationalization thoughts or scarcity thoughts. A rationalization thought is often about telling yourself that your life will be better because of the purchase of this particular item. A scarcity thought often shows up such as, "if I don't buy it now it won't be here later." Often it is the thoughts in our mid brain that creates urgency in our actions "to have." Delay your purchase of the item. See if the intensity of your desire to have this item is just as strong in 3 days and if so, find a way to place in your spending plan so you do "do no harm spending."

4. What will be the consequences of this unplanned purchase? Will it delay my regular bills, like my rent or mortgage? Will I need to take money out of savings to pay for it? Will this expense create new debt for me and is it worth that? What will purchasing this do to my bank account and my current cash flow plan?

5. Is this item worth the amount of time and energy it took me, to earn the money to pay for it? Reflect on this and see what comes forth for you?

6. Am I in an impulsive or compulsive craving behavior right now? Do I need to go to a 12 step meeting or call a friend? What will support me in releasing this craving?

Just because we see something
that we like and then want
doesn't mean we have to purchase it
we can simply appreciate the beauty it
has to offer

and even if the thoughts of the thing
spins around and around in our heads
and we think we have to have it in order
to stop
the spinning thoughts...

we can let the spinning continue
and not give into the craving
or compulsion to have it
and still appreciate it

after all, who is in control here
us or the thing?
us or the craving?
us or the spinning thoughts?

US, we are the ones in the driver's seat of
our financial life
and if we aren't in the driver's seat
we need to hop up in that front seat
with both hands on the wheel

even though some days
it's nice to day dream out the window
while something else is the driver
yet, this doesn't work with our money lives
in a daily habit kind of way

