

I'm Amy and I'm a Groupon Addict

By Amy Pengra | [Work + Money](#) – Thu, Jul 18, 2013 2:19 PM EDT



Over the past year, I've ridden stallions in Malibu, yoga-surfed in Hermosa, indoor-skydived in Burbank, paddle-boarded in Marina Del Rey, pole-danced in Hollywood, and swung from a trapeze in Santa Monica, all due to an admittedly unhealthy dependency on discount deal websites.

The trouble began several years ago when multiple deal sites began invading cyberspace. One by one, the deals hit my inbox, beckoning me with discounts on everything from designer pumps and Brazilian blowouts to fancy restaurants and facials. The digital ease of these offers tapped into my innate spontaneity and lifelong fear of being left out—that panicky feeling of wanting to be everywhere at once. It's a nagging feeling that by making one choice, I'm missing another opportunity to make new connections, have more experiences, and somehow, have a more satisfying life because of it. So, it made sense that Groupon soon became my gateway deal drug and eventually I was registered to 9 different sites.

But after multiple clothing returns, mild indigestion and several unused vouchers, I realized that superficial services (and losing cash from expired coupons) wasn't satisfying. Getting a bargain on "stuff" only offered a short-lived high so I quickly advanced to the hard stuff: "adventures" and "escapes."

It began innocently enough—a script-writing seminar here, an Italian cooking class there, but soon my calendar exploded with back-to-back events. The rush of adventure pushed me to buy more, do more, live more. My yes personality couldn't say no.

Turns out, I was experiencing a scorching outbreak of FOMO: Fear of Missing Out, a psychological phenomenon recently studied by [psychologists at the University of Essex](#). "FoMO is characterized by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing," says lead study author Andrew Przybylski, PhD, a professor at the University of Essex. With limits, that can be healthy. However, people who experience high levels of FOMO actually feel less competent, independent, and distanced from people, compared to those who don't stress about being left out.

"In our fast-paced society, people will do pretty much anything to avoid the pain of seeing a door close in life," says Caroline Adams Miller, MAPP, author of *Creating Your Best Life*. The problem with discount sites is that they're specifically designed to make us believe that just living isn't enough—we've got to live large. And when we cave to that pressure, we feel scattered, non-committal and miserable.

I know it's true because I'm exhausted. Sure, my life is full of adventure, but my wallet is nearly empty. I've spent over \$2,500 on these deals. And the stress of an over-packed schedule (coupon expires soon!) floods my head with anxiety.

I wanted to exit but quitting cold turkey felt too radical. But when I found myself rescheduling a pole-dancing class for the fourth time, I knew I had to re-prioritize. After all, if I really wanted to wear hot pants and Lucite heels, wouldn't I have done so by now?

The key, says Miller, is choosing which doors to open and which to leave closed. "By saying no, you allow yourself time and energy to focus on what you really want and what makes sense for your life."

I know I'll always be a spontaneous person but I realized that I don't need to feel pressured by a false sense of urgency to improve my life. I decided to listen to my instincts instead of jumping on an offer because in the moment it sounds better than sitting at my computer.

I entered deal detox a few months ago and so far it's working. There have been some slipups but I'm down to three memberships and when their offers arrive, I pause and ask myself some questions: Am I really interested in shadowing a beekeeper to learn how honey is harvested? I love honey, but I hate bees—problem solved! I'm not saying I won't indulge in activities I truly enjoy (paddle-boarding) if the offer arises. But discount fire-dancing lessons in Ventura and colon cleansing in Burbank just because space is filling up fast? No thanks. I'm staying in tonight.

SPONSORED LINKS

- **Going Cold Turkey?**
[TurnToHelp.com](#)
Get info on withdrawal, detox, and rehab for painkiller addiction.
- **VA Home Loans - \$0 Down**
[www.VeteransUnited.com](#)
See If You Qualify For A VA Loan. PreQualify Online In Just 2 Minutes
- **1 Tip To Lose Belly Fat**
[MiracleGarciniaCambogia.com](#)
Cut pounds of stomach fat every week by using this 1 weird old tip.

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