

# Diary of a reformed SPENDAHOLIC!

Jane Hawkes, **aka Lady Janey**, is an award-winning money blogger, who helps others manage their finances. But it wasn't always this way. For half of her life, she was a self-confessed spendaholic. Here, Jane explains how she went from spender to saver — and how you can too...



## How I became a spendaholic

**Jane says:** 'I think it stems back to when my sister and I were little. Dad was doing a university course while Mum stayed at home to look after us. So, money was tight. Mum was a master of careful budgeting, down to the last penny. And although being careful with money should have come quite naturally, I think being brought up in a straightjacket of frugality pushed me into being exactly the opposite.'

When Jane started to earn her own money from part-time jobs, she spent it all instead of saving any, and this spending continued at university, where she spent her student loan with gusto, without thinking ahead to when she'd need to pay it back.

## What made me want to change my ways?

**Jane says:** 'It started with accepting that there was an issue. I met my now husband,

who was much more of a saver. He spent wisely and never took unnecessary risks.

'The realisation that I was a spendaholic was a chance to finally take responsibility for all those years of needless extravagance, and stem that tide of spending before I got to the point of no return. And, with his help, I could do so.

'By setting up a proper budgeting programme and analysing all my expenditure, he

was able to provide the structure and supervision I so desperately needed to get my finances back on track.'

## How I took a new approach

**Basic book-keeping:** 'In the days before budgeting apps and laptops, I started religiously recording my incomings and outgoings in a little notebook. It helped me see exactly what was

## 5 TIPS TO AVOID QR CODE SCAMS

**It's become a common form of payment for drinks, food, travel and even charitable donations, but scammers can use malicious QR codes to replace legitimate ones in bars, restaurants and other locations. So, experts at QR Code Generator have released advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of such scams, whether at home or abroad...**

### Avoid payments using public QR codes

If you're scanning a publicly placed QR code, such as on a parking payment machine, check a sticker hasn't been placed over the original code or it hasn't been tampered with in any way. A QR code scam will direct a device to an official-looking but phoney website. So be

aware. If in doubt, don't pay through the QR code. There is almost always an alternative way to make a payment, such as entering the URL yourself.

### Check the destination of any QR code

Check the URL is legitimate by looking out for extended domain names. Multiple hyphens and symbols are common in malicious links. Just because a URL has 'Google' in it, doesn't mean it's legitimate. Websites with an unprofessional-looking design, low-resolution images, and typos, can be a telltale sign of fraud.

### You do not need a QR code 'app'

Your phone's camera is capable of scanning and

following QR codes. The misconception you might need a new app to do this can lead to downloading fraudulent software.

### Don't scan QR codes from unsolicited emails

Email inboxes are often bombarded with links and attachments that may be malicious. Always think: *Do I know the sender? If so, are they definitely who they claim to be?* Many scams claim to

come from trusted retailers. Stay safe and simply avoid scanning QR codes in emails altogether.

### Don't be a victim of your own curiosity

Scanning a QR code may be incentivised with the promise of a reward. Be extremely wary of any QR code that gives you the chance to 'win' anything, offers a survey, or promises free goods or services.



going in and out. Nowadays, I have a spreadsheet workbook for all my

accounts, which means that every penny is accounted for and, because all direct debits and standing orders are deducted at the beginning of the month, I always know how much I have left to play with.

'Being able to easily view and track my finances means I'm a lot more financially disciplined in terms of what I spend my money on. I haven't used my overdraft in years and now even have savings accounts!'

**Using credit cards wisely:** 'I can spend and get money for spending. It's not a huge amount of cashback, but it certainly adds up. I use the card like a debit card, but record all purchases on my spreadsheets and pay it off every month.'

**Identifying triggers:** 'Identifying why you spend is a really important stage in the process of changing your ways. For me, it was pleasing others — for example, an ex-boyfriend who loved to spend and always splashed the cash. Ironically, I also spent when I felt a bit down or worried about money. Retail therapy helped in the moment. Now, I take the dogs

for a walk or try to do something constructive. For example, I plan a zero-spend week and channel that desire to spend elsewhere.'

**Avoid impulse purchases:** 'I've tried to adopt a 30-day spending rule. If I spot something that is a 'must have', I make a mental note of it or even add it to basket. But I don't buy it straightaway. I wait a couple of weeks or even a month, and if I still want it and can afford it, then I get it. Meanwhile, I think of how I can make money before I spend it. For example, if a new dress is on the cards, priced £30, I think: 'How can I raise that amount?' This also helps payday splurges

become a thing of the past.'

**Set realistic goals:** 'If you're looking to curb your spending, set realistic, achievable goals. I couldn't have paid all my debt off in one go. But bit by bit, I chipped away at it, and am now firmly out of the red and determined to stay there. Having a budget buddy in my hubby really helped me stick to the plan and hold myself to account for my spending. I'm proud to be a reformed spendaholic with a new love of saving, and my experience allows me to help others as a money blogger. Who would have thought being frugal would be so much fun!'



From spender to saver

