



I receive about 80 emails a day from deal-discounting sites: [VOICE by SF Weekly](#), [Facebook Deals](#), [Scoutmob](#), [LivingSocial](#), [Daily Gourmet](#), [Vegan Cuts](#), [Gilt City](#), [Groupon](#), and so forth. And I buy them *all the time*. This didn't seem like much of a problem to me at first: "I'm going out and still saving so much money," I thought! But I hit rock bottom last week when I bought five of these coupons; *that's one for every day of the work week*. I realized I had to admit my problem and seek help.

I have a deal compulsion. I think it was instilled in me by my father, whose dedication to sales and coupons at the local drugstore meant we always had dozens of boxes of cereal as well as tons (literal tons, cans are heavy) of bean with bacon soup sitting dormant in the basement. "If it's on sale, we need to buy it" seemed to be the mantra. Nobody in the house likes [Yogurt Burst Cheerios](#), you say? Well, TOO BAD, because they were three boxes for a dollar at [Osco](#), and they're what you're having for breakfast for the next five weeks.

I have turned into a modernized, more technology-savvy version of my dad. A Groupon for [Sudachi](#) came to my inbox. Sudachi, a loud, weird, slightly overpriced sushi bar in Nob Hill, isn't even that close to my apartment, and when I do go, I find myself scraping mayonnaise off my food and screaming my order to the server over the Lady Gaga thumping through the sound system. But when you give me \$20 to spend at Sudachi for only \$10 out of my own pocket, by golly, I'll take it. "Yeah, it totally has the best veggie tempura roll in San Francisco," I found myself claiming. "Plus the pineapple sake is out of this world."

Had Sudachi never had a Groupon or the like, I know I'd probably be just as happy staying away from it for all eternity and spending that valuable sushi money at a restaurant I actually enjoy — or better yet, staying in and hardly spending any money at all on my beans, rice, and frozen spinach. But luckily, I'm not completely at fault. Psychology has a name for this phenomenon: perceived value. Whenever something — really, anything at all — goes on sale, it suddenly seems like you're getting away with something if you buy it. The value of the original product goes *up* now that the actual price has gone *down*.

What makes these sites even worse for me is that I'm a broke ass. I really feel like I'm ballin' when I can go out to eat every night of the week, you know? I'll dine at an establishment I don't even *like* if I think it will

save me money. And that is what social coupons are tricking me into doing.

Do you have a coupon compulsion? How do you keep it under control?

Image courtesy of this post's author

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