

Living With Impulsivity

You may know what impulsivity feels like in your bones.

It's the blurting, the leaping, the buying, the interrupting, the starting and stopping and switching and wondering what just happened.

It's fast. It's intense. It's sometimes messy. And it's also part of what makes you, you. Impulsivity isn't a personal failure. It's a brain wired for now, for action. And in a world built around pause buttons and perfect timing, that can be hard. But that same impulsivity can also mean:

- You're courageous.
- You're a doer.
- You say what others are too afraid to.
- You spot possibilities others don't see.
- You act before doubt has time to talk you out of it.

"Impulsivity isn't a flaw. It's energy in motion. We just have to learn how to steer it."

If you've been told off, shut down, or shamed for being impulsive, you're not alone. A lot of us have carried that. You deserve tools that support you.

This isn't about fixing you. It's about supporting yourself with tools that make space for your brilliant, fast-moving brain to breathe.

What impulsivity might look like

Some of these might feel familiar:

- Speaking before thinking, especially when you care a lot
- Buying things you didn't plan to
- Getting caught up in a feeling and reacting quickly
- Starting projects and abandoning them mid-sprint
- Breaking rules or taking risks before you've thought them through
- Struggling to wait or slow down, even when you want to
- Feeling regret or confusion after something felt right in the moment

But also: this part of you has power

Let's not forget what impulsivity can give us:

- Genuine enthusiasm
- Spontaneous joy
- Unfiltered honesty
- Speed in a crisis
- Boldness when others hesitate
- The magic of saying "yes" before fear has time to take over

"We don't always need to slow down. Sometimes, we just need to aim better."

What can help (without killing the spark)

We're not aiming for perfect control. We're aiming for a pause. A breath. A moment where you get to choose.

The Pause Plan

1. Stop - Catch the moment. Say "pause" out loud if it helps.
2. Check in - Ask yourself: "What's going on here?" "Is this about now, or something deeper?"
3. Ask the Question "Will this help me in five minutes?" "Will I still want this tomorrow?"
4. Imagine - Play it forward. What happens next if you go with this impulse? What else is possible?
5. Choose - Whatever you choose - make it yours. Even saying "yes" after checking in is a win.
6. Reflect - Later, look back with curiosity, not criticism. What worked? What didn't? What might you try next time?

Other ways to work with your impulsive side

- Use visuals – sticky notes, colour coding, reminders that slow you gently.
- Talk it out – even (especially) with yourself. External processing helps.
- Plan for tricky moments – if online shopping is a trigger, remove stored card details
- Set delay habits – "I'll wait 24 hours before buying anything over £20"
- Create safe spaces for impulse – creative projects, playlists, dancing, writing
- Celebrate the pause – not just when you get it 'right', but when you noticed at all
- Tell someone – share your small wins. Validation matters.

Final thoughts

Impulsivity is not the enemy. It's part of your story. And like every powerful thing, it gets easier to work with when you understand how it moves.

You're allowed to make mistakes.

You're allowed to course-correct.

You're allowed to be proud of the moments you paused, even if they were tiny.

Tiny pauses are where the magic starts.

And then, sometimes - when it feels right - you can run with it.

You can say yes in the moment.

You can let your joy be loud, your enthusiasm be real, your presence be total.

Not every impulse needs taming. Some of them are treasures.

The trick is learning to tell the difference - and learning to trust yourself when you do.

"When I realised that impulsivity wasn't something I had to 'get rid of', but something I could learn to work with, it changed everything. Now I try to build space around decisions, not shame. And sometimes I still leap - but now I choose when."

(Lisa Heledd Jones)

Need more support?

You're not meant to do this alone. Impulsivity can sometimes cause real challenges. If you're struggling with risk, regret or shame, speak to a trusted professional for guidance, tools and connection.