Back when I was in my twenties, and my girlfriends and I would go shopping, I had one goal in mind: to spend $10 or less on each item. Am I that cheap? Well, basically: YES! What I realized is that I had stumbled upon a principle that would guide my spending habits in a very positive way throughout my life.

And now twenty years later, I have revised my purchase-price-point only slightly: $10-$15 or less, $20 if I LOVE it! (Granted, this system doesn't work for refrigerators, washers, mattresses, etc., but you get the picture, right?) The bottom line when I am making nonessential purchases, the Price must be right.
I have come up with a list of a few of my favorite items that I can usually get for $10 or less.

Shoes and Clothes

Years ago, when my sister/girlfriend, Missy, relocated from Minnesota to southern California, the two of us spent three days driving her shiny black sports car to her new home. That was one of the most memorable trips of my life.
It consisted of eating, shopping, arguing (like sisters do), and shopping.
From Minnesota to Cali, we planned our stops around good shopping destinations.
We bought high-end boots for around $10, that were end-of-the-season and clearance priced (I still have a pair, and they look great).
We would hit both malls and outlet stores, sniffing out $10-or-less bargains, and we scored at nearly every stop.
The key:
Look for end-of season deals and plan to use them the following year.
My favorite places where I recently scored: Target-shoes for $3.74 and $4.98; a great spot to find stuff for the kiddos!) Macy's-ribbed turtlenecks and designer t-shirts for $8, and JC Penney's-girls' jeans and boys' zippered hoodies for just $3.97!

Dining

One of my favorite places to get a great meal for $10 or less is located inside International Market Square. Market Square Bistro & Bar is a beautiful full-service eight-story atrium restaurant. Open weekdays from 11:30-2 pm, they offer a soup and salad bar that is one of the best in town. The items are always fresh and the pasta salads keep me going back for seconds (and thirds).
www.imsdesignonline.com

My favorite Friday night dinner option is Little Caesar's. A large pepperoni or cheese pizza costs only $5! Add to that, a bag of salad and some fresh fruit and you have a great weekend meal.
www.
littlecaesars
.com

Entertainment

Are you looking for cheap ways to have a night on the town? Why not swing on over to the hip 1950's style Riverview Theater, located at 3800 42nd Ave South in Minneapolis. The large hip lounge area invites you to come early and enjoy the mod vibe before taking in the movie. Tickets are only $2-$3, except for special showings. Remember to take cash, because plastic is not accepted.
www.riverviewtheater.com
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Another one to try is Maple Grove Cinema 10, Maple Grove, where you will always find ticket prices from $2.50-$3.
www.manntheatresmn.com/theater

What can you do with $10? Lots-that is if you do your homework. At a time like this, adopting the principles of deal-finding is a downright smart idea. To start, set a limit and practice sticking to it.
Challenge yourself to find the very best ways you can make your ten dollar bill feel like a twenty. Every, little bit helps. Finally, if you need a little more convincing, consider this; wise spending leads to less stress and more peace!
Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.