



www.aseasonofhappiness.com

The Power of Boycott **How boycott impacts even the civilised world**

In the dim dark ages a frequently employed and effective means of overcoming an enemy was the siege. An invading force would surround a fortification, even an entire city; then make sure no-one and nothing could enter or leave. The invader might then proceed with an attack, bombarding the besieged with rocks and other destructive missiles to weaken those held captive by the cordon; but the major factor likely to decide the conflict would be the denial of resources only available from the outside. Although the siege strategy would have been considered by the defenders and allowed for by stockpiling food and ammunition, eventually supplies of both would run out. Then the only resort remaining would be to break from the diminished safety of the fortification and meet the invader head on.

We've come a long way since the days of catapults, ballistae and archers, but the strategy of denial is still used today and continues to prove effective. Conflicts both in the past and more recently have seen the implementation of boycott as a means of persuading a belligerent party to cease and desist without actually participating in the battle. Cutting off supplies of energy, food, medical necessities, even water places a huge burden on those in the conflict zone. The other edge of the sword cuts as deeply when trade routes to the outside world are blocked, preventing the besieged from selling their produce, thus diminishing finances and its ability to buy more armaments and military resources. It is, plainly and simply, a stifling ploy that suffocates not only the militant, but also innocent civilians. Unfortunately, in many cases they tend to be regarded as collateral damage.

Most of us on the home front sit in our armchairs and merely observe, concerned, of course, that such inhumanities should be inflicted; yet glad of the fact that we are a safe distance from the turmoil. We continue to enjoy domestic bliss in our comfortable little bubbles because nothing drastic ever happens to put pressure on our simple lives; boycott, however, isn't restricted to war zones and is lurking in a different guise. Ordinary workers are frequently in the news, pushing for better conditions and pay. They may petition employers and governments; or gather in protest marches, hoping that their voices will be heard. More often than not, the powers-that-be ignore the requests, reasoning that, left to simmer and fester, the "unreasonable" demands will die a natural death. Needless to say, they rarely do. Then, the only way left open to the protesters is to withhold their labour; in effect, call a strike and refuse to work.

This type of boycott impacts more than the profitability of the company or institution being challenged. When production is slowed, perhaps halted entirely, the diminished supply of goods or services eventually affects their customers and clients who are deprived of necessities. There was no better example of this than during the Covid pandemic. Like the besieged townships of medieval times, ordinary modern-day people learned not to

take things for granted and began stockpiling everything from baby formula to toilet rolls; and we all know how awkward that made life for everyone.

With respect to normal trade, especially international, restricting the supply of raw materials perhaps only available from one source can bring manufacturing businesses which rely on it to a grinding halt. On the flip side of the coin, refusing to import another country's produce because it is in direct competition with their home "grown" variety also has wide-ranging effects; not only on the seller's profitability, but on whomsoever buys their product. And if that particular item is in short supply, prices usually increase, sometimes to unacceptable levels.

From the consumers' point of view, there is generally little they can do to rectify the situation except pay up or go without. I did, however, hear of one situation many years ago in America, maybe in Texas or Arkansas; when, apparently, the price of sugar skyrocketed. Customers were outraged. Following much private grumbling, the angry words spread throughout the community. People got together and decided to impose their own boycott, refusing to buy the over-priced product. I believe it took around a fortnight for the sugar manufacturers to realise that if they didn't do something, they would go bust. So, down came the price of sugar; customers were happy again; and the profiteers tasted the not-so-sweet impact of civilised boycott.

It doesn't always work, of course; but making this kind of peaceful stand is merely saying that people will only put up with some things for a while before they react in a practical way to correct an imbalance. No wars, no fighting; just two simple words: "No more!"

A Season of Happiness - helping you towards a better lifestyle

For a look at some more informative articles on a variety of subjects just return to the web page



Where every effort has been made to be accurate and fair-minded, comments and opinions expressed on this website are based on personal experience and do not necessarily reflect the views of the wider community or those groups and institutions mentioned. A Season of Happiness and its staff accept no responsibility for any outcome based on suggestions offered. What works for one may not work for others. Please bear this in mind.