

# The Renegade Consumer Manifesto

**For more than three generations**, since at least the end of World War II, Americans and most citizens of the Western world have been subjected to an unceasing assault on their economic rights and their fundamental freedoms of thought and choice.

Far from being opposed, this assault is actively supported by governments and economic institutions. Whole industries have arisen with the sole purpose of protecting and furthering this effort. The great majority of individuals have been conditioned to tolerate and even welcome this continual siege on their lives. As a result, this onslaught has had a larger impact on present-day life and the state of our world than any other factor in recent history.

This assault comes from the many combined forces of the consumer manufacturing and marketing industries, and all those who promote, support and encourage **consumerism** — the idea that the purpose of life is to use one's economic resources to acquire goods, and that it is incumbent on all to make maximum use of those resources to further this pursuit.

This assault strikes everyone, from all sides, unrelentingly and without significant opposition or protections. It harms everyone by limiting their educational, economic and life options, by undermining individual potential for economic security, and by blunting the potential achievements of individual lives. It harms our world by fostering overconsumption and unnecessary depletion of natural resources. It harms our future by conditioning us to accept a form of slavery that we have been trained to praise as freedom.

Despite its universal presence and effect, this unceasing attack on the minds and fortunes of nearly every person on Earth has gone all but unnoticed. The camouflage and misdirection are inherent in the effort itself. Those who recognize the assault are subverted. Those who attempt to bring it to public notice are ignored. Those who attempt to change it are dismissed. To all this we say: **No more.**

As renegades in the spectrum of consumers, we declare that this assault on the lives and economic freedom of all individuals must cease. We will strive to free ourselves individually from its effects and control. We will strive to educate others that they might free themselves. We will strive to eliminate the very notion that spending one's wealth is the purpose of life. We will work to actively expose this onslaught and oppose those who perpetrate it. **We actively and aggressively seek to end the reign of consumerism as a political, economic and social force.**

In support of these goals, we declare that:

- ~ We believe that ownership of goods does not define a worthwhile life;
- ~ We believe that there are better bases for life than maximizing one's ability to consume;
- ~ We believe that people should live within their economic means, and that individuals should consider their financial future while managing their financial present;
- ~ We believe it is unethical to manipulate the economic practices of individuals for economic advantage or gain, and we demand ethical actions from manufacturers, marketers and sellers of consumer goods;
- ~ We believe in the strongest possible protections against fraud and misrepresentation;
- ~ We believe that education and awareness are more effective defenses against this assault than excessive regulation and law;
- ~ We encourage independent thought and critical thinking; *and*
- ~ We believe that the problem transcends all political and social ideologies and that our efforts should remain independent of them all.

We find it in no way contradictory to our aims to further declare that:

- ~ We believe that personal economic choices are best left to the fully informed individual;
- ~ We believe it is acceptable to live at any level and in any style one's means permit; and
- ~ We accept that, within bounds, marketing and advertising are components of a healthy economy.

We pledge unceasing war on the promulgators and the very concept of consumerism, with no rest in this effort until:

- ~ The American populace has been thoroughly educated on the real role of consumer spending in our lives, politics and society;
- ~ The real tactics and purposes of the consumer product and marketing industries have been brought to wide public attention and understanding; *and*
- ~ A sustained national discussion of individual, family and community economics not based on maximized consumer spending has begun.

We pledge not to abandon the effort until these interim steps result in:

- ~ A pronounced reduction of spending on valueless consumer goods;
- ~ A substantial movement of people adjusting their lives around sustainable and personally beneficial economic plans;
- ~ A reordering of the consumer product industries reflecting a market that will no longer be goaded into fostered spending and acquisition; *and*
- ~ Changes in our national policies reflecting a permanent turn away from consumerism as a basis for both individual lives and national economies.

**In summary,**

**We don't buy it any more!**

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