



Trade Wars

You may have encountered numerous instances of the term 'Trade Wars' over the past year. Whether it was on your newsfeed or a headline in the newspaper, it seems to be slowly turning into a recurring problem with serious real-life consequences.

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Now, before getting into the thick of it, the first thing we should clear out is the purpose of trade. Countries have the ability to exchange goods and services amongst each other, which not only allows consumers a wider variety of choice but also allows countries to specialise in certain commodities and thus partner up with other countries.

Trade wars, however, is the opposite situation, when countries decide to prevent trade between each other by imposing restrictions such as tariffs (import taxes), quotas and other barriers.

The logic behind creating such a situation is to protect a country's domestic industries. For example, if consumers in the US are given the choice between importing electronics at a cheaper price from China, instead of buying from US producers at a higher price, they will choose the former.

This situation, however, threatens the US technology industry from losing out on profits and ultimately becoming obsolete, which is not an ideal scenario for the US government.

Therefore, in order to protect their domestic industries, the US government will impose tariffs and quotas on imports from China to make them more expensive, thus reducing their demand. This ideally is how the trade war begins.

Now, the question you might have is, why we make it sound so melodramatic by using a term as serious as 'war'. Well, the problem is how things start to go downhill right after said trade war begins.

As one country steps in with these

tariffs, the opposing country retaliates with its own tariffs and quotas accordingly. Before you know it, both countries not only significantly reduce both imports and exports between each other.

But the problem that arises is when domestic industries fail to satisfy the consumer's demands. Because, if the end result is consumers still importing goods from the now tariffed country, the consumers are the ones who actually end up paying these tariffs.

Looking at the current US-China trade war, we can learn a lot about such scenarios. US companies are suffering, as they're heavily reliant on the import of steel and aluminum from China, but tariffs have greatly reduced their potential for making a profit.

Usually, in such trade wars, one country usually comes out on top, and that country is the one who can rigorously compete by its ability to cut prices. And since China is easily able to do that, they seem to be currently gaining out of the situation.

The take away from all this is that, trade wars have real-life consequences on the consumers, not the government. Trying to artificially protect domestic industries with tariffs doesn't always work in your favour unless you have the necessary power to get efficient prices to negate the effect of the tariffs. And finally, it sours relationships between two countries who could, in another scenario, work together to better benefit their respective citizens.

Aaqib is stuck in an existential crisis loop. Send help at aaqibhasib94@gmail.com

Life Lessons from Driving School

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I believe that most of the practical skills we learn teach us much more about life than we realise. Confused? Let me explain. Let's talk about driving. What are the few things that we learn from driving school that we can directly apply to everyday life?

PATIENCE IS THE REAL TEST

Many of the new drivers have the skill level of a baby learning to read but the ego of a best selling writer. So they tend to want to prove themselves the only way they know how. Speeding.

So they are constantly taught that it's the ones who can be patient and drive slow that are really proving their worth.

Sometimes, life deals you a really bad hand of cards. And the best thing to do, is to get through it patiently, by staying strong.

STAY IN YOUR LANE

We all hate those of us who tend to overstep. You know, by being a little too nosy and telling you how to live your life, just like that one rude driver on the road who keeps cutting you off and seems to be literally allergic to patiently waiting in his own lane.

Well, this rule speaks volumes too.

STAY IN YOUR OWN LANE politely translated to MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

YOU KNOW HOW WE ALL HAVE A BLIND SPOT?

For all the drivers out there, you know what I'm talking about. And for the smart ones, you already know where this is going. To the others, a blind spot, is an area in the car where a person's view is obstructed.

Starting to make the connection? How many times, have we liked someone,

or met someone whom we see through a foggy lens. We don't quite see them for who they are. Which can then turn out pretty bad for us. Hence, look out for the blind spots!

OH SORRY, AM I BREATHING DOWN YOUR NECK?

Okay, so this one, can be applied to life in two very separate but equally important aspects. Number one, standing in queues. Much like cars, people have to know how close is okay and how close is not.

Second, is not to be clingy. Know when to step back and give people space, which applies to boyfriends, girlfriends, best friends and that guy/girl you met yesterday.

NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE DOING

"Pretend that no one around you can drive," We are constantly reminded, just so we're extra careful on the roads. However, when you think about it, this is something we have to face EVERYWHERE.

Do any of us really know what we're doing as we race on the highway of life? Let me answer that for you. We don't. We're all winging it.

I'm sure most of you have met someone in your life who has affected your life negatively; thrown you off track. Well, these people exist both on the road, swerving like complete maniacs with no care for anyone's safety, and in life. Solution? Avoid them.

So there you go! A few lessons you can pick up from driving school that might help you get through life too. Drive safe!

Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious and has no sense of time. Send help at erum.noor1998@gmail.com

