

Uncooperative

To be un-cooperative is to be unwilling or unable to work with another (or others) toward a common goal. This goal can be of any sort: working together to install a fence around our backyards; polling for our political party; forming a posse to track down illegal immigrants. In such cases co operation is likely to be the only way to get the job done: the manpower or ingenuity or bravado assembled. An un-cooperative person—quite possibly for good reasons-- will withhold his or her co-operation.

Examples

1 Ferguson, Missouri

The race riots in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, could only be calmed by the co-operation of several constituencies—the Afro-American community, the city Administration, the justice system. Ultimately co-operation, among these constituencies, was achieved by the enforcement of a curfew, the mutual desire to control the damage brought on by disorder, and the slowly grinding machinery of the law. One group, however, remained counter cooperative in the playing out of this costly drama: the looters who took advantage of the Ferguson chaos to break store windows, steal merchandise, and vandalize the property especially of those, the Afro-American retailers, who were innocent victims of the struggle. Were these looters consciously aware of the obstacles they were putting in the way of justice and peace? Or was their explosive self-interest all they needed to justify un-cooperative behavior?

2 Uncooperation in marriage

In marriage, I find, there are many subtle ways to be un-cooperative, and many of them relate to the small gestures of revenge which marriage can provoke. Let's say my wife and I have had an argument. Some hours have passed, and the sparks are long dead, but I harbor a vegetative grudge against her. Let's also say that she asks me to bring up the clean clothes from the basement so that she can iron them. I call up the stairs, that I will do this. In my heart, though, I 'feel' that I will not do this right away. (After all I didn't promise 'when I would do this.')

I let ten minutes, then twenty minutes, pass. No comment from upstairs. (She may be seething quietly. Can't be sure.) When I feel sick of myself, and as though I have used up the sulking privileges I bought myself, I call back 'coming,' and head for the basement to get the clothes.