

She : All these discussions don't help me solve my problem. I need to have a phone. Can you at least agree with me on that?

Him : But why don't you want to have yours fixed?

She: You think that's possible?

Him : Yes - it's a touchscreen - so it can be done.

She : Oh, OK. If I take it to be fixed, it'll cost 130 Euros, just for a screen. Or I could order it - which will cost 40 Euros - and do it myself.

Him : Or by someone you know.

She : You know how to do it?

Him : No, but I can probably find out!

She : Oh no - that's it, it's too complicated. And I can't to wait. My phone is what I use to work. I have to be contactable anytime. Look, I really don't want anything bad to happen to our planet, but I simply must go and buy a phone.

Him : So, one more phone.

She : This time, I have no choice!

Him : You always have a choice.

She : That's easy for you to say.

Him : The environmental impacts are too great. Among your old phones, there has to be one that you can get working again.

She : No, I prefer to buy one.

Him : Do you know what a product life cycle is?

She : Yes - I buy it, I use it, and when it doesn't work anymore, or doesn't work as well, I throw it into my bag.

Him : Well, that's your modus operandi. What I'm talking about is life cycles, issues of traceability, social justice, and fair pricing.

She : So I have to go back to college just to understand all of that?

Him : I can teach you.

She : That's just it. I am starting to ask myself questions.

Him : About what?

She : I don't know...what I should and shouldn't buy.

Him : That's good - you're starting to be more critical.

She : Yes, but what should I do ?

Him : Well, you just have to change some habits and adopt some new reflexes.

She : But you know very well that one's habits are basically second nature.

Him : What's important is that we ensure that we don't waste resources, and that we care about what happens to our products when we no longer need them.

She : That's what you mean by life cycle.

Him : Yes. The product cycle - the stages of its life - are a series of steps from extracting the raw materials to the end of the product's life. And that includes manufacturing, packaging, transport and consumption by businesses and households. All this is the basis for the eco-design of products. Now, we are going even further with the service economy.

She : And I am supposed to care about all of that?

Him : Yes, and whoever supplies the product to you should have a minimum of information about the sector. Besides, the duty of care is being regulated. You're a conscious consumer - what do you think about when you buy a product?

She : I think about where and how the product was made, and whether it is recyclable. That's it, isn't it?

Him : Yes.

She : And the price, of course.

Him : To buy responsibly, you have to be able to choose a product or a service according to the social and environmental goals you've set for yourself.

She : And how will I recognise them?

Him : There are labels, but it's true that it's difficult to know the difference between products that are green, organic, ethical, fair labour, fair trade - I admit that it's not easy.

She : No, it certainly isn't. To be completely honest, even if I am a bit of a greenie, I make choices based mostly on price, because if a product has all the right social and environmental qualities, but at three times the price, I don't think that it will be successful. And anyway, there's no way to be sure it even has those qualities.

Him : Yes, but we have to care about social and environmental qualities all the same, because one day humanity will have to pay the price for it.

She : That's a real conundrum.

Him : It's a way of doing something for the planet and for everyone's benefit.

She : But it's still the businesses that manufacture these products for the public, so they should ask themselves the right questions.

Him : Yes, but you understand that if the customer thinks only about the price, it won't be easy for companies to prioritise sustainable development initiatives. And yet, that is the fair price.

She : But of course.

Him : So, each of us needs to be vigilant. And we should pay more attention to what we're offered, especially if that allows us to save, such as, for example, no longer buying just the product, but rather buying the use of that product.