

Bye-Bye, Attention Span!

I generally avoid watching 'Classic MTV', Alf, The A-Team, any of the Nightmare on Elm Street movies, and Miami Vice. Why? I find that the memories, feelings, and associations that I have from my childhood are better left to *how I remember them*. Revisiting childhood television and movies usually leaves me dismayed, critical, and disregarding my fond childhood associations.

I usually wake up at 5 a.m., stumble to the coffee pot, plant myself on the couch, and turn on the news. I followed my routine this morning, yet my television turned on to 'Classic MTV' instead of the usual news channel. I still do not understand how my television decides what channel it will be when turned on; it can be like a Cracker Jacks box prize first thing in the morning. This morning my television greeted me with a welcomed surprise, 'Jump Around' by House of Pain. I felt that teen angst and energy anew...or maybe it was the caffeine kicking in.

...and then Alanis Morissette was next. Uggggg. Again? I haven't seen one of her videos in years; no need to because the 1990's played her music, along with Hootie & the Blowfish, to ad nauseam. However, I found myself sitting through the video, as was normal 'back in the day'.

That is what we did. We watched MTV waiting for our favorite videos to come on. And we sat through more videos that we *didn't like* than watch those that we did. We literally sat...we didn't get on our cell phones because they didn't exist. We would push the 'previous' button, on our remote controls, **only** if we had 1. A television that accepted a remote; and 2. We had a remote. It was a 50/50 shot depending on whose house we were at.

We no longer have to sit through videos that we don't like, or rather *anything* that we don't want to watch- thanks to YouTube. I watch my two sons click through YouTube videos at a rapid clip. My oldest explained to me that he clicks through a video if it doesn't capture his attention in the first 8 seconds (I don't know why '8' seconds). We also have DVRs that afford us the opportunity to watch only what we want.

Advances in technology have trained us to expect 'the speed of now' as the norm. We no longer have patience. This paradigm has seeped into every aspect of our lives- consider the self-checkout lanes at Walmart. This technology became wide-spread in 2013. Was it implemented to replace human employees...or was it implemented to allow customers to have control in the outcome of the shopping experience, much like controlling the outcome of a viewing experience (as outlined above)?

I only use the self check-out. It drives me insane to wait in lines- from slow employees to the person in front of me having a thousand coupons or five forms of payment. I observe 'the speed of now' phenomena, yet I am not immune to it. It gives me more control over my time and the outcomes of my actions. However, is it creating an artificial sense of self-importance? Of course it is. I checked-in to Chipotle at 2 p.m. yesterday on Facebook...so everyone would know what I was doing and where I was. And nobody clicked 'like' or commented on my post; what is wrong with my hundreds of followers and friends? They must be selfish...