

Living life through the drive-thru

Business



In the 1920's when Henry Ford invented the assembly line based on efficiency, quickness, and accuracy, the culture of the 20's was concurrently developing the same characteristics of living life; emerging as a fast paced and mass-produced manufactured society. The " Drive Thru" as it was named, was a product developed in this era; pioneered by Americans whose goal was to make depositing and withdrawing money from the bank quicker without having to be face-to-face with a bank teller. Today, the Drive-Thru has become a social phenomenon utilized by many fast food chains across 21st century America whose aim is to quickly feed the numerous orders of customers. From working at my local McDonald's, I have recognized that modern Americans, constricted by the current state of their culture, living under unnatural time constraints, employ the use of the Drive-Thru at restaurants to fuel their bodies that are traveling at warp speed. With little time to relax, or sit down for a meal alone or with their family, the speediness of the Drive-Thru serves the numerous customers with these predispositions.

By using the Drive-Thru at restaurants, society has become addicted to the speed provided and as a result substituting quality interactions and memories with family and friends for living life at a fast pace. Modern Asian culture contrasts to our quick pace of life; the simplicity of Chinese culture is one to commend; they treasure every moment of their lives; different than our throw-a-way wrappers of a meal that we bought, as a ' quick-fix' for our hunger. Chinese culture does not live based on time constraints or due dates; but time suggestions that are ever-changing, as there is no set in stone schedule. While we are marching to a drum beating rapidly without

rest, China's culture lets the individual be their own drummer; controlling the pace they choose to march. Linda Buzell, a psychologist, says that by trying to always speed ourselves up instead of pacing ourselves more naturally, we are making ourselves "completely frazzled and out of synch with our deepest selves," which affects the quality of our life and personal relationships (Altnet. org).

In China, when families are sitting down for a meal at their dinner table, Americans are pulling into a line at the Drive-Thru to place an order to go. One may say that this sharp contrast between both cultures is due to economic differences; however, Chinese culture is not very different than us in that aspect. While in recent years China has come to surpass the U. S. in production rates and also in scores for education, the Chinese still find time to spend time with their families. And while Chinese society has staunchly opposed fast food, restaurants like McDonald's, Burger King, Domino's, and KFC have found their way into Chinese marketplaces; the stereotypical American CEOs have achieved moderate success. The Drive-Thru was introduced to the Chinese with the establishment of numerous McDonald's in China; who after opening there in 1992 started to gain momentum. But the introduction of the Drive-Thru to a culture that had never used a Drive-Thru, whom was not as savvy as their American fast food all-star contemporaries. This required teaching the Chinese the purpose of the Drive-Thru as corporate McDonalds began to witness Chinese customers buying food through the Drive-Thru, parking their car, and walking into that McDonalds to eat their food (CNN Report- McDonalds).

Chinese culture simply did not understand the procedure of the Drive-Thru; they could not comprehend why anyone would want to be eating in their car or taking their food to be eaten at a different destination. The habitual Chinese who only see only appropriate to sit and eat, even by themselves, shows how their relaxation and steady pacing differs from our hastiness, and proving that even an industrial society like China, we should also find time to sit down and relax and savor life while we eat. Americans commonly agree that one of the reasons they cannot find time to sit down and eat is because of the immense workload and obligations they have from their jobs. A study from the American Psychological Association found that 70% of Americans were stressed from work (aolnews. com). The survey also asked whether if the stress they reported was impacting them negatively, and all who reported stress said, ' yes'.

So if most Americans agree that they don't like living as if they were rushing to achieve at a quick pace instead of dedicating deep thought to their work, why then are we always operating in a state of hyper mode? We are willing to give up our quality time with families for what purpose? The ' workaholic' as it is named, I doubt, is an aspiration very few want to achieve. We live in a world where our leisure time is devoid from the hours we spend dedicated to work, school, and other high energy activates. It only makes sense why American culture has shifted from having home cooked and family meals to eating in the car while in transportation to other activities. The Drive- Thru, on inspection, sees many of these time compressed types of people; Americans who have their plates full of activities that are missing true quality in their life and are using that cheap hamburger to feed an unhappy

body. The Drive-Thru, a symbol of American culture is destroying the quality of our lives that people like Henry Ford sought to improve by making technological advances to better society. Ironically, the same product he created is furthering the decadence in the quality of humanity when we use the Drive-Thru.

We are sacrificing quality for quantity and speed; and as a result, Americans are throwing away experiences with friends and family during mealtimes for fast food on the go. We are quickly speeding through our lives just as fast as it takes to drive through the Drive-Thru, and as I've noticed, becoming a less unemotional and unhappy society full of rushed and overstressed individuals.