

1. 40 Years Ago, Sony's Walkman Changed Music Listening

If you have an iPod or a phone that plays music, the Sony Walkman may look like ancient history. But when it came out forty years ago, it completely changed how people listened to music.

Before the Walkman came out, there wasn't really a good portable way to listen to music. Small portable radios were common, but they didn't sound good and usually came with just a small earphone that went in one ear.

There were boomboxes – large music players which sounded good and could be turned up loud. But they were huge and heavy. And almost any way someone could listen to music meant that everyone around them would have to listen to their music, too.

On July 1, 1979, Sony introduced a product it called the “Walkman”. The “walk” part of the name was important, because it meant that you could listen to your own music as you walked around. These days, we are very used to that idea, but in 1979, it was pretty special.

Another thing that was special about the Walkman was how good it sounded. Compared to the headphones we have now, the quality wasn't great. But back then, the sound amazed people. It almost felt like the music was playing inside your head. The first Walkman actually allowed you to plug in two sets of headphones, so that users could share their music with a friend.

The Walkman cost about \$200. Many people thought it wouldn't sell very well because it couldn't record music. They were wrong. The Walkman was hugely popular. Soon other companies were imitating Sony's device. But no matter who made the device, most people kept using the name “Walkman”.

On a phone or other music player today, you might have hundreds or thousands of songs. If you stream music, you might be used to playing any song you want at any time.

The selection on the Walkman was much more limited. The Walkman played cassette tapes. Just like people make playlists today, back then, people began to make “mix tapes” – cassette tapes filled with the songs they wanted to hear.

Most tapes were 60 to 90 minutes long. One side of the tape played for half that time. The tape needed be taken out and turned over to play the other side. If you wanted to go to a certain song, you would need to wind or rewind through the rest of the tape to get to the song you wanted to hear.

But at the time, most people didn’t mind. The Walkman offered people a way to listen to their own music whenever they wanted and wherever they wanted.

Over the years, Sony updated the Walkman as technology changed. But the cassette Walkman was its biggest success. And it started the trend of “personal” music that led to the iPod, the iPhone, and the other music-playing devices we use today.

From: <https://www.timeforkids.com/>

2. **My First Baseball Game**

I remember everything about my first Cubs game, although it was two years ago. My uncle came to take my sister and I on a Saturday in spring, a bright sunny day. He drove a great distance from Indiana to Chicago, but we did not travel in his car to Wrigley Field. We traveled by train to the ballpark because he said traffic would be challenging.

He was right about how crowded it would be; in fact when we arrived it was so crowded that it was difficult to walk from the train. I was only 10, not very tall at all, so it was hard to see over all the people who crowded the sidewalk. Finally, we got to the entrance and then we went to our seats after we handed in our tickets. We had tickets that were for seats far back and it seemed like I climbed about 300 steps to get to them! When we got there I realized that even though we were at the upper level, I could see everything clearly, the entire field! This expansive view was much better than watching it on TV.

Then the game started and everyone cheered when the Cubs took the field. This really was going to be a great experience! So much better than watching it on TV. The man next to me said, “This is going to be the year. They are playing really well.”

My uncle said to him, “Let’s hope this is the one.” But then he whispered to me, “I think he is over-confident, we’ll have to wait and see. I am optimistic but remember last year? They started the season winning and then they had a long losing streak.”

“Hey, Hey, Hey!” The Cub batter hit a ball that sizzled all the way to the wall.

Just then I heard “Hot dogs!” “Peanuts!” I looked and saw a vendor with a big tray hanging from his shoulders full of hot dogs in plastic wrap and bags of peanuts.

“Three hot dogs,” my uncle shouted, and he gave the man next to us \$6 to pass along down to the man with the hot dogs. He sent back three steaming hot dogs with condiments.

“This is great,” I said to my uncle as I started to munch on my hot dog.

“Not so great, Jerome,” he said. “We just struck out. This inning is not a winning one.”

While I had been watching the hot dogs, the batter had misjudged the pitches and swung at them. “Baseball is a game of predicting,” my uncle said. “The batter has to predict what the trajectory of the ball will be and determine if it will be a good one to swing at or if it’s going to be a mistake. There’s no certainty, it’s a guess; the batter has seconds to make that decision.”

It continued that way for the rest of the game - us enjoying the food, and my uncle saying “maybe next time” each time a player misjudged the pitch and returned to the bench. We purchased peanuts, we even got another hot dog and I believe I had never eaten such delicious hot dogs. We’d have hope every time a batter started out, and then were disappointed as one by one they struck out and retired back to the bench. Still, it was a remarkably pleasant day with great food, fine weather and special time with my uncle. The final score was 7 to 0. It was nine innings of hoping and then losing. We were disappointed by the result but delighted in the food and fascinated with the way each batter attempted to get a hit. “Those batters really are determined. They never give up,” my sister said. “And they all help each other. When they missed, they went back to their team and everyone told them it would be ok next time.”

“Tomorrow, they’ll win. I’m certain!” one person exclaimed. “Definitely,” another replied. “The pitcher tomorrow is outstanding, they’ll reverse course then.”

When we were returning, I asked my uncle, “Why was everyone so optimistic when the score was 0 today—how can they predict a winning performance tomorrow?”

“That’s what it means to be a Cubs fan: we believe in tomorrow. When they win, it’s the best and if they lose we expect it will get better, even though experience may tell us it won’t. Every year, we hope; every game we hope and we don’t abandon hope. That’s loyalty. It’s about supporting your team no matter what; Cubs fans are loyal.”

Felicia said, “I see what you mean. Even when they struck out, they stuck together. They’re like a big family. Thanks for taking us and thanks for being loyal to our family.”

3. **Get Pet-Ready**

Bringing home a pet can be a purr-fect experience or a cat-astrophe. You need to be prepared! Here, we break down the costs of animal companionship.

Are you thinking about welcoming a dog, cat, rabbit or hamster into the family? First, ask yourself: am I ready for such a big responsibility?

“You are your pet’s world,” explains Amy Nichols, a vice president at the Humane Society of the United States. “They look forward to you coming home from school every day because all they want is to spend time with you.”

But spending time isn’t the only commitment you make when you adopt an animal. You also have to spend money. If your parents are on board, consider these costs.

According to the Humane Society, the average cost of adopting an animal from a shelter is around \$150 depending on where you live. While that may sound like a lot, the cost is far less than you’d pay a pet store or a breeder. Plus, you’re providing a home for an animal in need. The adoption fee often includes your animal’s first shots. It may also include surgery to neuter or spay the animal, to prevent it from having unwanted puppies or kittens. If they’re not included, these medical services can cost between \$100 and \$200 each.

Families can also expect to spend between \$200 and \$300 for supplies: like food, a leash and a bed. In all, your family should plan for an initial investment of \$400 to \$500 to bring a pet home.

The costs don’t end there. Pets are a long-term commitment. Dogs can live 15 years, and cats can live 20. Families should expect to spend between \$1,000 and \$2,000 a year for vet visits, shots, food, and all the basics, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).

You might encounter additional costs, like paying a pet sitter to look after your dog when you go on vacation or enrolling it in obedience courses if it needs training. You might also want to purchase pet health insurance. It ranges in cost from \$25 to \$45 per month, but covers large vet bills if your pet is in an accident or gets a serious disease.

Another price you'll pay for pet ownership is your time. Pet duties may cut into your time for doing things you love, like playing video games or hanging out with friends. You can always enlist help. If you welcome an animal into your home, consider creating a daily schedule of responsibilities for each family member, recommends Rena Lafaille. She is a director at the ASPCA's Adoption Center. "Work with your family to ensure your pet has constant access to fresh water, is being fed appropriately, and is getting enough exercise and outdoor time," Lafaille says. "It can be helpful to create a checklist or chart to keep track."

So, do you still want that dog, cat, rabbit, or hamster? Remember, having an animal can be great fun, but it also requires time and money. Be sure to do the math before you make a move to take home a four-legged friend

From: <https://www.timeforkids.com/>

4. **My Sister, the Soldier**

"My sister is a soldier. I remember when she came home and told our mother that she was going into the army. My mother said, "You're too young. It's too hard."

My sister Darlene said, "I'm 18. That's old enough to go. And if I go I'll be able to get a better job. Right now, all I can do is work part-time. I need a real job. I need a good one. This one isn't going anywhere."

My mother cried. She said, "There is a war. You might have to go there to fight."

I said, "Don't worry. They don't send girls to fight in wars. If it was me that would be different."

Darlene said, "Don't worry. I'm careful."

But my mother stayed worried. My sister went to training camp. When she came back, she looked happy. I asked her what it was like.

"Well, we have to get up very early. I get up at 5:00 every morning. Then we do exercises. Then we drill a lot. You have to be on time. You have to follow all the directions. I like the people in my unit. They help each other out."

My mother said, "I'm proud of you. But I'm still worried."

"Don't worry, mom. If I do get sent to the war I'll be careful."

My sister went to war. Her unit was sent to Iraq. I had no idea where that was. But I looked it up on a globe in the school library. Iraq is on the other side of the world. My sister bought us a computer before she left. She showed us how to use it to send email. I'm so glad she did that. We can send notes to her on it. She sends us back a note. She tells us about the weather and the people. Here's what she put in one note.

"It's hot here. We have to wear heavy clothes, though. They are to keep us safe. Most of the people here are very nice. And the soldiers are great friends. Don't worry. I'm being careful. See you in September."

She would end every note that way—see you in September. But then September came. Then she wrote to us, "We have to stay longer. I'm not sure how soon I'll be back. But I'm being careful."

My mother went on the email every day for the next week and didn't get a message. She was getting more and more worried. Then she got a note. "I'm fine. They sent us on a trip. Sorry I couldn't email. Don't worry. I'm being careful."

So it went on. And we waited. I worried, too. I would see news about the war on TV. It looked dangerous. Sometimes I would see that my mother was crying.

October went by. Then November. Then it was December. My mother bought some presents for my sister. She mailed them to her. She said, “I really wish Darlene could be here for Christmas.” Every time the phone rang or someone knocked on the door, she hoped it might be Darlene coming home by surprise. But she didn’t get her wish. So Christmas was kind of sad.

Then on New Year’s eve, the doorbell rang. We ran to open it. My mother said later she was a little afraid every time the doorbell rang that it might be someone to tell her bad news, that there was a problem with Darlene. But this was the opposite. This was the best news. It was Darlene! We’ll have a really happy new year now.

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5. Museums Want Art Lovers to Take Their Time

Today, museums around the world are holding “Slow Art Day” in order to encourage their visitors to take their time and appreciate art more deeply.

In today’s world of fast-paced games and apps, flashy websites, and short, funny videos, people are spending less and less time on things. For example, research has shown that the average visitor spends just 15 seconds on a website before moving on to other things.

But the internet is a huge and busy place, with millions of sites to choose from. You might expect people to slow down a bit more when they’re in museums full of great works of art. But you’d be wrong.

Several studies have shown that the most common amount of time for people to spend looking at a piece of art is ten seconds. Many people may spend more time, but not much more – the average is about 28 seconds. At the Tate Modern museum in London, it’s even worse. People there spend an average of just eight seconds on each art work.

And in that short period of time, the visitors are also managing to do one other important thing – take selfies!

In recent years museums have been working to change this behavior. Today, over 170 museums around the world are celebrating “Slow Art Day”. They are asking their visitors to spend at least 5-10 minutes looking at just one work of art.

Slow Art supporters believe that when visitors take more time looking at and studying the work of art, they appreciate it more. By spending time, they are able to notice details about the work that they would miss with just a quick glance.

Studying a work of art for more time can also help people gain a better understanding of the artist’s ideas and what the artist went through to create the work.

Phil Terry, who started Slow Art Day, says, “By slowing down, it helps us to see art in a new way...it will blow your mind!”

Most of the museums taking part in Slow Art Day are choosing just a few works for their visitors to focus on. Some of the museums are offering chances for visitors to talk about the artworks afterward and share their ideas.

Having the museums support slow art is important. Often when people visit a museum with lots of art, they feel like they must see everything in the museum. They go around like they are checking things off of a list.

When people view art this way, slow art supporters believe, they aren't really seeing it. As one expert told the New York Times, "You can't really see a painting as you're walking by it."

In the past, Slow Art events have been held on all seven continents. Though Antarctica won't be taking part today, Slow Art events can still be found in museums in cities across Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. A list can be found on the Slow Art Day website.

From: <https://www.timeforkids.com/>

6. The carrot, the egg, and the coffee bean

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling.

It seemed that, as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans.

She let them sit and boil without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl.

Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the young woman replied. The mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened! The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water. "Which are you?" the mother asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?" Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong but, with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit but, after a death, a breakup, or a financial hardship, does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I

bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart? Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavour.

If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?

From: <http://www.rogerdarlington.me.uk/stories.html#Story7>