

Glancing at the clock with anxiety

As each minute passes

My chest gets tighter

My eyes burn

From the tears forming

Meal timing has been an aspect of my recovery that I've have been trying to work on since I entered treatment at 17. What a silly concept it is to be controlled by a clock, I can recognize that at all times of the day except for one. That one time are the times where I am in a panicked state when the inner voice is yelling whatever it wants to at that specific time:

"It's too late to eat that"

"Lunch can't be past \_\_\_\_\_"

"If you eat now you will have to restrict later"

"Fine, you can have lunch but you won't have your snack"

"Don't eat now, you are going to bed soon"

"Your timing is all thrown off, your eating times will be way too close together"

The list can go on and on, finding the tiniest speck of doubt and catapulting it into a full blown internal war.

The truth is, there are certain times when my 'timing' is thrown off because of my own fault, underestimating time or whatever other excuse I have. However, there are times when life doesn't go according to plan, and that can drive my anxiety through the roof. I can't count the times on my fingers that I've heard, "you can't control everything, but you can control the way you respond". In a moment when I'm about to meltdown and go against everything I know I need to do, hearing that would usually cause me to roll my eyes and become more upset.

Thinking about it rationally, there is a reason that it is repeated so often; because it's true. As much as I hate to admit it (and my eating disorder hates it even more), going about your day according to the clock isn't normal. Sure, the clock is helpful to keep track of time, but it's not

there to tell you whether you can or can't eat, whether you 'should' or be 'allowed' to be hungry, or whether there has been a perfect and acceptable amount of time between meals or snacks. What if you have lunch and are still hungry? What if your lunch break at work is later than normal? It can be easy to convince yourself that you or the world will explode and you should punish your body because timing is off. Why should your body suffer? It won't magically not be hungry because you say it shouldn't, you aren't smarter than your own system that has kept you alive all these years. I express this concern to my dietitian often and she always replies with, "you could eat all your food for one day at midnight and nothing would happen to your body". So worrying about whether you have the ideal amount of time between your last meal is a waste of time, your body is smart. I myself need to remember this, and if you feel the same way, you aren't alone.

Your body isn't a clock

Your body is smarter than you are

The "facts" that seem so real about time and how it relates to food are myths

Don't be fooled by the fitness influencers on instagram spewing nutrition information

They don't have the qualified education to do so

e.g.