

IN TIME

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The start of all life is called the beginning of *time*. Time is defined as a system of those sequential relations that any event has to any other, as past, present, or future; indefinite and continuous duration regarded as that in which events succeed one another. It is belonging to the present life.

The Bible says that God created the Earth in seven days. It is estimated that the Earth has existed for 4.54 billion years. The concept of time has existed since... well, it *is* existence. Everything is measured by time, and if it cannot be measured by time then it simply cannot be. If time stands still that can only mean one thing: you are out of time. That, we can assume, is why they call it a *lifetime*.

I was born at 6:43 p.m. on April 27, 1995. My time of death, although as indefinite as the notion of time, will be recorded in the same way. All that lay between is run by the moving hands of the numbered face around my wrist, on the wall, measuring my life by the millisecond.

1998 – Time is a conundrum. One hand moves quickly, always in motion, knowing that there is no time to stop, to slow down. It does laps around its' counterparts. It is the driving force behind the propelling of time; without this hand, time would not move forward. There is no rest for this hand, no stop. In comparison, the minute and hour hands are slow, for they have time to rest.

My dad was always in motion. He worked relentlessly to support the young family of four he had built, running from the first to second to third job just to make ends meet. I, however, was three years old, and to me time seemed at the grace of the hour hand. Time moved slowly, leisurely. The days were long, and the nights were no different. My dad was gone for hours on end, never home.

My mother tells me about a little silver picture frame that I would carry around, containing a sole picture of my hard-working father. His kind blue eyes looked out at me in an unbroken stare, as if saying “don't worry, I'll be home soon.” But what is the definition of “soon”? To him

that could mean tomorrow morning, while from my perspective that was nowhere near *soon*. So this image was my comfort, my substitute. During meals I would place the silver frame upright in the spot where my dad should have been. He would sit calmly, smiling as always, and enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner in the same fashion. I would make sure to include him in conversation, but he never replied. He simply gave me the same solemn look, and that was enough.

This frame went everywhere with me, and was therefore stained, rusty and old. It had endured more than I'm sure most frames are made to. Finally, while playing at the park with me, the glass in the frame shattered into a million salt-like pieces. My mother was by my side in an instant, checking me fervently for cuts. She collected the frame and its' loose image and put them in her bag; I would never see them again.

Time didn't speed up, and it seemed like ages between the quaint moments I would have with my dad at home. He was tired (I could tell by his eyes, which were definitely more worn than the ones comforting me in the picture) but yet he would give up his time for rest to be with my older brother and I. We wouldn't do much, but those moments always seemed to go too quickly. It was as if his perpetual motion would infect me, like when the second hand passes over the 12 on a clock, forcing the minute hand to move in turn. I was suddenly forced to move with him. When he was around it was clearer than ever that time was passing.

2005 – Time is forceful. It never stops and is constantly reminding you of that, letting you know it is in control. Life is a battle against the clock. Hurry, move faster, get more done, make more money – you don't want to waste *time*.

There is an exponential amount of time to an eight-year-old. I always had too much time, it seemed. I would dream of being older, falling in love, getting a job, having a house and creating a family. All of these things would come with time, I knew, but it was so far away. My parents often said I had a little world inside my mind that I would go to; which I guess was true. I was never in the present. I lived my life in my head, in that little world I had created, and it was called *the future*. Time needed to speed up. I wanted to be older, more mature, and more responsible. But when do eight-year-olds ever know what they want?

My dad, meanwhile, wanted to live in the moment completely. He spent so much of my younger years working that any chance he

had to spend time with me he wanted to stop the clock and enjoy it. He would not think of the future, he would not think of the past. He was fully and splendidly wrapped in the present, soaking in every ounce of each second.

On my eighth birthday my dad took me to lunch, just him and I; he wanted some one-on-one time with me. As a gift, my dad handed me a small, silver ring. He started to explain how time was moving quickly, and before I could grow up too much he wanted to make me a promise. He promised to always be there for me, no matter what happens. He promised to always love me, to always support me, and to always respect me. In turn, he said, I was to promise him the same. It was a symbol of our relationship, of how our mutual love and respect would be unbreakable for the remainder of time.

2010 – Time is its own entity. No one controls time; instead it controls you. “The right place at the right time” – it is up to time to determine your future. Of course you control your moves, but whether those are the right moves, only time can tell.

I met Nate when I was fifteen. We met at a community college, which we both had just started attending – as we were years younger than the average student, we instantly gravitated towards each other, and quickly became good friends. He was tall, had dark hair and a young, bright face. At the time, of course, I didn’t know he would become the man I love today. I wasn’t even looking for any prospects. School and work had me moving nonstop, busier than ever. I had no time to date, no time to be still and unproductive. But time doesn’t take that into consideration. I was in the right place (the right class, to be specific) at the right time, and so was he.

We didn’t begin dating until a year after we met. When what we had become a relationship, my dad had a small panic attack. He acted uneasy whenever Nate was around (even though he had been around long before as a friend – and that apparently was fine!) Things were clearly changing quickly, and my aging father was having difficulties with that. When we finally talked about it, he came up with one resolute answer concerning his discomfort: time is moving too quickly.

2014 – Time is deceiving. Although time is supposedly a fixed measurement that cannot be altered, it is compelling how it speeds up with each passing year, and suddenly the time you had been daydreaming about as a child is *now*.

Suddenly I find myself about to turn twenty, and with this comes so much more; so much that I would never have imagined to be my life a mere five years ago. I am about to graduate with my bachelor's degree in a matter of months. I have a serious boyfriend who will be graduating around the same time and moving back to Washington (he is currently in North Dakota training to be an emergency rescue helicopter pilot). I see marriage in the near future, a home and a family of my own. And suddenly I am an adult. How did this happen?

You have too much time until life blindsides you on a random day and wakes you up from the sleep you've been walking through life in. Here I am, thrust into adulthood, and I see myself as the same young, naïve child that I was a mere decade ago. I try to convince myself otherwise, knowing in full well that I have a job, I have debt, I have school, and I have responsibilities that my parents never wished upon me. Others mistake me for someone much older, someone in their twenties. How can this be? Are they seeing someone other than the same unsuspecting face I see in the mirror every day?

My dad still sees what I see. He sees his little girl, the one who carried a picture frame around with her at all hours of the day. Now I carry an iPhone, on which is not a picture of the man who raised me, but of another man I love. My dad accepts this with difficulty. I can see him struggling to let go of me, let me be in the care of someone else. I fidget with the ring on my finger as I remember the mutual promise we have.

I wish I had more time. This phrase is said every day. People are run by time and wish to defy it. We want time to slow down; we want a breath. We spend our days working hard, slaving to make a brighter future for our loved ones as well as ourselves. But why do we always look to the future? My dad lived in the present whenever he could. I never have, and enjoyed spending my time in the futuristic world inside my mind as a young girl. But now that I am driven so strictly by time I find myself wishing to break free of the future, what is to come. I want to be in the present. I want to be right here, right now. After all, aren't we also always reflecting on the past, thinking about the good times? We hardly realize it when the future becomes the present, and the present the past.

So let's not focus on the movement of time. Instead, let's focus on those moments that we wish time would stand still.