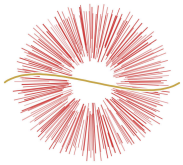
Should Clocks

What they are and how to identify them



WHAT IT IS

Should Clock

Internalized urgency
that masquerades as truth.

IT HAS TWO PARTS

the timing

Now, when your own rhythm says not now.

the knock

A verdict that you're wrong, measured against someone else's expectation, even when your way is right for you.

EXAMPLES

A Should Clock usually sounds like the truth.

I should tackle my inbox *now. I have the time, so it's wrong not to.*
LOUD AND IMMEDIATE

I should be making money *asap. Why haven't I figured it out yet?*
A HUM THAT'S ALWAYS THERE

The part in red is the Should Clock.

HOW TO IDENTIFY

Three steps help you hear a Should Clock.

URGENCY

1 Hear the timing

Is it loud and immediate, or a hum that's always there?

INTERNALIZED

2 Ask whose expectation it is

It can sound like your own. The tell is usually a bristle underneath.

MASQUERADING AS TRUTH

3 Ask: or else what?

What's a real consequence, now or later, and what's only a verdict?

I should leave for the airport *three hours early. Anything less is careless.*

→ Loud. "Three hours early."

→ My family's. I bristle.

→ Missing the flight is real. "Careless" is only the knock.

Real pressure has truth in it, and a real consequence. That part isn't a Should Clock. A rule of thumb, not a diagnosis.

You can hear it without following it.

→ I'll leave in time. Just not three hours early.

Name it, then move to your own rhythm.

I hope this helps with the next Should Clock you hear.

Named by Erika Troia, February 2026. The story of the term: einmotion.co/should-clocks

Finding what's your own rhythm and what's just avoidance is outside the scope of this page.

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