BLACK AND WHITE THINKING

We all have thoughts. Some are helpful and some are not. By being aware of our thoughts and identifying which are true or not as well as which to engage with we can begin to have a more positive relationship with food and our bodies.

One very common thought pattern in regards to eating is known as 'black and white thinking'. We do A LOT of black and white thinking when it comes to food.

When someone is engaging in black and white thinking they will label certain foods as "good" or "bad", "healthy" or "naughty", "clean or "junk food" and usually feel guilty or anxious if they eat something that they consider to be wrong or bad. Black and white thinking can sound like:

- I feel like eating chocolate, but I'll have some 'nice cream' instead.
- Il can eat this but if I do, I'm going to have to work it off tomorrow
- I blew it today, that's ok, I'll start on my diet tomorrow.
- I already ate a cookie today, I've blown, I might as well keep going

This back and forth thinking can be really friggen exhausting emotionally! Have you ever had thoughts like this in regards to food? If you're like me, I'm sure you've thought this way at some point in your life.

But how does labelling foods in this way influence our eating patterns? Does it influence your enjoyment of the food? I'd say 'absolutely right?

But what happens when we mix black and white together. What colour do we get? Grey. Ah… I love this grey area! Maybe if we listened to our bodies AND our brains our thoughts would be a bit more balanced. It might sound a little like:

- I kind of want something crunchy and salty. I think I'll have some carrots and some chips.
- Pizza sounds good, but I'm craving veggies too. I think I'll have a salad with my pizza.
- I feel like being active, but I don't feel like running today. I think I'll go for a walk.

Consider a yo-yo. Well just like yo-yo dieting yo-yos go up and down and so do our thoughts and our body weight when we diet. Our thoughts and weight is either UP or down, right? It doesn't usually stop n the middle.

However, if we drop it right down it might just start to swing a bit, side to side like a pendulum.

When we label foods 'bad' and restrict those foods the yo-yo gets pulled all the way to one side and we can stay here, restricting, eating keto bars, pretending paleo bread tastes just like regular bread. Until one night, you're out to dinner and the waiter shows up with the breadbasket. Eventually, we give in right? And so what happens to the yo-yo? It then swings all the way to the other side.

BLACK AND WHITE THINKING

This is our internal voice that says 'stuff this' I'm eating the whole f'ing basket of bread. I've already ruined it, I might as well keep going. Not only that but when I'm home tonight I'm going to pick up a tub of two of ice cream to top it off. It's ok, I'll just get back to it tomorrow. Then we feel guilty and we do start again tomorrow. Making the yo-yo go back and forth back and forth… for years and years. It's either all or nothing right?

But what if we don't go this far over to the restricting side? We see then that we don't go so far over to the overdoing it side. Eventually, we will find this nice happy middle ground.

Because if you stop pulling the yo-yo, hop off the yo yo dieting cycle, eventually it will stop swinging.

Maybe not straight away, it will take time to lose momentum just like it takes a while to get rid of that diet mentality. But that's what Empowered Eating sets out to do. To help us find this nice little middle ground with a healthy relationship with food without losing our shit. It's possible I promise you!