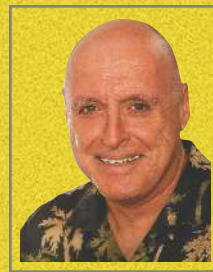


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1047 Worries About Memory Loss are Growing

Where are your keys? If you're driving right now, presumably they're in the ignition. If you're not driving, then I repeat, where are your keys? Have you forgotten? I'm Jerry Roberts and a lot of folks will misplace their keys today. Is that a bad thing, something to make us lie awake, worrying about? We'll get into that, next, on The Extra Point.

I caught a story in the Wall Street Journal about a teacher who was delivering a college seminar to 24 students last week when his mind went blank. He said he'd forgotten the name of his teaching assistant.

"I was embarrassed," said Dr. Grant Shields, who thought he heard students laugh when he said the wrong name, then struggled to recover. "I wish my memory was as good as it used to be."

Dr. Shields is — are you ready? — 32 years old. He's a memory researcher. And he was teaching a class on how stress affects cognition.

When's the last time you had a "senior moment," and are you a senior? Are these things happening more frequently these days?

For many people, it's the forgetting of names of people we know, or maybe it's just the last name. Should this be a major concern?

According to the article and many others I've read, unless this is a regular occurrence, and your forgetfulness is widespread, it might just be that we're expending more cognitive energy these days than we're used to.

Bad news in all its forms has taken a toll on just about everyone, so say the experts, and it's no surprise we can't remember what we had for lunch yesterday.

The article quoted a University of California

neuroscientist, who said, "Our brains are like computers with so many tabs open right now. This slows down our processing power, and memory is one of the areas that falters."

Okay, so there's a lot going on and our basic focus and attention is being pulled in different directions, and we forget. What else contributes to this?

If you've listened to this feature for a while, you might have a good guess what I'll say next. Sleep deprivation causes forgetfulness.

A chronic lack of sleep is a factor in memory issues. Most of us get less than the 7-8 hours of nightly sleep we need. Why is it a surprise when so many people complain of memory loss?

Here's another one you probably won't like. Information overload. We're scrolling our phones all day long, and dumping buckets of data, often totally out of context with what we're doing. Then, you see a face and can't connect up a name to it.

Again, should we worry? Science tells us that memory peaks in our 20s, and declines from that point — but the decline is different for everyone.

There is a positive side to this. First, if you're really worried about your memory, see your doctor. Otherwise, think of three things:

1. Don't freak out about forgetting a name once in a while. This will lead to frustration, worry, and fear. Move on to something else and let your brain work in the background, so to speak. That name may pop into your head.
2. Don't try to do 10 things at once. This cuts back on that information overload.

(Con't.)

3. Calm your brain. Get involved in something else to take your mind off whatever is causing you the worry. Pray, meditate, take a walk, give a hug, have sex, and get that sleep. This clears out the toxins in your brain and will improve mental processing.

Forgetting your keys or an occasional name doesn't mean you're in cognitive free-fall, and it's all downhill from here.

Slow down a bit, and restore your focus. It could make a huge difference.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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