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Remember

I couldn't remember what I did at 3 years old. At 5, 7, 13. I don't remember how it happened or when, but I realized one day that my 'forgetfulness' was affecting my person. Why could I not remember simple details that most did? Why did it take me so long to relate to topics of conversations such as my fondest childhood memory, my favorite family vacation, the best moments with my relatives.

Every year growing up, I would brush off the innate, personal questions and deflect with funny scenarios or popular instances. Yet, I never could pinpoint a scenario specific to me, specific to my upbringing and my individuality that did not include tears on the linen sheets that hugged my bed.

I wanted to talk about my trip to Hawaii with my family and friends, sitting on a recliner drinking from a well-prepared mocktail. I wanted to, but I couldn't. Because it wasn't me. It wasn't real.

But how did I know what was real and what was not? I couldn't and can't remember.

Even as I sit here and write about the nights I would cry myself to sleep, I still can't remember why.

Why couldn't I remember? Was I protecting myself? For what? From who?

Was the absence of these memories the reason why I didn't know who I was? Was my memory fading because of something unspoken I was avoiding? Questions I asked myself to make the silence in my head subside, but they never seemed to spark conversation within my thoughts.

What happened to me? If I could just answer that, I knew I would be set. If I could just remember, I could stop borrowing the lasting memories of others to fill my lost ones. I could stop formulating my own memories based on fleeting images I had seen in my day to day. I could have something that was mine, personal.

Maybe, somewhere along the line, I had learned to adapt to an irrelevant and empty lifestyle in which I put myself on the line to make others smile, but struggled every day to be happy within myself. Maybe that was, is, the root.

Yet I knew that my first step to getting my memories back was to acknowledge that my disconnection was not an anomaly, but a part of me. Instead of trying my best to push it away, I had to own it and realize I had to be aware of the problem.

Coming into my consciousness of knowing that I struggle with remembering has helped me to pursue those memories. To think and to reflect. To grow because I want to know myself instead of simply recalling memories to tell fun stories.

I still struggle, we all do, but I encourage us to keep going and to be kind to ourselves. Be kind to others, but especially to your own being because your personhood is all that you've got for the rest of your life.