Why We’re All Forgetting Things Right Now

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Grant Shields was teaching a college seminar to 24 students last week when his mind went blank. He’d forgotten the name of his teaching assistant.

“I was embarrassed,” says Dr. 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 32 years old. He’s a memory researcher. And he was teaching a class on how stress affects cognition.

Short, temporary instances of forgetfulness—those ‘senior moments’—are happening to more of us more often these days, memory experts say. We’re finding it difficult to recall simple things: names of friends and co-workers we haven’t seen in a while, words that should come easily, even how to perform routine acts that once seemed like second nature.