DAY 09

When Recall Fails: Memory Loss and Silent Labor

Honoring the Unseen Mental Labor

Today's Diary at a Glance

In Day 9, Kimberly explores the reality of cognitive strain, brain fog, and memory loss across her journey with neurodivergence, trauma, and sensory overload. She recounts terrifying moments of sudden disconnect, including staring blankly at a PowerPoint slide during remote work and losing her bearings completely outside a client site in 2009. Her physician compared her brain to an overheated computer running too many demanding tabs at once after surviving immense stress and burnout. Navigating the internal clash between autism and ADHD, Kimberly reveals the silent labor required just to retain simple daily details. While the world praises her ability to architect complex technical systems, she calls for compassion toward the unseen mental toll required to keep the lights on inside.

Key Life Lesson

A cognitive glitch or memory lapse does not signify a lack of intelligence or a personal moral failing. Often, an internal system crash happens because the mind has been silently carrying far too many open tabs under sustained pressure. Practicing true self-stewardship requires honoring that invisible cognitive effort and granting yourself permission to reboot without attaching shame.

Spiritual Reflection

Psalm 103:14

Scripture in Psalm 103:14 reminds us that God remembers our structure and knows our human frailty, holding our identity secure even when our own recall falters. When cognitive strength wanes and thoughts scatter, His unbroken grace remains the steadfast anchor that keeps our spirit fully known.

Moment of Grace

When your thoughts slip away or everyday tasks suddenly feel insurmountable, give yourself permission to pause without harsh self-judgment. Remember that your mind is carrying an extraordinary, unseen workload, and it deserves your softest patience, quietness, and gentle care.

Today's Self-Reflection

1. What silent mental labor have you been expending without giving yourself credit, and what is one "open tab" you can lovingly close today to give your mind room to breathe?

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My Journal

1. If you wish, write down a few of the invisible tasks or thoughts currently running in the background of your mind, acknowledging the energy they quietly consume.
2. If you wish, reflect on a recent moment when brain fog or fatigue caught you off guard, and offer yourself words of understanding rather than criticism.

Prayer & Application

Prayer prompt: If prayer is part of your practice, rest in the comfort that God knows your frame and never forgets who you are, even when your own thoughts feel scattered. Entrust your weary mind to His gentle care, allowing His peace to hold you when your internal resources need time to restore.

Practical takeaway: Identify one mental demand or nonessential task you can intentionally set aside today, giving your mind a designated window of stillness to reboot without guilt.

Reading Circle Discussion

1. Kimberly describes how sensory overload, trauma, and autistic burnout can combine to cause cognitive crashes; how do you typically recognize when your own system is reaching its threshold?
2. In what ways do you navigate the contrast between the capabilities others see and the silent, exhausting labor required to manage daily life behind the scenes?
3. Reflecting on Psalm 103:14 and the assurance that God remembers our frame, how does it comfort you to know that your worth and identity remain anchored even when your memory and faculties feel overwhelmed?

Your written responses belong to you. You may leave any prompt unanswered and decide whether to share anything in a group.

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Read the complete chapter in your published book.

The Diary of a Neurodivergent Black Woman

30 Days of Faith, Identity, Healing, and Becoming · Kimberly J. Lewis, M.Div.

This companion includes manuscript-based summaries, the original questions in Today's Self-Reflection, and newly developed companion exercises. Scripture reference: Psalm 103:14. Source: Approved manuscript · Day 9 · pages 35–38.

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