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Rare form of amnesia causes woman, 32, to wake up thinking she's 15

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One morning in 2008, 32-year-old Naomi Jacobs woke up in a home she didn't recognize, to a son she didn't know, thinking she was 15 years old. Jacobs, who is British, wasn't admitted to a hospital the night prior for any head trauma. Rather, her personal memories disappeared due to a rare form of amnesia called dissociative amnesia, which is induced by stress, BBC reported.

"Initially I don't recognize the room, the bedroom that I've woken up in, the bed that I've woken up in. I jumped out of the bed in shock," Jacobs told the BBC.

According to the Mayo Clinic, dissociative, or psychogenic, amnesia results from emotional shock or trauma. The condition causes a loss of personal memories and autobiographical information but typically only for a brief time.

Jacobs, who details her experience in her new book, "Forgotten Girl," said she thought she was dreaming until she saw her face in the bathroom mirror. Upon waking up, her last memory was of falling asleep the night before in her bunk beds that she shared with her sister as a teen.

While Jacobs recalled tasks pertaining to her automatic memory, like driving a car and dialing certain phone numbers, she didn't remember memories relating to her personal life, such as weddings, death and even giving birth to her 10-year-old son, Leo.

"I was in shock— total shock," Jacobs told the news website of seeing her son after she woke. "Everything from fear to joy from seeing this child that I didn't have any memory of giving birth to, but knew undoubtedly that he was mine because he looked so much like me, to terror of having the responsibility of this small child."

"I was convinced that I was going to fall asleep again that night and wake up in 1992. It wasn't real to me what was happening," she added.

Jacobs said the most commonplace items, from smartphones to digital TV, perplexed her, but she said she is happy to have been given the opportunity to see the world through her younger self's eyes.

"I do feel quite fortunate in that sense because at the age of 15, you imagine where you're going to be at the age of 32, and then to almost wake up 17 years later and see that your life and the world hasn't quite turned out the way you expected it to, but seeing it again all through my new 15-year-old eyes gave me a fresh and new perspective," she told the BBC.

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