

## Nostalgia Increases Self-Continuity

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Certain psychological conditions have the symptom of reducing sufferers' sense of self-continuity. In order to explore possible treatment options for reduced sense of self-continuity, we examined whether nostalgia increases temporarily reduced self-continuity. This paper defines nostalgia as an emotion of sentimental longing for the past, containing a mixture of mostly positive and some bittersweet elements. It has recently been suggested that nostalgia serves certain psychological functions. Nostalgic recollections often focus on interactions with significant others or momentous life events, and so generate a sense of authenticity of self that is experienced by the recaller. Nostalgic recollections also foster the recaller's sense of the relevance of the present physical or psychological situation. These two senses are factors of self-continuity, which is the sense that the individual's self is temporally extended from the past into the present; hence, nostalgia should increase self-continuity.

In Experiment 1, participants' self-continuity was lowered through a scrambled sentence task. Participants unscrambled nine word sets, six of which implied the reduction of participants' self-continuity when unscrambled. After completion of this task, participants' self-continuity was assessed with a questionnaire. Participants then watched a video recording of landscapes. In the nostalgia condition, music evocative of nostalgia was played along with the video. In the positive affect condition, music evocative of positive affect was played along with the video. After watching the video, participants' self-continuity was reassessed.

Participants in the nostalgia condition exhibited increased self-continuity after listening to the nostalgia-evoking music, compared to before listening; participants in the positive affect condition exhibited no difference in self-continuity after listening to the positive affect-evoking music, compared to before listening.

In Experiment 2, participants watched a video recording of changing geometric figures, which was intended to suggest that participants' self was also changing, lowering participants' sense of self-continuity. After watching the video of geometric figures, participants' emotion was manipulated by the landscape video recording's BGM, same as Experiment 1. Participants' self-continuity was then assessed with a questionnaire. Participants in the nostalgia condition exhibited greater self-continuity than participants in the positive affect condition.

Our results suggest that nostalgia increases self-continuity; however, they do not indicate whether self-continuity was reduced in either experiment. We should therefore be cautious in concluding that nostalgia may effectively treat reduced self-continuity.