

## SCIENCE CONFIRMS: NOSTALGIA FULFILLS THE HUMAN NEED TO BELONG

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Your heart had it right all along. Studies show that nostalgia is good for psychological and social wellbeing. Albums and album-making can make people feel more positive, connected and optimistic.

Humans are a social species; we need to feel we belong. In today's increasingly disconnected world, depression and suicide rates are growing as people connect more with technology than one another, are less likely to join civic groups, go to church, spend time with their neighbors and be part of their communities. It's creating a deep, persistent sense of loneliness, which can become chronic and increase the risk of death by up to 30%.

The good news is that it's possible to reverse these trends to help people develop feelings of connection and belonging – scrapbookers do it every day. And now science proves it! Nostalgia has a restorative function and can not only help people feel inspired, youthful and optimistic about the future... it can help them recover from the unhealthy state of loneliness.

To be truly socially connected, people need to have strong and enduring relationships in which they feel valued or needed by others. Albums filled with cherished memories and reminders of great times with friends and family can provide a direct boost to positive mood, self-esteem, feelings of belongingness and a sense of meaning in life.

Modern life is hectic and full of distractions, making it difficult to stop and thoughtfully engage in meaning-making activities. Scrapbooking is an excellent way to create a space in one's life to focus on what's most important. And doing so with others helps promote a meaning-making culture in which people take the time to connect to their pasts and each other. There's a reason scrapbookers call their album-making time "therapy."

Or, as Dr. Routledge puts it, "When people are creating albums, they are actively engaging in a nostalgic exercise, which focuses their attention and motivation on social goals and interests. The scrapbooking activity itself and the community and social bonds this activity can create may offer an especially impactful way to benefit from nostalgia."

There's even more benefit when people make albums with others as a social activity (crop or retreat, anyone?) because not only are they celebrating their connectedness, they're creating meaningful shared memories for future nostalgia. It gets even better... creating albums in a group setting over time helps create and maintain a culture of nostalgia.

And nostalgia is all good; it has been found to promote the thoughts, feelings and actions that lead to a fulfilling social life. Specifically, when people enjoy nostalgia, they not only feel more connected, loved and supported, they feel more socially confident, are more optimistic about their future social life, are more motivated to resolve relationship problems, are more driven to pursue relationship goals, and are more generous and kind to others. What you've always known, now backed by science!