Nostalgic Reverie and Affect toward Past and Present Selves

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This thesis titled
Nostalgic Reverie and Affect toward Past and Present Selves

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ABSTRACT

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Nostalgic Reverie and Affect toward Past and Present Selves

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Recent research overwhelmingly suggests that experiencing nostalgia feels good (e.g., Wildschut et al., 2006). The present research aimed to explain this positive mood by considering how nostalgia influences comparisons between past and current selves. Informed by predictions from Temporal Self-Appraisal Theory (Wilson & Ross, 2001), I predicted that nostalgia would prompt positive mood by moving past and present self-descriptions towards one another, particularly when nostalgic memories feel subjectively close. Consistent with these expectations, two studies demonstrated that nostalgia was associated with increasing similarity in positivity of a past self-affect relative to a present self-affect (Studies 1 & 2). This effect was moderated by subjective closeness to the past self such that people rated their past and present selves as similarly positive to the extent that they were both nostalgic about and subjectively close to the memory (Study 2). Moreover, when people were experimentally induced to experience nostalgia, and they saw their memory as subjectively close, they showed high positive mood that stemmed from an increasingly positive past self and an unchanged present self (Study 3). Nevertheless, if a nostalgic memory was subjectively distant people showed decreased positivity surrounding their present selves. Similar effects were observed for people contemplating a positive future self, suggesting that the positive mood typically associated with nostalgia may simply arise from considering a positive temporal self.
Keywords: nostalgia, temporal self-comparisons, current mood
I dedicate this work to my parents, John and Wanda Osborn, for their unwavering support and encouragement. In the wise words of Leslie Knope, “no one achieves anything alone.”
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nostalgia, or a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past (Pearsall, 1998), has been a topic of discussion for centuries. First coined in the 17th century by Swiss physician Johannes Hofer (1969-1972), the term ‘nostalgia’ described a neurological disease afflicting mercenaries battling in foreign lands. Symptoms included crippling anxiety, intense homesickness, bouts of melancholy, and disordered eating and sleeping (McCann, 1941). The idea that ‘abnormal’ populations experienced nostalgia persisted well into the 20th century when it was considered a psychological disorder much like depression (Rosen, 1975). Until recently, nostalgia described an overwhelmingly negative experience afflicting a subset of the population, with overtones of homesickness and a sense of being ‘uprooted’.

Today, nostalgia is cast in a significantly more positive light. Wildschut and colleagues (2006) spearheaded such efforts by content analyzing several autobiographical narratives published in the periodical Nostalgia to identify perspective of recollection (self or other), content of nostalgic reverie, affective tone of autobiographical descriptions (positive, negative, or mixed affect) and frequency of nostalgic experiences. Their findings suggested that nostalgia is an ordinary, self- (as opposed to other-) relevant emotion surrounding recollections of close others and/or momentous life events that elicit sometimes mixed, but primarily positive, affect (Wildschut et al., 2006).

Nostalgia and Affect

Despite their evidence, researchers have disagreed about whether nostalgia’s affective signature (i.e., how nostalgia makes people feel) is positive or negative.
Researchers who contend that nostalgia is overwhelmingly a negative emotion argue that nostalgia may emphasize the pitfalls of the present (e.g., “look at where I was and look where I am now- I can never go back”) or may feature negative events. Consistently, Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1980) describes “nostalgics” as individuals who romanticize the past, causing them a dislike for the present and dread of the future. Echoing this sentiment, Peters (1985) posited that nostalgia is experienced as an intense yearning for the past, which hinders one’s attempts to cope in the present. Moreover, research suggests that objects of nostalgia need not be positive. Indeed, Hertz (1990) found that Holocaust survivors were able to engage in nostalgic reverie of their time during the holocaust (i.e., were able to be nostalgic about extremely negative events). Together, this evidence suggests that nostalgia may be fraught with perceptions of loss and a focus on the irrevocability of the past.

Combining evidence that nostalgia can be positive with that suggesting it can be negative, some researchers define nostalgia in terms of mixed emotions. Werman (1977), for instance, describes nostalgia as a “wistful” pleasure. That is, nostalgia is overwhelmingly a joyous emotion, but it is tinged with elements of sadness and loss. Johnson-Laird and Oatley (1989) define nostalgia similarly as positive emotion containing elements of sadness, which ultimately gives rise to mixed affect. Under their definition, mixed affect is due to contrasts between an overwhelmingly positive past that pales in comparison to the present moment.

Some empirical evidence supports the notion that nostalgia is an ambivalent emotion consisting of both positive and negative affect alike. For instance, research on
the various objects of memory that come to mind during nostalgic reverie implies ambivalence. Holak and Havlena (1992) examined the central and peripheral features of nostalgic recollections. Alongside positive emotions, more negative emotions such as “longing,” “yearning,” “missing,” and “wanting to return to past” emerged as central features. Further, “sadness/depressed,” “loneliness,” and “regret,” emerged as peripheral features. Thus, the content of nostalgia appears to contain both positive and negative elements.

Despite these differing perspectives, the most recent empirical tests of nostalgia’s affective signature imply that experiencing nostalgia primarily elicits positive affect (Wildschut et al., 2006). Indeed, the broadest consensus in the literature is that nostalgia is a positively toned emotion (e.g., Batcho, 1998; Davis, 1979; Kaplan, 1987; Sedikides, Wildschut, & Baden, 2004; Wildschut et al., 2006). Moreover, functional analyses provide possible explanations for why nostalgia feels good. In particular, findings suggest nostalgia creates positivity by enhancing one’s self-concept, increasing social connectedness, and heightening perceptions of existential meaning and purpose in life.

Nostalgia’s Functional Utility

Research on the functions of nostalgia suggests that nostalgia functions to enhance (a) positivity surrounding the self-concept, (b) social relatedness, and (c) existential meaning in life (see Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, Arndt, & Hepper, 2015 for a review).
First, research demonstrates that nostalgia serves as a resource for the self. For example, Vess and colleagues (2012) found that nostalgia heightens positivity of the self-concept by enhancing the accessibility of positive self-attributes in memory. Indeed, those who recalled a nostalgic event were more likely to describe themselves using positive self-attributes than were people who simply imagined a positive future event. Relatedly, nostalgia also buffers against negativity surrounding the self-concept: people are less self-serving in response to self-related threats (i.e., failure feedback) when they are allowed to experience nostalgia (Vess et al., 2012). Additionally, nostalgia makes salient an authentic self-standard that serves as a guide for actions in the present (Baldwin, Biernat & Landau, 2015). For instance, experiencing nostalgia leads people to focus on what they see as their authentic or “true self” and disregard external factors acting against this authentic self in the present moment. That is, greater nostalgia leads to an increased sense that one is authentic which can lead them to focus on themselves, rather than extrinsic motivations (e.g. external evaluation; Baldwin et al., 2015).

A second primary function of nostalgia is to promote social relationships. Content analysis of nostalgic reverie suggests that it is often directed toward interpersonal relationships (Wildschut et al., 2006). Consistently, research suggests that nostalgia is a mechanism through which positive social relations are established, maintained, and even restored. For instance, inducing nostalgia increases empathy toward others (Stephan, Wildschut, Sedikides, Zhou et al., 2014; Zhou, Wildschut, Sedikides et al., 2012) promotes intergroup contact (Turner, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2012) and instills feelings of being loved by and connected to close others (Reid, Green, Wildschut & Sedikides,
Further, correlational data suggests that trait nostalgia (i.e., people’s chronic tendency to experience nostalgia) is associated with increased perceptions of social support (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut, & Gao, 2008). In sum, nostalgia aids in the maintenance and protection of social connectedness.

In addition to serving as a resource for the self and social relationships, nostalgia also functions as a buffer against existential threat. In particular, research demonstrates that nostalgia buffers against threats to meaning and purpose in life as well as against anxiety caused by considering one’s own mortality. In one study, participants read either an essay arguing for the insignificance of human life or a control passage. Next they indicated how nostalgic they felt. Those in the meaning-threat condition were less likely to respond defensively to the passage (i.e., by discrediting the author) to the extent that they reported feeling nostalgic (Routledge et al., 2011). Similarly, Juhl and colleagues (2010) found that making people aware of their own mortality (as compared to a control condition) prompted anxiety about death primarily among people high (as compared to low) in trait nostalgia. Together these studies suggest that nostalgia can buffer people from existential threat created by a lack of meaning or by thinking about death.

In sum, research on nostalgic reverie supports the notion that nostalgia feels good because it serves to promote, maintain, and protect a positive self-concept, important social relationships, and existential meaning in life.

Comparing the Past to the Present

Most modern nostalgia research focuses on the broad functions of experiencing nostalgia that give rise to positivity in the present moment. The present work takes an
alternative approach by considering comparisons between temporal selves. That is, I consider how revisiting a past self might influence feelings surrounding the present self. A theory of temporal self-appraisal (TSA; e.g., Wilson & Ross, 2001) is a prominent line of research suggesting that revisiting a past self can affect a current self.

Findings from TSA research imply that temporal selves are not fixed in time but rather are malleable to serve the needs of the present self. Specifically, TSA posits that people choose to either distance or bring close past selves in order to feel good about who they are in the present. For instance, people will derogate a past self in order to enhance the present self (Wilson & Ross, 2001). As such, perceptions of past selves change to the extent that such a change serves to improve present self-standing.

People can also reap the benefits of a positive past in the present by moving closer to a positive past. For instance, when people recall a positive (as opposed to negative) past self, they report feeling closer to that self. Moreover, when induced to feel close (versus far) from a past failure, or far (versus close) from a past success, people subsequently rate their present self more unfavorably (Wilson & Ross, 2010).

To our knowledge, consideration of the malleability of temporal selves has not been applied to the concept of nostalgia. Still, because nostalgia inherently involves considerations of both the past and the present, and by extension, past selves relative to the present self, the nostalgic process offers fertile ground on which to examine the tenets of TSA. The present research addresses this gap in the literature by examining how recalling a nostalgic event influences the construal of temporal selves, and in turn influences current mood. Specifically, I examine whether nostalgia creates positive mood
primarily by focusing people on their a positive past self, by assimilating the positive past self to the current self, or both. Examining the tone with which past and present selves are recollected allows the teasing-apart of temporal locus of affect (past, present, or both) associated with nostalgic reverie.
CHAPTER 2: THE PRESENT STUDIES

In three studies, I examined how nostalgia influences assimilation to or contrast from past and present selves. In all three studies, I experimentally induced nostalgia (or not) and examined whether nostalgia predicts the affective tone with which past and present selves are described. In the absence of nostalgia, I expected that people will evaluate their present selves more positively than their past selves (consistent with Wilson & Ross, 2001). However, I also expected that increasing nostalgia will eliminate this effect. Consistent with the notion that nostalgia is a “wistful affection for the past” (Pearsall, 1998), I hypothesized increases in nostalgia will be associated with past self-descriptions that are as positive as present self-descriptions. Moreover, I explored how descriptions of past and present selves give rise to the current mood associated with nostalgic reverie.

Study 1 aimed to establish this primary effect by manipulating nostalgia indirectly and examining affect toward past and present selves as well as current mood. Next, Study 2 attempted to conceptually-replicate and extend these findings using novel measures, a new indirect manipulation of nostalgia, and by examining moderators. Study 3 extended Studies 1 and 2 by employing a direct manipulation of nostalgia (considering an ordinary v. nostalgic memory), and by examining whether people show similar effects when they consider a positive future self.

Study 1

The primary purpose of Study 1 was to investigate the association between experienced nostalgia and the affective tone with which past and present selves are
described. Research suggests that people tend to prefer their present selves to their past selves (e.g. Ross & Wilson, 2002; Wilson & Ross, 2001). Is this the case when people experience nostalgia? To answer this question, in Study 1, I attempted to manipulate nostalgia and then examined the valance of past and present self-descriptions.

Specifically, I hypothesized that individuals made to feel nostalgic will describe a past self that is more positively toned than the present self. Moreover, I examined how the interactive effect of nostalgia and temporal self-descriptions influenced current mood.

Study 1: Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 134$; 51.1% Female; $M_{age} = 36.8$; 83.6% White/European American, 10.4% Black/African American, 3% Asian/Asian American, 3% other) were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk. All participants were compensated $0.40 for their participation. Three participants who did not complete all experimental tasks were excluded from the analyses, leaving a total of 131 participants in the final sample.

Materials

Nostalgia manipulation. I attempted to manipulate nostalgia by manipulating self-certainty. Previous research demonstrates that nostalgia is elicited by a number of aversive states including negative mood (Wildschut et al., 2006), loneliness (Zhou et al., 2008), and lack of meaning or purpose in life (Routledge et al., 2011). I expected that inducing self-uncertainty would trigger nostalgia because, similar to negative mood, loneliness, and purposelessness, people find self-uncertainty aversive and are motivated to reduce states of self-uncertainty (e.g., Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Consistent with prior
manipulations of self-uncertainty (e.g., Morrison & Johnson, 2011), participants wrote a brief essay about three aspects of their lives that make them feel most uncertain (nostalgia condition; \(N = 70\)) or certain (control condition; \(N = 61\)) about themselves, their lives, and their futures (see Appendix A for all materials).

**Manipulation checks.** Participants completed a four-item measure of experienced nostalgia (Baldwin et al., 2015; \(\alpha = .87\); e.g., ‘right now I am feeling ‘nostalgic’, ‘sentimental’, ‘wistful’, ‘longing”’ on a Likert-type scale anchored at 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree* \((M = 3.50, SD = 1.50)\).

**Past and present selves writing task.** As in earlier work on temporal self-appraisal (e.g., Wilson & Ross, 2000), participants first vividly considered their current self, and then read instructions to “write a description of your present self in your own words. Use whatever information you feel is useful.” I also extended this task to include a second essay where they described a past self (i.e., who they were at age sixteen).

Two independent raters, blind to the purpose of the study, coded the positivity of these ratings on a 7-point Likert type scale where 1 = not at all positive and 7 = extremely positive. The raters’ judgments of positivity were highly consistent \((M_{ICC} = .89, CI_{95\%} = .85, .92)\). As such, I averaged the judges’ scores to compute a single positivity index for people’s past \((M = 4.32, SD = 1.60)\) and present selves \((M = 5.10, SD = 1.54\); hereafter referred to as ‘past-self affect’ and ‘present-self affect,’ respectively). I also examined the discrepancy in positivity between past and current selves (hereafter referred to as ‘temporal affect discrepancy’). Specifically, I subtracted past-self affect from present-self affect so that higher scores reflect more positive present self-descriptions relative to past
self-descriptions \((M = 0.77, SD = 2.27)\). These three measures—past-self affect, present-self affect and temporal affect discrepancy—represented three of my primary outcomes of interest. In further analyses, they also served as mediators lying along the indirect path from the experimental manipulation of nostalgia to current mood.

*Current mood.* Consistent with the notion that nostalgia promotes positive mood, participants also completed 20 items from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS Watson, et al., 1988; \(a = .92\); e.g., “please rate the extent to which you feel ‘determined’, ‘active’, ‘jittery’, ‘afraid’; 1 = very slightly or not at all to 5 = extremely). I then summed scores across all positive \((n = 10)\) and negative \((n = 10)\) adjectives to create an overall measure of positive \((M_{PA} = 2.89, SD_{PA} = .92)\) and negative current mood \((M_{NA} = 1.57, SD_{NA} = .81)\).

*Procedure*

After consenting to participate, participants completed a nostalgia manipulation followed by a manipulation check, a past and present selves writing task, and individual difference (i.e., self-concept clarity, nostalgia proneness) measures. Upon completion of these measures, participants were debriefed, thanked, and compensated for their participation.

*Study 1: Results*

Table 1 shows zero-order correlations between all variables.
Manipulation Check

To assess whether the self-certainty manipulation elicited nostalgia, I conducted an independent samples t-test predicting nostalgia from experimental condition. Results indicated that those in the nostalgia condition experienced marginally more nostalgia ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.53$) than those in the control condition ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.44$), $t (129) = 1.88$, $p = .06$, $d = 0.33$.

Temporal Affect Discrepancy

I conducted an independent samples t-test to examine the effect of nostalgia condition on temporal affect discrepancy. People reported significantly greater temporal affect discrepancy in the control condition ($M = 1.21$, $SD = 2.10$) relative to the nostalgia condition ($M = 0.39$, $SD = 2.38$), $t (129) = -2.10$, $p = .04$, $d = .37$. That is, participants in
the nostalgia condition described past and present selves that were more similar in affective tone than did those in the control condition.

To understand whether the reduction in temporal affect discrepancy was driven by nostalgia increasing past-self affect, decreasing present-self affect, or both, I conducted two separate independent samples t-tests predicting past-self affect and present-self from condition. Results suggested that past selves were viewed marginally more positively in the nostalgia condition \( (M = 4.56, SD = 1.62) \) than in the control condition \( (M = 4.05, SD = 1.54) \), \( t(129) = 1.86, p = .07, d = .32 \), but that condition was unrelated to present self-affect, \( t(129) = -1.16, p = .25, d = .20 \) (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1](image.png)

*Figure 1.* Mean levels of positivity ratings of past and present selves as a function of experimental condition. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals (Study 1).
Finally, to determine if temporal affect discrepancy was related to experienced nostalgia, I examined zero-order correlations between experienced nostalgia and past-self affect, present-self affect, and their discrepancy, respectively. As with the experimental evidence, increased levels of experienced nostalgia were associated with more positively toned past self-descriptions, \( r(131) = .38, p < .01 \), but were unrelated to present self-descriptions, \( r(131) = -.04, p = .62 \). As a result, high levels of experienced nostalgia were associated with decreased levels of temporal affect discrepancy, \( r(131) = -.30, p < .001 \).

**Current Mood**

Two separate independent samples t-tests examined the effect of the nostalgia manipulation on positive and negative mood, respectively. Surprisingly, the nostalgia manipulation elicited marginally less positive mood (\( M = 2.76, SD = .93 \)) compared to the control condition (\( M = 3.05, SD = .89 \)), \( t(129) = -1.83, p = .07, d = .32 \). Nostalgia and control conditions did not differ significantly in terms of negative mood, \( t(129) = .60, p = .56, d = .10 \). Bivariate correlations between experienced nostalgia (as a continuous measure) and current mood revealed that nostalgia was marginally positively correlated with negative mood, \( r(131) = .17, p = .06 \), but was unrelated to positive mood, \( r(131) = .10, p = .30 \).

Finally, I conducted two separate mediation analyses to examine whether the nostalgia manipulation gave rise to current mood (positive and negative mood, respectively) by influencing past and present self-descriptions (see Figure 2). If nostalgia is a positively-toned emotion, nostalgia-condition participants should report greater positive mood than control-condition participants. Contrary to predictions, the results
revealed a marginally-negative direct effect of condition on positive mood such that nostalgia-condition participants reported marginally-less positive mood than did control-condition participants. There was no indirect effect of nostalgia on current mood via either past-self affect, \( b = .37, SE = .37, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -.07, 1.39 \), or present-self affect, \( b = -.62, SE = .51, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -.178, .35 \). There was no direct effect of nostalgia condition on negative mood, and further, no indirect effects of past-self affect, \( b = -.25, SE = .28, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -1.17, .07 \), or present-self affect, \( b = .51, SE = .45, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -.27, 1.57 \), as mediators.

**Figure 2.** Regression coefficients for the relationship between experimental condition (0 = control, 1 = nostalgia) and current mood (P = positive mood, N = negative mood) as mediated by past- and present- self affect. Note: \( b \) (SE), \( + p < .10, * p < .01, ** p < .001. \)
Of course, it is likely that inducing self-uncertainty, an aversive state, might have masked any positive effects of nostalgia on mood. As such, I conducted identical analyses examining the relationship between experienced nostalgia (as a continuous variable) and current mood through past- and present-self affect (see Figure 3). As with the manipulation, there was no indirect effect of nostalgia on positive mood via past-self affect, \( b = .16, SE = .21, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -.22, .58 \), or present-self affect, \( b = -.09, SE = .18, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -.42, .29 \). However, there was a significant indirect effect of nostalgia on negative mood through past-self affect, \( b = -.36, SE = .18, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -.82, -.06 \), but not present self-affect, \( b = .07, SE = .15, CI_{95\% \text{ bootstrapped}} = -.26, .34 \). That is, for most people, nostalgia increased their past-self affect, which in turn reduced their negative current mood.
**Study 1: Discussion**

Study 1 contributes to the existing literature by providing initial evidence that nostalgia moderates the asymmetry in the affective tone with which past and present selves are described. Increased nostalgia was associated with past self-descriptions that were affectively more equivalent to present self-descriptions. Importantly, Study 1 found that self-uncertainty acts as a trigger of nostalgia, which in turn leads to decreased temporal-affect discrepancy. Indeed, those made to feel nostalgic via self-uncertainty described their past selves marginally more positively than did those in a control group. However, self-uncertainty and experienced nostalgia were both unrelated to the descriptions of present selves.
Further, participants who felt particularly nostalgic when thinking about their past subsequently described past selves in a more positive tone. This, in turn, led to diminished negative mood experienced in the present. Interestingly, this effect did not occur via present self-descriptions, which suggests that the positivity associated with nostalgia may stem (temporally) from positivity in the past and not the present.

Study 2

In Study 1, nostalgia was associated with the tenor of past-self descriptions more closely matching present-self descriptions. Nevertheless, there were three notable limitations in Study 1. First, the effects of condition on nostalgia in Study 1 were only marginal. In Study 2 I employ a different manipulation of self-uncertainty to assess the robustness of self-uncertainty as a trigger of nostalgia. Second, the instructions for considering a past self were to consider themselves when they were 16-years old. Although recalling oneself at age 16 might have been nostalgic for some, it might have been mundane for others. Given that the interest of this paper is specifically in nostalgia, in Study 2 I will address this earlier oversight by specifically instructing participants to recall any memory of their choice and to indicate how nostalgic the memory makes them feel. The past and present selves recollection task, then, will use the past self from this recalled memory. To the extent participants report experiencing nostalgia, then, one can assume they are describing a “nostalgic” past self.

Finally, the present study assesses possible boundary conditions of the effects in Study 1 by incorporating a key variable in the Temporal Self Appraisal (TSA) literature: subjective distance between the past and present selves. Wilson and Ross (2001) find that
people maintain high levels of self-regard in the present by enhancing subjectively-close past selves and disparaging subjectively-distant past selves. In line with this reasoning, I examined subjective closeness of the recalled memory as a possible moderator of the relationship between nostalgia and past-self and present-self affect, respectively. Consistent with TSA theory, I hypothesized that any bolstering effects of nostalgia on past- and present-self affect or mood will occur primarily for subjectively-close, as compared to subjectively-distant, memories.

**Study 2: Method**

**Participants**

Participants ($N = 97$; 50.5% Female, $M_{age} = 34.75$; 80.5% White/Caucasian, 8.2% Black/ African American, 6.2% Asian/Asian American, 5.1% other) were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk. All participants were compensated $1.00 for their participation.

**Materials**

*Nostalgia manipulation.* As part of the nostalgia manipulation, participants completed items adapted from Campbell et al.’s (1996) Self-Concept Clarity (SCC) scale that prime either self-certainty or self-uncertainty (see Salancik and Conway, 1975). Participants in the control (self-certainty) condition ($N = 48$, 49.5%) endorsed whether SCC items were “always” true or false (e.g., “the way I think about myself is always inconsistent with how I act”). By contrast, participants in the nostalgia (self-uncertainty) condition indicated whether items were “sometimes” true or false (e.g., “the way I think about myself is sometimes inconsistent with how I act”; see Appendix B for all
materials). Arguably, those in the control condition ought to react against the notion that self-cognitions are always inconsistent with self-behaviors, and therefore bring to mind instances when their actions were consistent with internal experiences. Conversely, those in the nostalgia condition should be less reactive to the idea that internal experiences are sometimes inconsistent with behaviors, and thus readily bring to mind experiences where this was the case. Recalling contradictions between one’s internal experience and external behaviors may give rise to an aversive state of self-uncertainty. Based on findings from Study 1, such a state might elicit greater levels of nostalgia relative to those made to feel self-certain.

*Memory recall/ Past and present selves writing task.* Participants were instructed to recall any memory from their past. Participants were told that “people have all sorts of memories so there are no kinds of rules for the kind of memory you think about” (Baldwin et al., 2015) and were asked to elaborate on this memory in more detail.

Study 2 used the same writing task as in Study 1 with one exception. Specifically, instead of asking participants to recall themselves at 16 years old, participants were asked to spontaneously recall any memory from their past and to elaborate upon their past self from that specific memory. After providing these descriptions, participants were also asked to indicate how positive their past self- \((M = 4.86, SD = 1.66)\) and present self- \((M = 5.57, SD = 1.86)\) descriptions were \((1 = \text{not at all positive, } 7 = \text{extremely positive})\). Participants also indicated how similar their past self-description is to their present self-description \((1 = \text{not at all similar, } 7 = \text{extremely similar}; M = 3.98, SD = 1.83)\).
Manipulation checks. Participants indicated whether the past memory they recalled made them feel “nostalgic,” “sentimental,” “yearning,” or “longing” ($\alpha = 0.93$; Likert-type scale anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree); $M = 5.03, SD = 1.56$). I expected that if self-uncertainty elicits nostalgia, then participants made to feel self-uncertain should spontaneously recall a memory that makes them feel more nostalgic than would those made to feel self-certain.

Current mood. As in Study 1, participants completed the PANAS ($\alpha = 0.93$; $M_{PA} = 2.70, SD_{PA} = .88$; $M_{NA} = 1.38, SD_{NA} = .71$) as a measure of current mood. The PANAS also contained the single-item “uncertain,” which we evaluated to ensure the nostalgia manipulation did in fact elicit different degrees of uncertainty.

Subjective closeness, memory recall frequency, and time. Embedded within the memory recall task was a single-item measure of how subjectively close participants felt to the memory recalled ($M = 3.64, SD = 1.23$). Participants were asked to indicate how close they felt to the memory they just recalled based on a series of five overlapping circles with corresponding scale points (Baldwin et al., 2015). One circle is labeled “then” and the other is labeled “now.” The scale is anchored at 1 (no overlap/distant) and 5 (most overlap/close). Additionally, participants indicated how often they typically bring the memory to mind on a Likert-type scale anchored at 1 (not at all) and 7 (frequently) ($M = 4.78, SD = 1.81$). Participants also indicated how long ago (in years) the past memory occurred ($M = 10.46$ years, $SD = 10.59$). In these analyses, I controlled for how long ago the memory was and how often it occurred.
**Procedure**

After consenting to participate, participants completed a nostalgia manipulation followed by manipulation checks (a memory recall task with items assessing nostalgia), subjective closeness, and past and present selves writing task measures. Upon completion of these measures, participants were debriefed, thanked, and compensated for their participation.

**Study 2: Results**

Table 2 presents zero-order correlations of the primary variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Condition</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Positive Mood</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Negative Mood</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nostalgia</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Past-self Affect</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Present-self Affect</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Closeness</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Condition coded as 0 = control, 1 = nostalgia, + $p < .10$, $p < .05$ *, $p < .001$ **.
Manipulation Checks

I conducted an independent samples t-test predicting experienced nostalgia from condition to assess whether the manipulation elicited nostalgia. Those in the nostalgia condition did not report greater levels of nostalgia ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.66$) than did those in the control condition ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.46$), $t(95) = .66$, $p = .51$, $d = .13$. Because the manipulation did not elicit nostalgia, I examine only the relationship between experienced nostalgia and each of the relevant outcomes.

Temporal Affect Discrepancy

I first examined bivariate correlations between nostalgia and past self-affect, present self-affect, and temporal-affect discrepancy. As in Study 1, experienced nostalgia was significantly positively correlated with positivity surrounding a past self-description, $r(97) = .55$, $p < .001$, but unrelated to present self-descriptions, $r(97) = -.12$, $p = .25$. As a result, experienced nostalgia was significantly negatively correlated with temporal affect discrepancy scores, $r(97) = -.42$, $p < .001$. That is, greater experienced nostalgia was associated with viewing past and present selves similarly positively.

Current Mood

Next, I examined whether nostalgia predicted current mood. Results suggested that nostalgia was marginally related to positive mood, $r(97) = .18$, $p = .07$, but unrelated to negative mood, $r(97) = .03$, $p = .76$. I conducted mediation analyses to test the primary hypothesis that nostalgia leads to current mood by increasing positivity toward past and/or present selves. As Figure 4 shows, although the direct effect of nostalgia on positive mood was nonsignificant, there was a significant indirect effect through
increasingly positive past-self affect, \( b = .83, SE = .34, CI_{95\%\text{bootstrap}} = .20, 1.55 \), but not present-self affect, \( b = -.34, SE = .33, CI_{95\%\text{bootstrap}} = -.98, .28 \). That is, recalling a memory that made one feel nostalgic was associated with more positive past-self affect, which was in turn associated with more positive current mood. However, no indirect relationships between nostalgia and negative mood via either past-self affect, \( b = -.14, SE = .29, CI_{95\%\text{bootstrap}} = -.72, .45 \), or present-self affect, \( b = .10, SE = .15, CI_{95\%\text{bootstrap}} = -.03, .57 \), emerged.

\[\text{Figure 4.} \text{ Regression coefficients for the relationship between nostalgia and current mood (P = positive mood, N = negative mood) as mediated by past- and present- self affect (Study 2). Note: } b (SE), + p < .10, * p < .01, ** p < .001.\]
Moderation Analyses

To examine whether subjective closeness moderated the effect of nostalgia on temporal affect discrepancy, I entered nostalgia (mean centered), subjective closeness (mean centered), and their interaction into a multiple regression predicting, past-self affect, present-self affect, and temporal affect discrepancy (see Table 3).

Table 3

Multiple Regression of Variables Predicting Temporal Selves (Study 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Past-self Affect</th>
<th>Present-self Affect</th>
<th>Temporal Affect Discrepancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
<td>Partial r</td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia</td>
<td>.58 (.09) *</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-.79 (.15) **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>-.03 (.12)</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.46 (.19) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia x</td>
<td>-.12 (.07) +</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.45 (.11) **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: + p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .001. All variables centered at their mean.

Nostalgia was related to more positive past-self affect and more negative present-self affect. As a result, nostalgia was associated with marginally reduced temporal affect discrepancy. There was also a positive main effect of subjective closeness on present-self affect such that people felt better about their present self (but not their past self) the closer they felt to the self in memory they recalled. As a result, subjectively close memories
were associated with increased temporal affect discrepancy. These main effects were all qualified by interactions between nostalgia and subjective closeness.

I examined the effect of nostalgia at high (+1SD) and low (-1SD) levels of subjective closeness (see Figure 5). When people reported feeling more subjectively distant from their memory, increased nostalgia was associated with more positive past-self affect, $b = .72, SE = .12, p < .001, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = .52$, and decreased positive present-self affect, $b = -.62, SE = .15, p < .001, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = -.40$. As a result, participants who were subjectively more distant from their memory showed decreased temporal affect discrepancy overall, $b = -1.34, SE = .20, p < .001, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = -.58$, such that past selves were rated similarly positively to (if not more positively than) present selves. By contrast, when subjective closeness was high, nostalgia had a weaker positive relationship to increased positive past-self affect, $b = .44, SE = .13, p = .001, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = .34$, and was unrelated to present-self affect, $b = .20, SE = .15, p = .19, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = .14$. As such, nostalgia did not affect temporal affect discrepancy among those who felt subjectively-close to their past self, $b = -.24, SE = .20, p = .26, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = -.12$, such that people rated past and present selves similarly regardless of experienced nostalgia.
To ensure that the moderating effect of subjective closeness on nostalgia was not due to the frequency with which the memory is brought to mind, how many years ago the memory occurred, or similarity ratings between past and present selves, I entered these variables as mediators of the relationship between the nostalgia x subjective closeness interaction (controlling for the main effects of each) in Hayes (2012) PROCESS macro. An examination of the indirect effects suggest that none of these variables significantly mediated the relationship between the subjective closeness x nostalgia interaction and temporal affect discrepancy, which remained significant, $b = .43$, $SE = .10$, $p < .001$, total indirect effect $b = .01$, $SE = .04$, CI$_{95\%}$ bootstrapped $= -.06$ -.09.

*Figure 5.* Interaction between nostalgia and subjective closeness predicting temporal affect discrepancy.
Finally, I conducted moderated mediation analyses to examine whether the relationship between nostalgia and current mood via temporal-affect discrepancy was moderated by subjective closeness of the memory. As Figure 6 shows, the indirect relationship of nostalgia on positive mood via present-self affect was moderated by subjective closeness, $b = .81$, $SE = .21$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = .41, 1.22. As such, I examined the indirect effect of nostalgia on positive mood via present-self affect at high (+1SD) and low (-1SD) levels of subjective closeness.

The results suggested that there was an indirect path from nostalgia to positive mood through present-self affect only when subjective closeness was low, $b = -1.49$, $SE = .46$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = -2.59, -7.9, but not when subjective closeness was high, $b = .48$, $SE = .41$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = -.32, 1.31. Subjective closeness did not moderate the indirect relationship from nostalgia to positive mood via past-self affect, $b = -.16$, $SE = .13$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = -.49, .02, suggesting that nostalgia consistently bolsters mood by considering a positive past self. Subjective closeness also did not moderate either (null) indirect effect of nostalgia on negative mood, past-self affect: $b = .03$, $SE = .07$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = -.06, .24, present-self affect: $b = -.25$, $SE = .16$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = -.64, .001. In sum, it appears that positive mood resulting from nostalgia is due to recalling an overwhelmingly positive past self. This positive mood, though, is accompanied by diminishingly positive present self-affect when nostalgic memories feel far away.
Study 2: Discussion

The results of Study 2 revealed that increased nostalgia was associated with a tendency to describe a past self more similarly toned to the present self (consistent with Study 1). This effect was particularly strong when participants felt more distant from as compared to closer to the memory recalled. Interestingly, nostalgia appears to be related to increased positive affect toward the past, regardless of subjective distance, which is in turn related to more positive affect in the present. However, nostalgia’s relationship to affect toward the present self is more nuanced. If a memory is close, nostalgia has no relationship with present-self affect, and therefore is unrelated to current positive mood. However, when a memory is subjectively distant, it appears that nostalgia can actually
decrease present-self affect, leading to increased positive mood in the moment. This latter process is consistent with theorists who claim that nostalgia prompts people to live in the past at the expense of their present (Castelnuovo-Tedesco, 1980).

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 provided initial evidence that nostalgia can influence affect toward past and present selves. Both studies suggested that high levels of nostalgia were associated with more positive perceptions of a past self, but generally supported no effect on perceptions of a present self. Moreover, the studies demonstrated that heightened nostalgia is associated with less negative mood (Study 1) and more positive mood (Study 2), largely by reminding people of a positive past self. Nevertheless, Study 2 also demonstrated the important moderating role of subjective closeness in this pattern. Specifically, Study 2 demonstrated that, while all nostalgia is associated with more positive current mood by bolstering one’s past, when memories are particularly distant, it also bolsters current mood by reducing affect toward the present.

Study 3 aimed to replicate and extend these findings in two ways. First, in Studies 1 and 2, I attempted to indirectly manipulate nostalgia via self-uncertainty. In the first study the manipulation was only marginally effective and in the second it was ineffective. To address this issue, I implemented a direct manipulation of nostalgia in Study 3. Second, to capture a more comprehensive picture of nostalgia’s affective signature, I included a measure of current mood that includes positive, negative, and mixed mood items. As mentioned previously, the current consensus in the literature is that nostalgia is experienced as largely positive, but some theorists contend that nostalgia is a mixed
emotion. The results of our last study confirm this might be the case: nostalgia may promote positive mood by reducing positive self-perceptions in the present in favor of the past. Nevertheless, most studies addressing the mixed-affective signature of nostalgia do not include measures designed to capture mixed mood (see Larsen, McGraw & Caccioppo, 2001). As such, I use a measure of current mood that captures positive, negative, and mixed mood.

Study 3: Method

Participants

Participants (N = 402; 61.6% Male, 37.4% Female, 1% Other; M_{age} = 33.3; 70.2% White/European American, 8.3% Black, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 6.2% Asian/Asian American, 4.6% Mixed, 2.7% other) were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk. All participants were compensated $1.81 for their participation. One participant was excluded from analyses for taking a particularly long time to complete the survey (completion time was greater than 3 standard deviations above the mean) leaving a total of 401 participants in the final sample.

Materials

Nostalgia manipulation and manipulation check. Participants completed the Event Reflection Task from Study 2 and were randomly assigned to recall a nostalgic memory (nostalgia condition; N = 132), or an ordinary memory (ordinary condition; N = 127), or to anticipate a positive event in their future (positive future condition; N = 142; e.g., Routledge et al., 2011; Vess et al., 2012; see Appendix C for materials). Participants in the nostalgia condition brought to mind a nostalgic time in their life, wrote down four
keywords associated with this memory, and elaborated upon this nostalgic memory in detail. Participants in the ordinary memory and positive future conditions did the same but brought to mind either an ordinary time in their life or considered a positive future event. After the event recall task, participants indicated the extent to which they felt “sentimental,” “longing,” and “nostalgic” (1 = very slightly or not at all, 5 = extremely). I combined these items to create a measure of experienced nostalgia (α = .88, M = 3.15, SD = 1.31).

Research examining the effects of nostalgia typically employs only an ordinary memory as a control condition (see Sedikides et al., 2015). Still, it is possible that recalling a nostalgic memory—a generally positive memory—is very different than contemplating a relatively mundane memory (e.g., Vess et al., 2012). Thus, I included a positive-future condition to examine whether the effects of nostalgia on current mood were uniquely due to reflecting on a nostalgic memory, or if they transferred to another clearly-positive temporal self. Below I first discuss the results of the control and nostalgia conditions. Then I turn to this possible alternative explanation.

Consistent with Studies 1 and 2, I hypothesized that recalling an ordinary memory from the past would produce traditional temporal self-appraisal discrepancy: preferring the present to the past. I also expected that that nostalgia would eliminate this present-over-past preference, by making one’s past self more positive. Consistent with research suggesting that people have a positive view of their future selves (Remedios, Chasteen, & Packer, 2010; Pronin & Ross, 2006), I also expected that participants in the future-self condition would view their future self more positively than their present self. Consistent
with Study 2, I expected these effects to be exacerbated particularly for subjectively distant memories. Building from Studies 1 and 2, I predict that differences in positivity of temporal selves as a function of manipulated nostalgia will explain current mood.

Subjective closeness and event and present selves writing task. As in Study 2, participants completed a writing task identical to Study 2 where they wrote about their present self and themselves during the event they described (ordinary memory, nostalgic memory, positive future event). Hereafter, I refer to participants’ temporal self (the one recalled in the memory past or predicted for the future) as their ‘event self’. After writing about their present and event selves, participants indicated how subjectively close they presently felt to their event self ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.22; 1 = no overlap/distant, 5 = most overlap/close$).

Current mood. I measured current mood using Larsen, McGraw, and Caccioppo’s (2001) Mixed Affect Scale. Participants first indicated whether they felt a number of positive (e.g., ‘calm,’ ‘happy,’ ‘excited’) negative (e.g., ‘stressed,’ ‘depressed,’ ‘tense’) and mixed (e.g. ‘ambivalent,’ ‘bittersweet’) emotions by choosing either ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ If participant indicated they were experiencing a specific emotion, they were then prompted to indicate the extent to which they felt that emotion ($1 = slightly, 7 = extremely$). If participants indicated that they did not experience an emotion, their response was coded as 0. Scores were then averaged to create measures of positive ($\alpha = .78; M = 3.36, SD = 1.69$), negative ($\alpha = .90; M = .93, SD = 1.68$) and mixed ($\alpha = .50; M = .76, SD = 1.43$) mood.
Procedure

After consenting, participants completed the nostalgia manipulation, the past and present selves writing task, and measures of subjective closeness and current mood. After completing these measures participants were debriefed, thanked, and compensated for their participation.

Study 3: Results

Table 4 displays means and standard deviations of primary variables separated by event reflection condition.

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations of Primary Variables (Study 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nostalgia</th>
<th>Ordinary</th>
<th>Positive Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Mood</td>
<td>3.09 (1.70)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>3.36 (1.74)\textsuperscript{ab}</td>
<td>3.60 (1.60)\textsuperscript{b}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Mood</td>
<td>1.21 (1.82)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>0.86 (1.68)\textsuperscript{ab}</td>
<td>0.73 (1.53)\textsuperscript{b}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Mood</td>
<td>1.16 (1.62)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>0.73 (1.43)\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>0.43 (1.12)\textsuperscript{bc}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia</td>
<td>3.88 (0.96)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>2.71 (1.37)\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>2.85 (1.27)\textsuperscript{b}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event-self Affect</td>
<td>5.69 (1.42)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>4.71 (1.93)\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>6.19 (1.21)\textsuperscript{b}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present-self Affect</td>
<td>4.72 (1.95)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>5.24 (1.70)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>4.96 (1.87)\textsuperscript{ab}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Closeness</td>
<td>3.62 (1.15)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>3.52 (1.37)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>3.67 (1.13)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means with different superscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$. 

Nostalgia versus Ordinary Memory

Manipulation Checks. As Table 4 shows, participants in the nostalgia condition reported experiencing significantly greater nostalgia than did those in the ordinary condition, \( t(257) = 8.00, p < .001, d = 0.99 \).

Temporal affect discrepancy. I first conducted independent samples t-tests predicting event-self affect, present-self affect, and temporal affect discrepancy from condition. As with Studies 1 and 2, nostalgia-condition participants rated their past selves more positively than ordinary condition participants, \( t(248) = 4.61, p < .001, d = .58 \). Present selves, however, were rated less positively in the nostalgia condition as compared to the control condition, \( t(249) = -2.17, p = .03, d = .28 \) (see Figure 7). As a result, those in the nostalgia condition reported greater temporal affect discrepancy (\( M = -0.96, SD = 2.48 \)) than did control-condition participants (\( M = 0.53, SD = 2.20 \)), \( t(248) = -5.03, p < .001, d = .64 \).

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1 Some participants completed the manipulation check items directly after the Event Recall Task, while others completed these items after completing all other measures (i.e., subjective closeness, event and present self-affect, and current affect). A 2x2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing the effect of event recall condition, manipulation check order, and their interactive effect on experienced nostalgia was conducted. Importantly, no interaction was observed, \( F(1,395) = 2.21, p = .14, \eta^2_p = .001 \). It appears, then, that participant reports of experienced nostalgia cannot be attributed to the order in which the items were presented.
As in all other studies, participants’ reports of experienced nostalgia were significantly related to more positive past-self affect, $r (388) = .22$, $p < .001$, and decreased temporal affect discrepancy, $r (388) = -.17$, $p = .001$, but were unrelated to present-self affect, $r (388) = -.01$, $p = .89$.

*Current mood.* I conducted three independent samples t-tests to examine whether the nostalgia condition elicited different levels of positive, negative, and mixed mood as compared to the ordinary condition. Nostalgia and control conditions did not differ in terms of either positive mood, $t (249) = -1.27$, $p = .21$, $d = .16$, or negative mood, $t (249) = 1.50$, $p = .14$, $d = .19$. However, the nostalgia manipulation elicited greater levels of mixed mood as compared to the ordinary memory condition, $t (249) = 2.17$, $p = .03$, $d =$
Further, participants’ reports of experienced nostalgia were unrelated to positive mood, \( r (393) = .01, p = .86 \), but were associated with greater negative mood, \( r (393) = .16, p = .001 \), and mixed mood, \( r (393) = .26, p < .001 \).

As in previous studies, I conducted mediation analyses to see if there was an indirect effect of event reflection condition on current mood through past-self affect and present-self affect (see Figure 8).

![Figure 8](image)

**Figure 8.** Regression coefficients for the relationship between condition (1 = ordinary, 2 = nostalgia) and current mood (P = positive mood, N = negative mood, M = mixed mood) as mediated by past-self affect and present-self affect. Note: \( b (SE) \), \(+p < .10, *p < .01, **p < .001\).

Although the direct effect of condition on positive mood was nonsignificant, both past-self affect, \( b = .20, SE = .07, CI_{95\text{\%bootstrapped}} = .09, .37 \), and present-self affect, \( b = -.27, SE = .12, CI_{95\text{\%bootstrapped}} = -.54,-.04 \), mediated the relationship between condition and
positive mood. That is, those in the nostalgia (versus ordinary) condition reported more positive past-self affect and less positive present-self affect. To the extent that this was true, they also showed increased positive mood. Present self-affect, $b = .24, SE = .11$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = .04, .47, but not past self-affect, $b = -.04, SE = .05$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = -.16, .06, mediated the relationship between condition and negative mood, such that those in the nostalgia condition recalled less positively toned present selves, which was in turn associated with decreased negative mood.

These two opposing outcomes—decreased negative and increased positive mood as the result of derogating a present self—also emerged for mixed mood, past-self affect: $b = .04, SE = .06$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = -.08, .16; present-self affect: $b = .09, SE = .05$, CI$_{95\%}$bootstrapped = .01, .22. That is, recalling less positive present selves in the nostalgia (versus ordinary) condition led to decreased levels of mixed mood. These results seem to suggest that increased positive and decreased negative and mixed moods stem largely from a positive past self (even in the presence of a less positive present self).

*Moderation analyses.* I conducted a multiple regression analysis predicting temporal affect discrepancy from condition, subjective closeness, and their interaction to see whether the effect of condition on past-self affect, present self-affect and temporal affect discrepancy was moderated by subjective closeness (see Table 5). Nostalgia was related to more positive past selves and less positive present selves. As such, nostalgia predicted increasingly negative temporal affect discrepancy (i.e., past selves that are rated more positively than present selves). Also, more subjectively close memories were related to more positive present-self affect and unrelated to past self-affect, and therefore
marginally decreased temporal affect discrepancy. These main effects were qualified by a significant interaction between condition and subjective closeness for present self-affect and temporal affect discrepancy.

Table 5

*Multiple Regression of Variables Predicting Temporal Selves (Study 3).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Past-self Affect</th>
<th>Present-self Affect</th>
<th>Temporal Affect Discrepancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
<td>Partial r</td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cond.</td>
<td>1.46 (.63)*</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-2.09 (.69)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>-.12 (.27)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.85 (.30)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cond. x Closeness</td>
<td>-.14 (.17)</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.44 (.18)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: TAD = temporal affect discrepancy, Cond. = condition (1 = ordinary, 2 = nostalgia memory), + p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .001. Variables centered at their mean.

I examined the effect of condition at high (+1SD) and low (-1SD) levels of subjective closeness. When participants reported that their memories felt subjectively close, nostalgia was unrelated to present-self affect, $b = .02, SE = .32, p = .95, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = -.004$, and only marginally related to temporal affect discrepancy, $b = .76, SE = .41, p = .07, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = .17$. By contrast, subjectively distant nostalgic memories were associated with less positive present selves, $b = -1.04, SE = .32, p < .001, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 = .21$, and therefore increasingly negative temporal affect discrepancy, $b = -2.18, SE = .41, p < .001, r_{\text{Partial}}^2 =$
.32. In other words, participants felt worse about their present selves when nostalgic memories felt far away, and therefore showed increased contrast between past selves and present selves. This effect was eliminated, however, when nostalgic memories felt subjectively close.

As in Studies 1 and 2, I conducted moderated mediation analyses to examine if the effect of condition on current mood via temporal affect discrepancy was moderated by subjective closeness. As Figure 9 shows, the indirect relationship between condition and positive mood via present-self affect was moderated by subjective closeness, $b = .24$, $SE = .11$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = .03, .45$. Therefore, I examined indirect effects of condition on positive mood via present-self affect at high (+1SD) and low (-1SD) levels of subjective closeness. Results suggested that there was an indirect path between condition and positive mood through present-self affect when subjective closeness was low, $b = -.58$, $SE = .18$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.96, -.25$, but not high, $b = .02$, $SE = .19$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.35, .37$.

Subjective closeness also moderated the indirect effect of condition on negative mood, $b = -.21$, $SE = .10$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.43, -.04$, and mixed mood, $b = -.08$, $SE = .04$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.18, -.02$, via present-self affect. As such, I examined indirect effects of condition on negative and mixed mood via present-self affect at high (+1SD) and low (-1SD) levels of subjective closeness. When subjective closeness was low, there emerged an indirect path between condition and both negative, $b = .51$, $SE = .17$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = .22, .89$, and mixed mood, $b = .19$, $SE = .08$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = .07, .40$, through present-self affect. Subjective closeness did not moderate the indirect relationship between
condition and positive, $b = .03, SE = .04, CI_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.13, .03$, negative, $b = .01, SE = .01, CI_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.01, .07$, or mixed mood, $b = -.01, SE = .01, CI_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.01, .06$, via past-self affect. In other words, it appears that nostalgia led to increased positive and decreased negative and mixed moods by lowering affect toward positive presents to the extent that those memories felt subjectively distant.

![Figure 9](image)

**Figure 9.** Regression coefficients for the relationship between condition (1 = ordinary, 2 = nostalgia) and current mood (P = positive mood, N = negative mood) as mediated by past- and present- self affect and moderated by subjective closeness. Note: $b (SE), +p < .10, * p < .01, ** p < .001$.

**Positive Future versus Ordinary Memory Conditions**

To examine whether the aforementioned effects are unique to nostalgia as opposed to simply contemplating a positive temporal self more generally, I conducted the same analyses comparing positive future and ordinary memory conditions.
Manipulation checks. Consistent with the notion that nostalgia involves a wistful affection for the past, participants in the positive future and ordinary memory conditions reported equal levels of nostalgia, $t (267) = -0.85, p = .40, d = .08$ (see Table 5 for descriptive statistics).

Temporal affect discrepancy. I conducted independent samples t-tests predicting event-self affect (i.e., positive future or ordinary memory), present-self affect, and temporal affect discrepancy from condition. Participants in the positive future condition reported more positive event selves than the ordinary-condition participants, $t (258) = -7.53, p < .001, d = .92$. Conditions did not differ in terms of present selves, $t (258) = 1.28, p = .20, d = .16$, so therefore those contemplating a positive future reported greater temporal affect discrepancy ($M = -1.24, SD = 1.74$) than those in the control condition ($M = .53, SD = 2.20$), $t (258) = 7.23, p < .001, d = .89$.

Current mood. I conducted three independent samples t-tests to examine differences in positive, negative, and mixed mood between positive future and ordinary memory conditions. The positive future and control conditions did not differ in terms of either positive, $t (260) = -1.14, p = .26, d = .14$, or negative mood, $t (260) = .69, p = .50, d = .09$. However, participants in the positive future condition reported experiencing marginally lower levels of mixed mood than those in the ordinary memory condition, $t (260) = 1.90, p = .06, d = .23$.

I ran mediation analyses to examine any indirect effect of condition on current mood via event and present selves (see Figure 10). Although the direct effect of condition on positive mood was nonsignificant, an indirect effect via event-self affect emerged, $b =$
.31, $SE = .10$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = .15, .54$, such that those in the positive future (versus ordinary) condition described a more positive future self, which lead to increased positive mood. An indirect effect of condition on positive mood via present-self affect did not emerge, $b = -.13$, $SE = .10$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.32, .07$. Further, indirect effects of condition on negative mood did not emerge for either event-self, $b = -.14$, $SE = .09$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.32, .04$, or present-self affect, $b = .12$, $SE = .09$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.07, .31$. This was also the case when mixed mood served as the outcome variable, event-self affect: $b = -.03$, $SE = .09$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.23, .14$; present-self affect: $b = .04$, $SE = .04$, CI$_{95\%\text{bootstrapped}} = -.02, .14$.

**Figure 10.** Regression coefficients for the relationship between condition (1 = ordinary, 2 = positive future) and current mood (P = positive mood, N = negative mood, M = mixed mood) as mediated by event- and present-self affect. Note: $b (SE)$, $+p < .10$, $*.p < .01$, $$p < .001.$
Moderation analyses. I conducted multiple regression analysis predicting temporal affect discrepancy from condition, subjective closeness, and their interaction to see whether the effect of condition on event-self affect, present self-affect and temporal affect discrepancy was moderated by subjective closeness (see Table 6).

Table 6

Multiple Regression of Variables Predicting Temporal Selves (Study 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Event-self Affect</th>
<th>Present-self Affect</th>
<th>Discrepancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
<td>Partial r</td>
<td>b (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cond.</td>
<td>2.33 (.59)**</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-2.47 (.66)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>.90 (.38)*</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>1.22 (.43)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cond. x Closeness</td>
<td>-.25 (.15)</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.60 (.17)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cond. = condition (1 = ordinary, 2 = positive future memory), + p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .001.

Condition was positively related to event-self affect and negatively related to present-self affect. As a result, those in the positive future condition experienced greater temporal affect discrepancy in the negative direction (i.e., positive future selves rated more positively than present selves). Additionally, subjectively close memories predicted more positive event-self affect and present-self affect. Thus, high subjective closeness was related to decreased temporal affect discrepancy. However, an interaction between
condition and subjective closeness qualified these main effects for present-self affect and temporal affect discrepancy.

As such, I examined the effect of condition on temporal affect discrepancy at high (+1SD) and low (-1SD) levels of subjective closeness. When positive future events felt subjectively distant, positive future events were associated with less positive present selves, $b = -1.03, SE = .30, p < .001, r_{Partial}^2 = .21$, and therefore increasingly negative temporal affect discrepancy, $b = -2.78, SE = .33, p < .001, r_{Partial}^2 = .46$. For subjectively- close positive futures, on the other hand, condition was unrelated to present-self affect, $b = .42, SE = .04, p = .17, r_{Partial}^2 = .09$, and negatively related to temporal affect discrepancy, $b = - .73, SE = .33, p = .03, r_{Partial}^2 = -.14$. In sum, people felt less positively about their present selves when positive future events felt far away, thus increasing the affective discrepancy between the present self and a positive future self. When positive future events felt close, though, people rate positive future selves and present selves similarly positively.

Finally, I conducted moderated mediation analyses to see if the indirect effect of condition on current mood via temporal affect discrepancy was moderated by subjective closeness. As shown in Figure 11, subjective closeness moderated the indirect effect of condition on positive mood via present-self affect, $b = .28, SE = .09, CI_{95\% Bootstrapped} = .10, .48$, but not event-self affect, $b = -.05, SE = .04, CI_{95\% Bootstrapped} = -.14 -.01$. An examination of the indirect effect of condition on mood via present-self affect at high (+1SD) and low (-1SD) levels of subjective closeness reveals there was an indirect relationship between condition and positive mood via present-self affect when positive
future events felt subjectively distant, $b = -.49$, $SE = .16$, CI$_{95\%}$Bootstrapped = -.82, -.17. However, there was no indirect effect of condition on positive mood via present self-affect when positive futures felt subjectively close, $b = .21$, $SE = .15$, CI$_{95\%}$Bootstrapped = -.06, .55. That is, thinking about a distant positive future elicited a reduction in present-self affect, which in turn led to increased positive mood. Those in the positive future condition experienced increased positive mood via increased future-self affect regardless of how subjectively close that event feels. However, positive futures also appeared to bolster current mood by decreasing present-self affect when those futures felt distant.

![Figure 11](image.png)

**Figure 11.** Regression coefficients for the relationship between condition (1 = ordinary, 2 = positive future) and current mood (P = positive mood, N = negative mood, M = mixed mood) as mediated by event- and present-self affect and moderated by subjective closeness. Note: $b (SE)$, $+p < .10$, $* p < .01$, $** p < .001$. 

As with positive mood, subjective closeness did not moderate the (non-significant) indirect effects of condition on negative mood via event self-affect, \( b = .02, SE = .03, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = -.01, .10 \). Subjective closeness did, however, moderate indirect effects of condition on negative mood via present-self affect, \( b = -.25, SE = .09, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = -.48, -.10 \). Present selves decreased negative mood in the positive future condition via decreased present-self affect but only when those futures seem distant, \( b = .45, SE = .15, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = .17, .78 \), but not close, \( b = -.19, SE = .14, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = -.52, .04 \). Additionally, subjective closeness moderated the indirect effect of condition on mixed mood via present-self, \( b = -.10, SE = .05, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = -.26, -.03 \), but not event-self affect, \( b = .01, SE = .02, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = .02, .07 \). Specifically, when subjective closeness was low, condition decreased mixed mood by decreasing present-self affect, \( b = .18, SE = .09, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = .05, .41 \). By contrast, when subjective closeness was high, present-self affect did not explain the relationship between condition and mixed mood, \( b = -.08, SE = .06, CI_{95\% \text{Bootstrapped}} = -.28, .01 \).

**Study 3: Discussion**

Study 3 provides additional evidence for the unique contributions of temporal selves towards the current mood associated with nostalgic reverie. In particular, manipulating nostalgia led to increased positive mood due to overwhelming positivity surrounding past selves. Negative and mixed mood, on the other hand, declined from decreased positivity of present self-descriptions. In other words, reflecting upon a nostalgic past makes us feel good. This positive mood, however, is accompanied by decreased positivity surrounding the present self.
Moreover, the effects of nostalgia on mood were consistent for event-selves. By contrast, the effects of nostalgia on mood via affect toward one’s present-self depended on how close the nostalgic memory felt. Present selves were construed as less positive when nostalgic memories felt distant (but not when they felt close). Nostalgia, therefore, predicts current mood depending on the unique interplay of temporal selves. Interestingly, Study 3 demonstrated that this very same links to mood emerged when one considered a positive future event. This suggests that contemplating a very positive temporal self more generally can lead to similar affective outcomes as those that arise from reflecting upon a nostalgic time in the past.
CHAPTER 3: GENERAL DISCUSSION

I designed the present research to better understand nostalgia’s affective signature. In particular, I drew upon predictions from temporal self-appraisal theory to test whether the way past and present selves are construed explains mood associated with nostalgic reverie. I hypothesized that nostalgia would relate to past self-descriptions that are overwhelmingly positive and closer to present self-descriptions, particularly when that past self feels close. I also hypothesized that the effect of positivity surrounding past and present selves ought to provide unique explanations of the current mood associated with nostalgia. Three studies generally supported these hypotheses.

In Studies 1 and 2, I attempted to elicit nostalgia indirectly by prompting people to feel self-uncertain. The manipulation proved marginally successful in prompting nostalgia in Study 1, and also prompted participants to describe past and present selves that were similarly positive in affective tone. The manipulation was unsuccessful in Study 2. Nevertheless, an interaction between self-reported experienced nostalgia and subjective closeness suggested that nostalgia reduced temporal-affect discrepancy most among those subjectively distant from their past self by both bolstering affect toward a past self and diminishing affect toward a present self. Among those subjectively close to their memory, past and present selves were described similarly positively regardless of experienced nostalgia. Importantly, Studies 1 and 2 supported the notion that the affective tone of past and present selves each uniquely predicts current mood. Experienced nostalgia led to diminishingly negative mood (Study 1) and increasingly positive mood (Study 2) through recalling a positive past self. Further Study 2 implies the importance of
subjective closeness of nostalgic memories in the understanding of present-self affect. Indeed, present selves were described less positively when nostalgic memories felt more distant. Dips in present-self affect did not occur, though, when nostalgic memories felt close to the present moment.

In Study 3, I directly manipulated nostalgia. In contrast to Studies 1 and 2, manipulated nostalgia elicited greater temporal affect discrepancy relative to a control condition due to past selves that are described more positively than present selves. However, as in Study 2, the asymmetry between tones of past and present self-descriptions becomes less pronounced when people feel subjectively close to the memory recalled. Furthermore, the predictive value of past and present selves on current mood was replicated and extended in Study 3. Positive past selves explained the effect of the nostalgia condition on positive mood, and less positive present selves account for the decreased negative and mixed mood associated with nostalgia. Importantly, though, the influence of positive past selves on positive current mood emerged regardless of how subjectively close the nostalgic memory felt. Conversely, decreased negative and mixed mood via diminishingly positive present selves only occurred when the nostalgic memory felt far away. Taken together, the present studies provide evidence for a more nuanced understanding of nostalgia’s affective signature. The manner in which nostalgic reverie promotes positive mood states depends on the parceled influence of past and present selves, respectively, as well as the closeness of the nostalgic memory.
Implications and Applications

In addition to supporting the primary hypotheses, Study 3 also revealed that the effects of nostalgia do not appear to be unique to considering a nostalgic past self. Indeed, considering a positive future self elicited almost identical effects. These effects suggest that the unique effects of nostalgia on mood may not be so unique after all. Indeed, they may arise from contemplating any very positive temporal self. Still, with few exceptions (e.g., Sedikides et al., 2016; Vess et al., 2012) most nostalgia research employs an ordinary memory as a control group. As such, future research is needed to investigate whether other benefits of nostalgia can be elicited by considering other positive temporal selves.

Of course, some research suggests that nostalgia’s positive effects are distinct from those due to recalling or imagining a positive temporal self. For example, Vess and colleagues (2012) found that individuals who recall a nostalgic event show heightened accessibility of positive self-attributes relative to those considering positive future selves, and further, that this effect could not be explained simply by positive mood. Moreover, Sedikides and colleagues (2016) showed that recalling a nostalgic memory was distinct from recalling a time when one was lucky in the past. That said, in light of the present research, future research should continue to employ control conditions that include positive temporal selves in lieu of (or in addition to) an ordinary event memories so as to illuminate the uniquely positive effects of nostalgia.

The present research also has implications for understanding temporal self-appraisal. Typically, past selves are malleable in efforts to improve self-standing when
past and present selves do not align. That is, positive past selves that stand in contrast with less positive (or even negative) present selves may be derogated to improve perceptions of the present self (Wilson & Ross, 2001). Additionally, past selves may be assimilated towards the present self to heighten positivity of the present self (Ross & Wilson, 2003). It appears the former, and not the latter, may occur with nostalgic memories. Indeed, if positive past selves were derogated in instances that were not ripe for assimilation (e.g., when recalling subjectively distant nostalgic memories) then one would expect past selves to be construed less positively when nostalgic memories feel far away from the present moment. This was not the case. In fact, the positivity of present selves changed based on subjective closeness of the memory, suggesting that positive past selves are assimilated towards the present moment to the extent that nostalgic memories feel subjectively close. Moreover, distant nostalgic memories cause a contrast effect, thereby prompting derogation of the present self.

The present research also provides insight into the varied definitions of nostalgia over time. Although present research implies that nostalgia is positively toned (e.g. Wildshut et al., 2006), some have argued that nostalgia is associated with negativity (Peters, 1985) or ambivalence (Holak & Havlena, 1992) in present. The current studies suggest that all of these definitions are possible depending on the way past and present selves are construed in conjunction with subjective closeness of the nostalgic memory. Indeed, whereas nostalgia may increase current mood by recalling a positive temporal time, subjectively distant nostalgic memories can promote negative and mixed affect.
Limitations and Future Directions

Although the present research demonstrates conditions under which nostalgia may be associated with positive mood, it provides no examination of whether this has implications for the functional utility of nostalgia. That is, it is still unknown whether experiencing positive or negative mood as a result of nostalgia necessarily means that nostalgia’s functions also become less positive. Future research is needed to address this question.

Relatedly, future research should examine the unique properties of past and present selves as they predict the functional utility of nostalgia. For instance, research demonstrates that nostalgia heightens accessibility of positive self-attributes above and beyond the presence of positive mood (Vess et al., 2012). Considering past and present selves, separately, might paint a different picture. Specifically, heightened accessibility of positive traits may correlate most with past self-descriptions relative to present self-descriptions. Just as the present research provides a more nuanced picture of the mood associated with nostalgia, so might exist a more nuanced explanation of nostalgia’s functional utility.

Finally, the present research does not consider the lasting effect of nostalgia’s affective properties. Although the current studies demonstrate conditions under which nostalgia is associated with various current moods, it remains untested how long these effects persist. Future investigations are needed to assess how quickly mood-states elicited by nostalgia fade, or even change, over time.
Conclusion

The present research provides a unique contribution to the nostalgia literature by considering the distinct influence of affect toward past and present selves as those assessments give rise to current mood. According to current findings, positivity associated with nostalgia can be largely explained by remembering past selves that are particularly positive. However, the present studies also afford that nostalgia’s positivity can be associated with decreased positivity surrounding the present self. Moreover, these temporal comparisons seem to operate in tandem with the closeness of the nostalgic memory. When nostalgic memories feel subjectively close, the positive past bleeds into the present. When those memories feel distant, though, this positivity is accompanied by present selves that are described less positively.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: STUDY 1 MATERIALS

(1) Nostalgia Manipulation via Self-Uncertainty (e.g., Morrison & Johnson, 2011)

**Self-Uncertainty Condition**

You are being asked to write a brief essay. In this essay, please write about three aspects of your life that make you feel most uncertain about yourself, your life, and your future.

**Self-Certainty Condition**

You are being asked to write a brief essay. In this essay, please write about three aspects of your life that make you feel most certain about yourself, your life, and your future.

(2) Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988)

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and indicate the extent to which you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment.

1. **Interested**

   1. **Interested**
      
      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
      |---|---|---|---|---|
      | Very slightly or not at all | A little | Moderately | Quite a bit | Extremely |

2. **Distressed**

   2. **Distressed**
      
      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
      |---|---|---|---|---|
      | Very slightly or not at all | A little | Moderately | Quite a bit | Extremely |

3. **Excited**

   3. **Excited**
      
      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
      |---|---|---|---|---|
      | Very slightly or not at all | A little | Moderately | Quite a bit | Extremely |

4. **Upset**

   4. **Upset**
      
<pre><code>  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
  |---|---|---|---|---|
  | Very slightly or not at all | A little | Moderately | Quite a bit | Extremely |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Strong</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Guilty</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Scared</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Hostile</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. Enthusiastic</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Proud</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. Irritable</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. Alert</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13. Ashamed</strong></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Past and Present Selves Writing Task (adapted from Wilson & Ross, 2000)

Past Self

Think back to how you were at age 16. Take some time to sit and reflect upon this past self – try to vividly imagine how you were at age 16. In the space provided below, please write a description of your 16-year-old self in your own words. Use whatever information you feel is useful.
Present Self

Think about how you are now, in the present. Take some time to sit and reflect upon this present self – try to vividly imagine how you are now. In the space provided below, please write a description of your present self in your own words. Use whatever information you feel is useful.

(4) Experienced Nostalgia (e.g. Baldwin et al., 2015)

1. **Right now, I am feeling nostalgic.**

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly Disagree  Neutral  Strongly Agree

2. **Right now, I am feeling sentimental.**

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly Disagree  Neutral  Strongly Agree

3. **Right now, I am feeling wistful.**

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly Disagree  Neutral  Strongly Agree

4. **Right now, I am feeling a sense of longing for the past.**

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly Disagree  Neutral  Strongly Agree

(5) Self-Concept Clairty (Campbell et al., 1996)

1. **My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another.**

   1  2  3  4  5
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
2. On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

5. When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I'm not sure what I was really like.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

7. Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

8. My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
9. *If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. *Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone what I'm really like.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. *In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. *It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don't really know what I want.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) Southampton Nostalgia Scale (Barret et al., 2010)
According to the Oxford Dictionary, ‘nostalgia’ is defined as a ‘sentimental longing for the past.’

1. How valuable is nostalgia for you?  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Not at all Very much

2. How important is it for you to bring to mind nostalgic experiences?  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Not at all Very much

3. How significant is it for you to feel nostalgic?  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Not at all Very much

4. How prone are you to feeling nostalgic?  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Not at all Very much

5. How often do you experience nostalgia?  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Very rarely Very frequently

6. Generally speaking, how often do you bring to mind nostalgic experiences?  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Very rarely Very frequently

7. Specifically, how often do you bring to mind nostalgic experiences? (Please check one.)  
   
   _____ At least once a day  
   _____ Three to four times a week  
   _____ Approximately twice a week  
   _____ Approximately once a week  
   _____ Once or twice a month  
   _____ Once every couple of months  
   _____ Once or twice a year
APPENDIX B: STUDY 2 MATERIALS

(1) Self-Uncertainty Manipulation (adapted from Campbell et al. (1996) and Salancik & Conway (1975)).

**Self-Certainty Manipulation:**

Here are some statements about who you are today. Use the true/false scale to indicate which ones are true and which ones are false.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True (1)</th>
<th>False (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is never very clear to me who I really am. (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way that I think about myself is always inconsistent with how I act. (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of my self-attributes are consistent with each other. (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am never the same person from situation to situation. (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Self- Uncertainty Manipulation:**

Here are some statements about who you are today. Use the true/false scale to indicate which ones are true and which ones are false.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True (1)</th>
<th>False (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is sometimes unclear to me who I really am. (1)</td>
<td>◦</td>
<td>◦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way that I think about myself is sometimes inconsistent with how I act. (2)</td>
<td>◦</td>
<td>◦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of my self-attributes are inconsistent with each other. (3)</td>
<td>◦</td>
<td>◦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am sometimes a different person from situation to situation. (4)</td>
<td>◦</td>
<td>◦</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988)

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and indicate the extent to which you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment.

1. **Interested**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Distressed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Excited**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. **Upset**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Strong**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Guilty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
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</table>

7. **Scared**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
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</table>

8. **Hostile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

9. **Enthusiastic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. **Proud**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. **Irritable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashamed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jittery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very slightly or not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. **Afraid**

1 2 3 4 5
Very slightly or not at all A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely

21. **Uncertain***

1 2 3 4 5
Very slightly or not at all A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely

(3) Memory Recall Task (Baldwin et al., 2015)

Think of a memory from your past. People have all sorts of memories so there are no rules for the kind of memory you think about. Once you have a memory in mind, please write about it in the space provided below.

The following items refer to the memory you just described. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements based on the scale provided.

1. This memory makes me feel nostalgic.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

2. This memory makes me feel sentimental.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

3. This memory makes me feel a sense of yearning.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree
4. This memory makes me feel a sense of longing for my past.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree

5. How often do you bring this memory to mind?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree

6. How close do you feel to this memory?

(4) Past and Present Selves Writing Task

**Past Self:**

Think back to how you were in the memory you just described. In the space provided below, write a description of your past self from this memory. Use whatever information you feel is useful.

**Present Self:**

Think back to how you are now. In the space provided below, write a description of who you are now. Use whatever information you feel is useful.
Please refer back to the responses you just wrote as you answer the following questions:

1. Look back to your description of your past self. How positive is this description?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Not at All  Neutral  Extremely  
   Positive    Positive

2. Look back to your description of your present self. How positive is this description?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Not at All  Neutral  Extremely  
   Positive    Positive

3. Thinking back to both descriptions, how similar does your past self feel to your present self?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
   Not at All  Neutral  Extremely  
   Positive    Positive
APPENDIX C: STUDY 3 MATERIALS

(1) Event Reflection Task (Routledge et al., 2011)

**Nostalgia Condition:**

Please bring to mind a nostalgic time in your life. Nostalgia is often defined as a sentimental longing or affection for the past. Specifically, try to think of a time that makes you feel most nostalgic. Please write down four keywords relevant to this nostalgic time from your past.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  

Please elaborate on this nostalgic memory in more detail:

**Ordinary Condition:**

Please bring to mind an ordinary time in your life. Specifically, try to think of a time that makes you feel most ordinary. Please write down four keywords relevant to this ordinary time from your past.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  

Please elaborate on this ordinary memory in more detail:

**Positive Future Condition:**

Please bring to mind a positive future event. Specifically, try to think about a time in your future that makes you feel most positive. Please write down four keywords relevant to this positive time in your future.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  

Please elaborate on this positive future event in more detail:
(2) Manipulation Check Items

Indicate the extent to which you are experiencing the following:

1. **Sentimental**
   
   
   1
   
   Very slightly or not at all
   
   2
   
   A little
   
   3
   
   Moderately
   
   4
   
   Quite a bit
   
   5
   
   Extremely

2. **Longing**
   
   1
   
   Very slightly or not at all
   
   2
   
   A little
   
   3
   
   Moderately
   
   4
   
   Quite a bit
   
   5
   
   Extremely

16. **Nostalgic**
   
   1
   
   Very slightly or not at all
   
   2
   
   A little
   
   3
   
   Moderately
   
   4
   
   Quite a bit
   
   5
   
   Extremely

(3) Subjective Closeness (Baldwin et al., 2015)

How subjectively close do you feel to the memory you just described?

(4) Event and Present Selves Writing Task

**Event Self:**

Think back to how you were in the event you just described. In the space provided below, write a description of your past self from this event. Use whatever information you feel is useful.

**Present Self:**

Think back to how you are now. In the space provided below, write a description of who you are now. Use whatever information you feel is useful.
Please refer back to the responses you just wrote as you answer the following questions:

1. Look back to your description of your event self. How positive is this description?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Not at All Neutral Extremely
   Positive           Positive

2. Look back to your description of your present self. How positive is this description?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Not at All Neutral Extremely
   Positive           Positive

3. Thinking back to both descriptions, how similar does your event self feel to your present self?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Not at All Neutral Extremely
   Positive           Positive

(5) Subjective Temporal Distancing (adapted from Peetz & Wilson, 2008)

Please place your past self on the timeline provided below by marking an X:

---

The Past                  Right Now                  The Future
(6) Current Affect (Larsen et al., 2001)

1. Do you feel calm?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how calm do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly  Moderately  Extremely

2. Do you feel depressed?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how depressed do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly  Moderately  Extremely

3. Do you feel happy?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how happy do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly  Moderately  Extremely

4. Do you feel excited?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how excited do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly  Moderately  Extremely

5. Do you feel stressed?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how stressed do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly  Moderately  Extremely
6. Do you feel tense?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how tense do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly Moderately Extremely

7. Do you feel relaxed?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how relaxed do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly Moderately Extremely

8. Do you feel sad?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how sad do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly Moderately Extremely

9. Do you feel bittersweet?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   If you answered yes, how bittersweet do you feel?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Slightly Moderately Extremely

10. Do you feel ambivalent?
    a. Yes
    b. No

    If you answered yes, how ambivalent do you feel?
    1  2  3  4  5  6  7
    Slightly Moderately Extremely