# Reasons to Reminisce

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If someone said you could lower your blood pressure and heart rate, raise your serotonin, and do it all without medication, drugs, or exercise, what would you say? Tell me more? Reminiscence therapy can do all of this and more! When we take time to visit the pleasant life experiences of yesterday, optimism and self- esteem are also improved.

Sentences beginning with “Do you remember the time when…” bring laughter to the heart and warmth to the soul. The power of golden memories opens the draw bridge of time, allowing safe passage to a land filled with butterflies, green trees, blue birds and autumn leaves.

The best thing about reminiscence therapy? It is so easy to do! Find a quiet spot and think about a moment in time you never want to forget. As you focus on your special memory, close your eyes and re-experience all that occurred during that moment.

Where were you? Who was with you? What do you smell? What do you hear? Is it summer or spring? Winter or fall? The more details you capture as you re-imagine the moment, the more beneficial your reminiscence experience will be.

When you practice this technique, you will find precious memories locked away, waiting patiently to be re-discovered. You may also find visiting such treasures brings a smile to your face with an overall sense of well being that wasn’t there before. This is the value of reminiscing!

Reminiscing is also a valuable tool for individuals living with dementia. The human brain is like a complicated storage unit, keeping memories tucked away until the right “key” unlocks them. When dementia is present, props such as old photos, music, and personal recordings may be necessary to help with successful reminiscence therapy.

A special song from the past, favorite family stories of long ago, and other pleasant memories from the past revisited bring comfort to the person living with dementia in the present.

An important step to begin to experience the benefits of reminiscence therapy is to start a journal. You don’t have to be good at writing. You only need to be good at writing down what you remember. After collecting several “memories” in your journal, have a seat in your favorite chair wearing your favorite comfy clothes. Read through your own reflections and enjoy the magic. Some say it’s better than a box of chocolates!