

# Reminiscence Functions Scale

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At different points throughout their lives, most adults think about the past. Recalling earlier times can happen spontaneously or deliberately, privately or with other people, and may involve remembering both happy and sad episodes. The process of recalling memories from our personal past is called reminiscence, an activity engaged in by adults of all ages.

This questionnaire concerns the why, or functions, of reminiscence. That is, what purpose does reminiscence fulfill, or, what goal does retrieving certain memories help you accomplish?

Below are listed 43 statements which other people have identified as possible uses or functions of reminiscence. You are to carefully read each statement and then rate each statement on the scale describing how frequently you reminisce with that particular purpose in mind. Note that we are not asking you how frequently you reminisce in general, but rather, WHEN YOU DO REMINISCE, how frequently is it for a particular purpose. For example, a statement might read:

“I reminisce to help me solve current problems.”

If you have NEVER used reminiscence for that purpose, rate that statement as 1, RARELY is rated as 2, SELDOM as 3, OCCASIONALLY is rated as 4, OFTEN is rated as 5, and if you VERY FREQUENTLY reminisce for the stated purpose, then rate the statement as 6.

Please answer each question separately. That is, some of the statements may seem to be describing similar functions, but rate each statement independently of both earlier and later statements. Answer as truthfully as possible and work relatively quickly, as your first impressions are often the most accurate. Please record your answers in the spaces provided at the end of each statement. Thank you.

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When I reminisce it is: (please circle one number per question).

NEVER

RARELY

SELDOM

## OCCASIONALLY

## OFTEN

VERY FREQUENTLY

1. to teach younger family members what life was like when I was young and living in a different time.
2. to help me “put my house in order” before I die.
3. because it fills the gap when I find time “heavy on my hands”.
4. to help me plan for the future.
5. to keep alive the memory of a dead loved one.
6. because it brings me closer to newer friends and acquaintances.
7. because it promotes fellowship and a sense of belonging.
8. because it helps me contrast the ways I’ve changed with the ways I’ve stayed the same.
9. because it gives me a sense of personal completion or wholeness as I approach the end of life.
10. to see how my past fits in with my journey through life.
11. to pass the time during idle or restless hours.
12. to help solve some current difficulty.
13. to keep painful memories alive.
14. out of loyalty to keep alive the memory of someone close to me who has died.
15. to rehash lost opportunities.
16. to reduce boredom.
17. to remember an earlier time when I was treated unfairly by others.

1    2    3    4    5    6

1    2    3    4    5    6

1    2    3    4    5    6

1    2    3    4    5    6

1    2    3    4    5    6

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

18. to remind me that I have the skills to cope with present problems.
19. to relieve depression.
20. to transmit knowledge that I've acquired to someone else.
21. for lack of any better mental stimulation.
22. to create a common bond between old and new friends.
23. in order to teach younger persons about cultural values.
24. because it gives me a sense of self-identity.
25. to remember someone who has passed away.
26. because remembering my past helps me define who I am now.
27. as a way of bridging the "generation gap".
28. as a "social lubricant" to get people talking.
29. because it helps me prepare for my own death.
30. in order to leave a legacy of family history.
31. to put current problems in perspective.
32. to try to understand myself better.
33. because I feel less fearful of death after I finish reminiscing.
34. to create ease of conversation.
35. because it helps me see that I've lived a full life and can therefore accept death more calmly.
36. as a means of self-exploration and growth.
37. for something to do.
38. because it helps me cope with thoughts of my own mortality.
39. to see how my strengths can help me solve a current problem.
40. to rekindle bitter memories.
41. to remember people I was close to but who are no longer a part of my life.
42. to avoid repeating past mistakes at some later date.

[illegible]

43. to keep memories of old hurts fresh in my mind.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Scoring: Sum over the following items to obtain factor scores. Sum over factor scores to obtain total RFS score.

Boredom Reduction: 16,37,11,21,3,19

Death Preparation: 33,35,29,38,9,2

Identity: 32,26,36,8,10,24

Problem-Solving: 39,31,18,42,12,4

Conversation: 22,7,34,28,6

Intimacy Maintenance: 5,25,14,41

Bitterness Revivial: 43,40,13,15,17

Teach/Inform: 1,23,30,27,20

Filename: RFS.doc  
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