

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MEMENTO:

Anterograde Amnesia, Confabulation, and the Self We Construct

Memory fails. Stories remain.
How we build meaning, protect our identity,
and keep going—even when the
truth is out of reach.

1



ANTEROGRADE AMNESIA: A WORLD THAT WON'T STICK

- What does Leonard's memory loss look like in the film?
- How would not being able to form new memories affect your daily life?
- What strengths and challenges did Leonard develop because of his condition?

2



EXTERNAL MEMORY SYSTEMS: BUILDING CONTINUITY OUTSIDE THE BRAIN

- What tools does Leonard use to cope with his memory loss?
- How do these tools help him—and where do they fall short?
- What "external systems" do you use in your own life to remember and stay organized?

3



CONFABULATION: FILLING GAPS WITH STORY

- What is confabulation, and how does the film illustrate it?
- Why does the brain create stories to fill in missing pieces?
- When might a story feel true even if it isn't actually accurate?

4



IDENTITY AS STORY: THE NARRATIVE WE NEED TO BELIEVE

- How does Leonard's story shape who he believes he is?
- What does the film suggest about the role of story in creating identity?
- How can stories in our lives both help and harm us?

5



GRIEF AND PURPOSE: THE DRIVE BENEATH THE INVESTIGATION

- How does grief fuel Leonard's need for answers?
- What purpose does the investigation give him—real or imagined?
- How do we sometimes hold onto a purpose that keeps us moving forward?

6



THE DANGER AND NECESSITY OF SELF-DECEPTION

- Why might self-deception help Leonard survive?
- How can it also keep him from seeing the truth?
- How can we hold both compassion and honesty with ourselves?



REFLECT TOGETHER



What stories do I tell myself about who I am and why I do what I do?



Which stories help me live with more meaning and connection?



What would it look like to hold myself with both truth and kindness as I keep moving forward?



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Understanding
minds.



Strengthening
connections.