

# Magnetic Mindfulness for Young People



## Introduction:

Over the last decade or so mindfulness has re-emerged as a valuable health and wellness practice for everyday life. Unlike other health based practices, like weight lifting where we can see muscle development through repetition, the effects of mindfulness are not as easily observed. As we continue to seek out ways to help us grasp the effects and benefits of mindfulness, here's an analogy and experiment for professionals to use with young people or parents and carers, to aid their understanding of mindfulness.



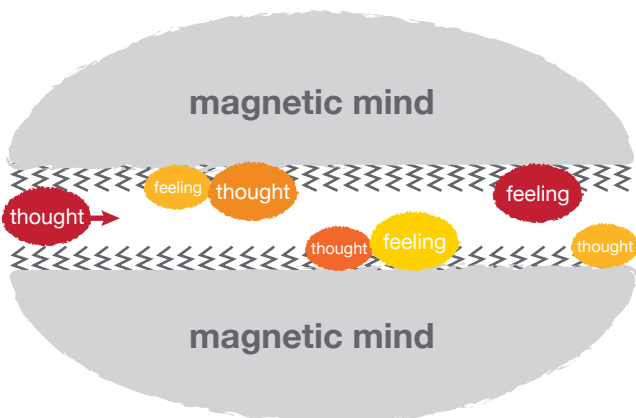
## An Analogy - Our Magnetic Minds:

Every day we have thousands of thoughts passing through our mind. Unfortunately, sometimes we think thoughts we don't want to think. These thoughts get stuck and magnetize in our minds. If emotions such as fear, anxiety, sadness, guilt, or worry attach to the thought, the thought gets even bigger and has more magnetic attraction in our mind.

What mindfulness attempts to do is to reduce the power of the magnets so that those thoughts can pass through our minds more easily. The more we practice mindfulness, the weaker the magnets in our minds become.

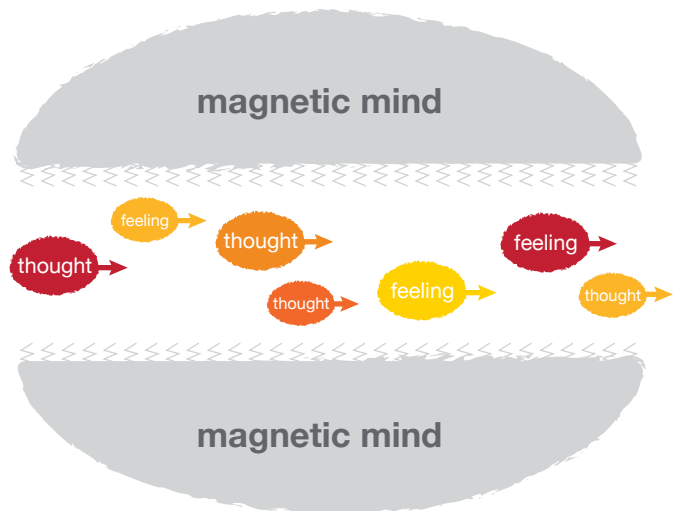
### Non-Mindful Magnetism

A busy, wary or distracted state: strong magnetic pull with stuck thoughts and feelings.



### Mindful Magnetism

An open, mindful state: thoughts and feelings pass through the mind with weak magnetic pull.



### Magnetic Mindfulness- An Experiment:

Following is an activity that demonstrates the above analogy that young people could experiment with.



#### What you will need:

- 2 long magnets – (representing a magnetized mind)
- A small range of different sized metal objects, e.g. Coins or metal balls – (representing thoughts and thoughts with emotions attached)



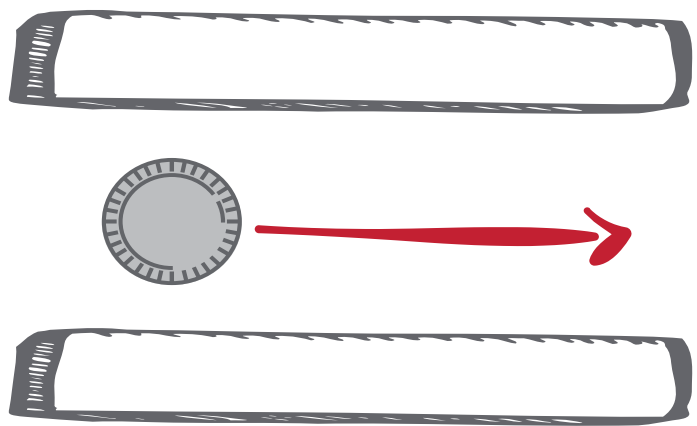
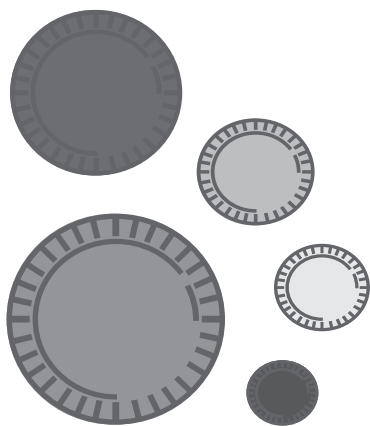
#### The Experiment:

Place 2 long magnets on a table or the ground, parallel with each other. This is our magnetized mind.

Move a small coin or metal ball between them. This is a thought traveling through our mind. See if the coin moves through without being caught by the magnets. Experiment with moving the magnets closer together- indicating a more magnetized mind, and further apart. What happens?

Use a bigger coin (which might represent a thought attached to an emotion) and see how it's even more likely the coin will get stuck on the magnets, because it's bigger and has more magnetic attraction.

Spread the two magnets further apart- this is what mindfulness allows our mind. It decreases the strength of the magnetic field in our mind to allow thoughts to pass through more easily, without getting stuck. Move coins through and feel the reduced magnetic pull.



### Three Tasks for reducing the mind's magnetism you could share with young people:



#### Acceptance:

Thoughts are going to always come through our mind, like a passing parade, and we can choose to pay attention to them, or not. As we accept our thoughts in this way, our mind expands, and our thoughts are less likely to get magnetized and stuck.



#### Focus on the Breath:

Our mind can only focus on one thing at a time. By focusing on our breath, we aren't focusing on those tricky magnetic thoughts. This takes practice, but each time we let go of a thought and return to focus on our breath we are growing this skill.



#### Commitment:

Just like going to the gym, mindfulness might take a while before we notice any real change. We also might not like it to start with because it could expose us to some thoughts that feel hard. However, the more we practice, the further apart and weaker the magnets become, and this makes it easier to let thoughts pass through our mind.



#### Mindfulness Related Apps to try:

Smiling Mind - IOS, Android, or Web

Stop, Breathe and Think - IOS, Android, or Web

Headspace - IOS, Android, or Web

Calm - IOS, Android or Web

Mindful Powers - IOS or Android