Mind Full, or Mindful?

Mindfulness is.....

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment on purpose with kindness and curiosity. The essence of mindfulness is very simple. We practice being in the here and now. This can be tricky because the mind is a great time traveller, planning for the weekend or replaying an embarrassing experience we had yesterday. The body, on the other hand, is only ever in one place. So we use our body as an anchor to bring our mind into the present moment.

Give it a try.

Can you feel the sensation of the soles of your feet? Can you notice the feeling in your chest? Can you tune in to your breathing?

By coming home to the body and the senses, we cultivate an awareness of life as we live it, from moment to moment. This is mindfulness.

We practice mindfulness to:

- Feel calmer
- Get to know ourselves better
- Soften reactivity and steady our emotions
- Improve focus and increase our attention span
- Let go of stress
- Improve our relationships with friends and family
- Develop compassion
- Build patience
- Strengthen resilience

2 minute Guided Breathing Exercise

- Sit comfortably on the chair.
- Both feet on the floor
- Feel the chair underneath you
- Close your eyes if you want to or just focus on something
- Breathe in through your nose, hold and breathe out through your mouth
- Focus on the breath entering your body, feel it in your lungs, try and push your breath into your feet

Session 2

1. Check –in
2. Rating 1 – 10
3. 2 Min Breathing Exercise –
   - Sit comfortably on the chair.
   - Both feet on the floor
   - Feel the chair underneath you
   - Close your eyes if you want to or just focus on something
   - Breathe in through your nose, hold and breathe out through your mouth
   - Focus on the breath entering your body, feel it in your lungs, try and push your breath into your feet

Reminding ourselves what Mindfulness is.

Mindfulness is …

Observing your life as it is happening

Accepting your current situation without judgement or struggle

Allowing feelings to exist without letting them drive your actions

Noticing thoughts as they arise without the need to buy into them

Taking action based on what you feel in your heart rather than old habits or short term convenience

mindful
mindful.org

THOUGHTS are *NOT* FACTS **PRACTICE**

When you put some space between you and your reaction, it changes your relationship to your thoughts—you can watch them come and go instead of treating them as facts.

If you're stuck on a negative thought, ask yourself:

1. **Is it true?**
   Often the answer is, "Well, yes." This is the brain initially reacting—the autopilot you live with and believe is you.

2. **Is it *absolutely* true?**
   Is this thought 100% accurate? Can you see the thought in a different way?

3. **How does this thought make me feel?**
   Notice any storylines you're holding onto, and name your feelings: *sad, angry, jealous, hurt*.

4. **What would things be like if I didn't hold this belief?**
   Imagine possible benefits to your relationships, energy levels, and motivation.

Excerpt from *Uncovering Happiness* by Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D., adapted from *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie.

Session three
Different Breathing Techniques

1 minute Mindful exercise:

Close your eyes and focus all your attention onto your breath
Then expand your awareness to your body and notice any physical sensations
Next, notice any feelings of emotions you might be experiencing right now, don't pass judgement on the physical or emotional feelings, just try and notice them without being sucked into the sensation
Bring your attention back to your breathing before opening your eyes
Use this to ground yourself when overthinking is taking over.

Counting down from 5...

Close your eyes – breathing slowly, count back from 5 trying not to get sucked into any thoughts. Each time you 'catch' a thought congratulate yourself and start again at 5! Try to count just focussing on your breathing.

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4 and breathe out as slowly as you can for 8 counts, repeat until you feel calm.

KOBE BRYANT

Breathe Bubble

The Why: Slowing down and taking a deep breath is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. The inhale and the exhale bring different gifts. Inhales are expansive, uplifting, energizing, and opening. Exhales are calming, grounding, and softening. Together, they bring balance to the body and mind. The Breathe Bubble is a guided visualization to help focus the attention on the breath.

Mindfulness Activity:

1. Invite students to note how they're feeling both physically and emotionally to themselves.

2. Play the Breathe Bubble*
https://calm.com/schools/resources?day=2

1 to 3 minutes.

3. Ask the students if they noticed any physical or emotional shifts during or after the breathing exercise. Emphasize that there's no right way to feel, but rather this is information that helps us to learn more about ourselves.

How do you feel after breathing deeply today?

Did you notice a difference before and after?

How does the exhale compare to the inhale?

Where might you use this breathing exercise?

Session 4
2 minute Guided Breathing Exercise

- Sit comfortably on the chair.
- Both feet on the floor
- Feel the chair underneath you
- Close your eyes if you want to or just focus on something
- Breathe in through your nose, hold and breathe out through your mouth
- Focus on the breath entering your body, feel it in your lungs, try and push your breath into your feet

Mindful Eating

Most of us eat in a rush, often whilst walking about, barely tasting our food. Mindful eating is a way of focusing on what we are eating, enabling us to savor each bite.

Together we're going to explore the practice of mindful eating in order to awaken our senses and be more present with our food.

Let's begin by taking a moment to look at the raisin in your hand. What do you see? Notice the color and the shape.

Now lift up the raisin and hold it between your fingers, taking a moment to feel its texture. Notice how it feels in your hand. Does it feel smooth or rough? Firm or soft? Is it heavy or light?

Now, bring the raisin towards your nose. Does it have a smell? Is the smell strong or faint?

Notice if you're feeling hungry. What's happening inside your mouth? Is it difficult to resist eating your raisin?

And now bring it towards your lips and, without biting into it, place the raisin on your tongue. Without chewing it, roll it around a little. Take a moment to explore how that feels.

Finally, begin to chew the raisin. Slowly and mindfully, savoring its flavor. Making sure not to swallow just yet, we'll do that soon. Notice its texture and taste. Does it taste sweet, sour, salty or bitter? Is it crunchy or smooth, chewy or creamy?

As you chew, bring awareness to the sounds. Do you hear a crunch or a squish as you take a bite?

And when you're ready, swallow your food, and observe what occurs once the food moves on from your mouth. How does it feel as it travels from your tongue, down your throat and towards your stomach? Are you left with an aftertaste?

Lastly, take a moment to appreciate the food you've eaten. Thank the food for helping to fuel and nourish you."

Reflection Questions: What did you learn by slowing down and opening your senses while eating? What was most difficult for you? What did you enjoy about the experience?

Session 5
2 minute Guided Breathing Exercise

- Sit comfortably on the chair.
- Both feet on the floor
- Feel the chair underneath you
- Close your eyes if you want to or just focus on something
- Breathe in through your nose, hold and breathe out through your mouth
- Focus on the breath entering your body, feel it in your lungs, try and push your breath into your feet

Soundscapes

Mindfulness Activity:

1. Invite students into a comfortable position, seated or lying down.

2. Play the following soundscapes for a minute each. Ask the students to listen closely and note how each one makes them feel.

https://calm.com/schools/resources?day=12

What soundscape made you feel most relaxed?

Why?

What else did you notice?

“Take a deep breath. If you think of your mind like a machine, your breath is the electricity. It’s like a power source for your concentration. If you’re under pressure, or feeling anxious, deep breathing is a way of telling your body and your mind that everything’s cool. Nothing to worry about. Even if you’ve got anxious thoughts in your head, you breathe deep, and your body calms down.” — LeBron James

Session 6
2 minute Guided Breathing Exercise

- Sit comfortably on the chair.
- Both feet on the floor
- Feel the chair underneath you
- Close your eyes if you want to or just focus on something
- Breathe in through your nose, hold and breathe out through your mouth
- Focus on the breath entering your body, feel it in your lungs, try and push your breath into your feet

Just Breathe...

https://youtu.be/RVA2N6tX2cg

Our breathing can tell us a lot about how we are feeling.

We sigh when we are sad, huff when we are frustrated and our breath becomes quicker and shallower when we feel excited or anxious. Our breathing slows down and is deeper when we feel peaceful.

We can work with our breath to help us change our emotional state and slowing our breath can help soothe the mind in stressful situations.

Mindfulness Activity

When you are feeling stressed and anxious, it can be helpful to connect with your 5 senses. This can help to feel more grounded and calmer.

Try and name:

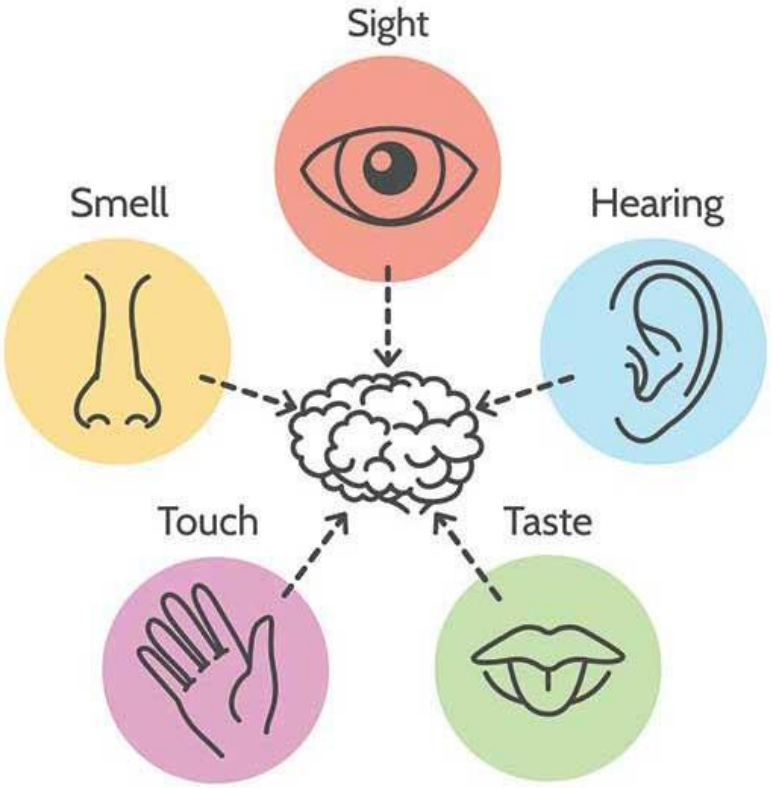
5 things you can see

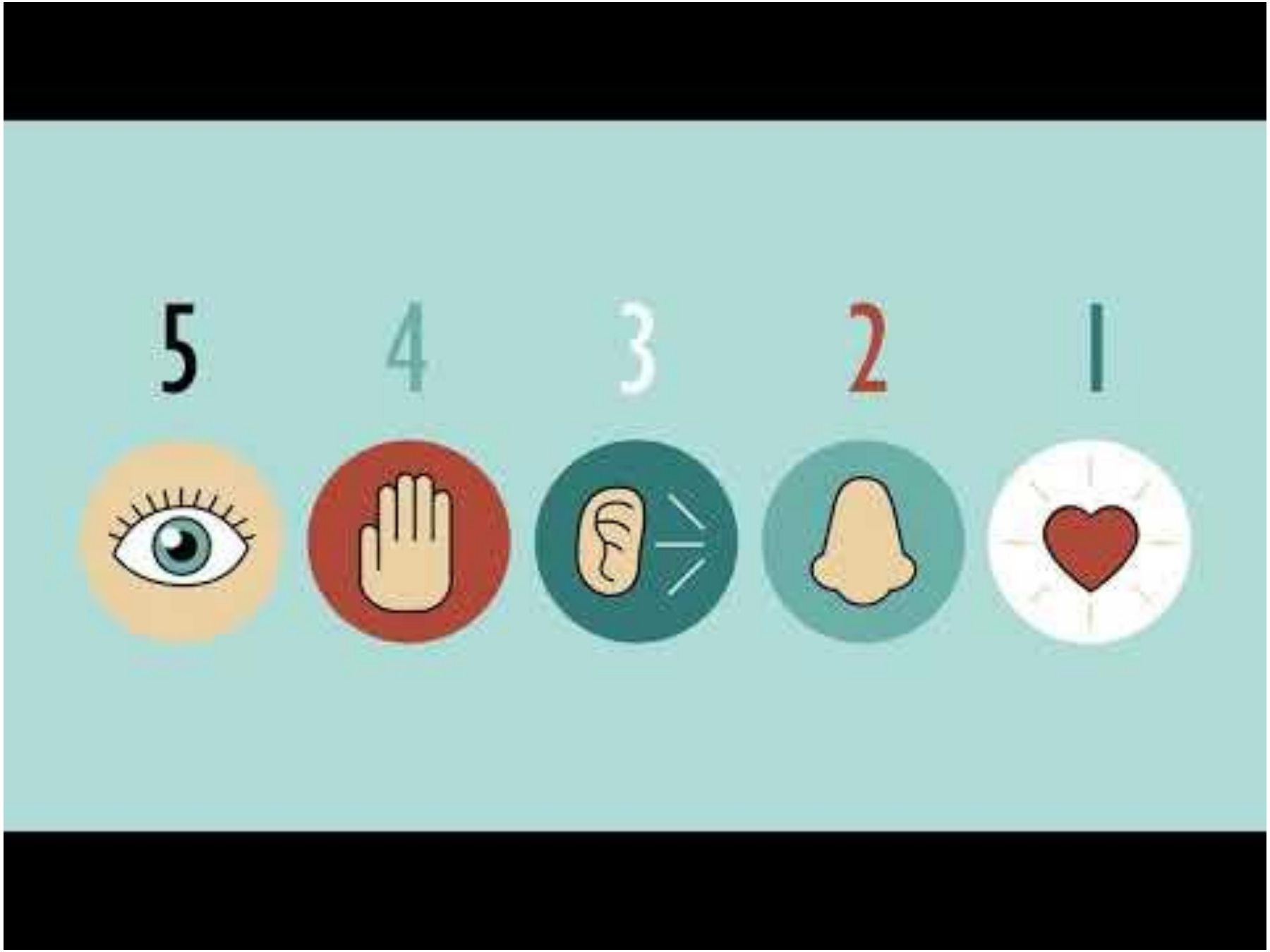
4 things you can touch

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste

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1

Reflection

What have you found useful?

What did you find challenging?

Have you used any of the breathing techniques?

What will you use in the future?

Helpful things to take forward:

Breathing techniques

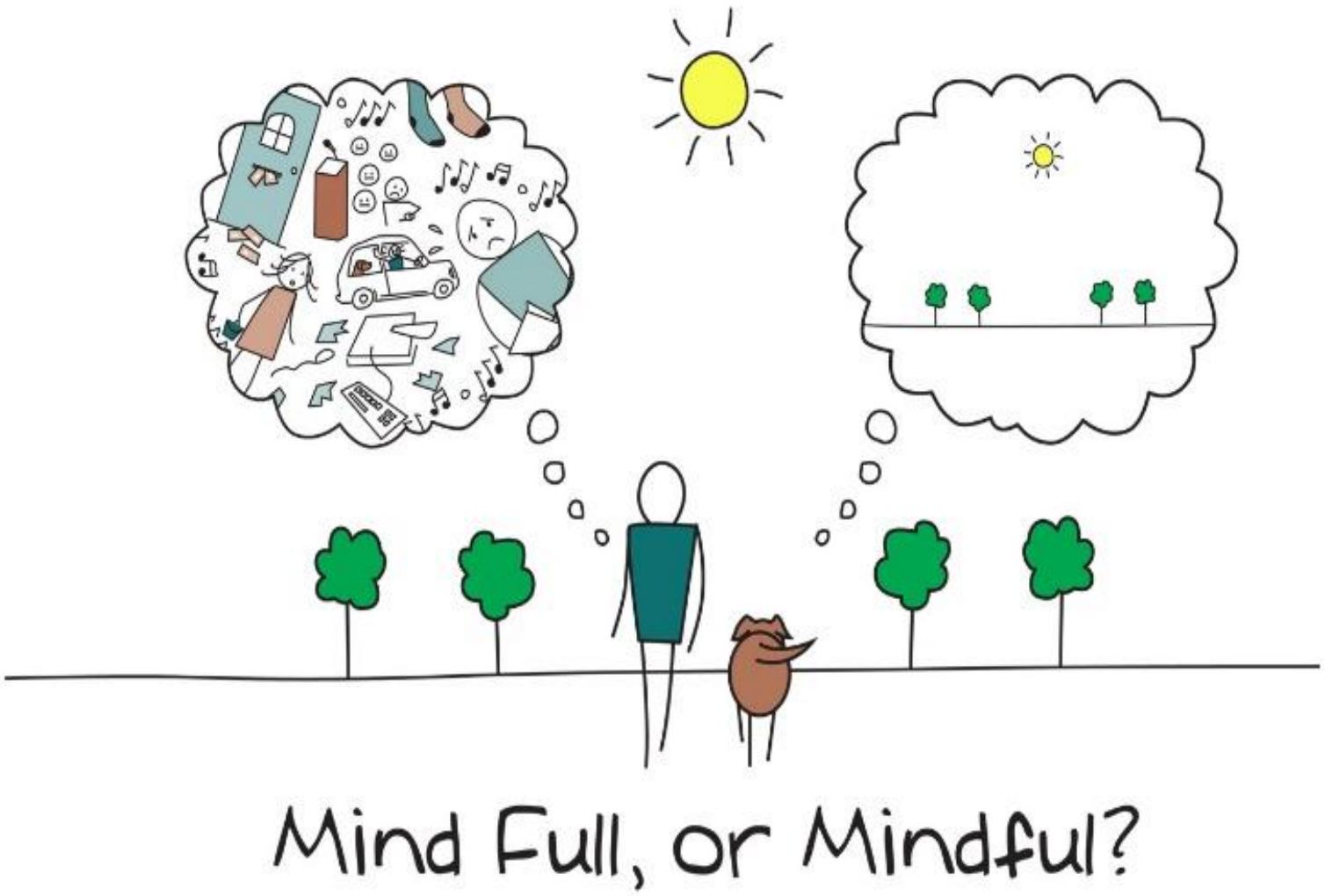
Listening to music

Colouring

Paying attention to your surroundings

Using your 5 senses

Being in the moment!



"if
the ocean
can calm
itself, so can
you.
we are both
salt water
mixed with
air." - nayyirah
waheed

Wellbeing Kit

Wellbeing activities for children up to 16 years old.

Let's help every child thrive.

Digital detox

Limit device use to 2 hours daily (online schooling is allowed). Uninstall unused apps and mute devices when you're with others. Try to switch off by 9pm.

In the moment

Bring your attention to the space you are in. What can you see, hear and feel?

Did you know?

Mindfulness is practiced by performers, athletes and more. Click here to learn more and start your mindful journey.

Relax

Getting enough sleep has a huge impact on how we feel and think each day.

Morning treat

Mix frozen banana, 1tsp coco or cacao powder, 1tsp peanut butter, milk, honey or maple syrup.

Reflective journal

Keep a daily journal of thoughts and feelings. Record what you are grateful for each day.

Routines

A list of daily rituals helps keep you on track and in tune with your life. click here for ideas.

Stress catcher

Life can feel really challenging, it is important you develop some coping strategies.

Sit with sensations

Scan your body from head to toe. Name, label and observe any sensations, without judgement.

Take a walk

Being in nature could help you to stay in the present and focus a wandering mind.

Natures ornaments

Beat the lockdown blues by getting outside and creative! Have a go at making an ice ornament.

Express yourself

Express your internal feelings by creating a comic for teens on managing this situation, who are villains and the heroes? Paint, draw or write it.

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Mindfulness activities for young people

Connect with nature. What can you see, hear, feel and smell?

Dance like no one's watching.

Go for a quiet walk, notice how your body feels as you move.

Give yourself a hand massage.

Listen to an instrumental piece of music and draw along to it.

Eat slowly, notice the different flavours and textures.

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Connection Kit