

GUIDE FOR ASSESSING MAG/MIN

General characteristics

Magnifiers magnify the probability of a favorable outcome (and minify the probability of an unfavorable outcome)

One poker player will continue to bet on a hand, downplaying the possibility that others may have a better one.

Minifiers minify the probability of a favorable outcome (and magnify the probability of an unfavorable outcome)

Another poker player will fold on a good hand, concerned that others probably have a better one.

Given that either success or failure is possible:

Success dominates the perception of the Magnifier to the exclusion of failure

A golfer facing a long putt, only thinks about making it, despite the odds from being so far away.

Failure dominates the perception of the Minifier to the exclusion of success

A golfer facing a long putt focuses on making it with two putts, trying to avoid a 3-putt.

Assessing oneself

Magnifier

When I am making a decision, I generally assume it will work out. I seldom think of how it won't. I seldom think of the risks of my actions. I seldom think of being careful.

Which am I more afraid of, limitation or potential? Any anxiety I have about my decisions is about limitations, about missing an opportunity that will be lost forever.

What is my reaction to this whole Mag/Min framework? – too limiting; you can't define me in such binary terms; I am more flexible in my decision-making. (Misses the understanding of the distortion of making poor choices as a pattern).

Minifier

When I am making a decision, I generally do not assume it will always work out. I often think of how it won't. I often think of the risks of my actions. I often think of being careful.

Which am I more afraid of, limitation or potential? Any anxiety I have about my decisions is about possibilities, about having to deal with success, and having to maintain it.

What is my reaction to this whole Mag/Min framework? – very appropriate; I am indeed limited in my decision-making. (Misses the understanding of the distortion of making poor choices as a pattern).

Assessing others

Common Mistakes:

1.) – ASSUMPTIONS:

Not asking about assumptions - relying too much on behavior (can have same behavior with different assumptions)

Two people, very concerned about their health, work out in the gym and press themselves hard. Same behavior.

Different assumptions

One is a Magnifier with an assumption that they need to press hard in order to not lose the fitness gained to date. Other is a Minifier with an assumption that they already are not fit, but need to press hard in order to not lose more.

Mistake: Not understanding different assumptions about “credit” (need to preserve what one has), and “debit” (need to not lose more).

Remedy: Ask Why? to determine Rationale

2.) - DETAILS

Two students obsess about memorizing as much as they possibly can about material for an upcoming exam, but after a while they give up because it is too much. Same behavior.

Different assumptions

One is a Magnifier who tries to memorize every single detail and not miss any details that would limit full comprehension. But then realizes it is not worth the effort, and gives up, assuming they know enough to pass the test.

The other is a Minifier who tries to memorize every single detail because this is the only way they can know enough to pass the test. But then realizes it is not possible, and gives up, assuming they couldn't pass the test anyway.

Mistake: Not understanding assumption behind behavior of strong focus on details

Remedy: Ask Why? to determine Rationale

3.) BASIC/SOCIAL SELF

When different – Not knowing which is which

Mag/min (Basic Magnifier but Social Minifier)

CEO of a major corporation operates with strong leadership, but puts effort into humbly asking for feedback about a new project. When employees offer critical comments, she quickly and firmly rejects them, with critical remarks about the employee,

Mistake: Not realizing the minifying of being humble about the request for feedback is overridden by the Basic Mag when threatened by the limitation of criticism.

Min/mag (Basic Minifier but Social Magnifier)

Very popular teacher, well respected by students and fellow colleagues, delivers powerful lectures that challenge his audience. But then discounts the clear evidence of his superior intellect and major contributions in the field with comments about his work being ordinary and not significant, confusing others who look up to him and value his work.

Mistake: Not realizing the magnification of the powerful presentations is overridden by the Basic Min when threatened by the potential of his intellect and significant work.

Remedy: Attend to assumptions behind behavior and determine which is primary (Basic)

Mistake: Thinking of Basic and Social self as two separate entities, not as a coordinated pair

Remedy: - Work to understand how Basic and Social work together as a denial mode that creates the self.

4.) LEVEL OF FUNCTIONING

Not factoring in level of functioning (Differentiation), often inaccurately assuming higher level for Mag and lower level for Min.

Mistake: Assuming a Mag's assertive, pro-active, get-it-done approach indicates high functioning.

A very active parent home schools her children, works a part-time job, and volunteers for many neighborhood projects, unable to say no. While it looks like she is able to accomplish all this, the observer may not recognize the intensity of the anxiety driven by the fear of the limitation of saying no, and the effects of the stress long term.

Mistake: Assuming a Min's slow and careful approach to making decisions and getting things done indicates low functioning

A person takes a long time to decide on the purchase of a car by researching many reviews, visiting multiple dealerships, talking to friends and family, but ultimately makes a clear, irrevocable decision based on a rational assessment of all the data and buys the car. The observer may not recognize the deliberateness and lack of anxiety with all of the multiple efforts to gather information.

5.) MISCELLANEOUS

a.) Crises

- Mags crash hard: Impact of not being able to overcome limitation in a crisis creates high anxiety

- Mins assume failure as chronic: While the threat of possibility creates anxiety, the contrast is not as sharp as for the Mag.

b.) Assumptions about the Mag/Min framework itself reflect misunderstanding:

- Mag: I can do both Mag or Min – “flexible”

- Min: The framework confirms inadequacy – I can only do one, not both.