



Topic:

Hack 2 Mood Boosting

Lesson 1

Feel-Good Activities

Objective: By the end of this lesson students will:

- ➔ Identify three categories of feel-good activities (enjoyment, relaxation, and fulfillment).
- ➔ Understand the role of daily exercise in boosting mood
- ➔ Understand the importance of acknowledging and rewarding achievements in contributing to a positive mood.

Materials Needed:

- ➔ Whiteboard and markers
- ➔ Handout A, B
- ➔ Writing materials for students with three different colour pens/pencils (notebooks, pens)
- ➔ “Mastering your mind” book by Yaakov Barr (pages 30–36)

Lesson Plan (40 minutes):

Introduction (5 minutes):

- ➔ Emphasize that everyone experiences moments of stress or low mood, and it’s essential to have strategies to lift one’s spirits.
- ➔ Emphasize the importance of being aware of one’s feelings and recognizing when mood-boosting activities may be needed.
- ➔ Introduce the idea that activity, like exercise, can significantly contribute to a positive mood.
- ➔ Where appropriate, include Torah sources (see the back of book excerpt) on the importance of mood boosting/exercise.
- ➔ Share any of your own brief real-life examples illustrating the impact of mood boosting/exercise on your life.

Feel-Good Activities (5 minutes):

- ➔ Introduce the concept of feel-good activities, encompassing enjoyment/fun, relaxation, and fulfillment. Explain that enjoyment includes doing things that make us happy, relaxation involves activities that calm our minds and fulfillment pertains to pursuing meaningful goals.
- ➔ Provide examples of each category, such as playing a favorite sport (enjoyment/fun), practicing deep breathing (relaxation), and learning/study (fulfillment).
- ➔ Discuss how daily exercise, with its endorphin release, is a key factor in boosting one's mood.

Feel-Good Activity List & Chart (15 minutes):

- ➔ Distribute Handout A to each student and ensure that they have 3 different colored markers or highlighters.
- ➔ Ask students to use the colors to circle all the activities on the handout that they find appealing. For example, they may use a green color for activities they find relaxing, a red color for activities they find enjoyable, and a blue color for activities they find fulfilling. Encourage them to think of other activities which may not be on the list.
- ➔ Distribute Handout B – a weekly feel-good activity chart to each student.
- ➔ Instruct students to fill in a weekly chart with a minimum of 2 daily mood-boosting activities across the three categories. Encourage them to be creative and choose activities that resonate with them personally and are realistic to be able to put into practice.

Class Discussion (5 minutes):

- ➔ Open the floor to students to share their favorite mood-boosting activities from their list or exercise routines they enjoy.

Reward Your Achievements (5 minutes):

- ➔ Discuss the significance of acknowledging and rewarding one's achievements, even the small ones.
- ➔ Ask students to keep a record of their achievements (or write a few of them down during the lesson) and consider various methods of self-reward, such as giving themselves self-appreciation, treating themselves to something special, or potentially even receiving a reward from their parents.

Conclusion & Homework (5 minutes):

- Summarize the key points of the lesson, emphasizing the importance of having a well-balanced toolkit of mood boosting feel-good activities.
- Ask students to reflect on the lesson and share their thoughts on what they found most useful or interesting.
- Students should make a note of at least two instances when they experienced low mood and describe how they used a mood-boosting activity to try and improve their mood.

Lesson 2

Strategies for Silencing the Self- Critical Inner Voice

Objective:

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- ➔ Identify the negative impacts of self-criticism on mood and self-esteem.
- ➔ Learn three strategies for countering self-criticism.
- ➔ Practice positive self-talk using the “Best Friend Technique.”

Materials Needed:

- ➔ Whiteboard and markers
- ➔ Writing materials for students (notebooks, pens)
- ➔ Handout C
- ➔ “Mastering Your Mind” book by Yaakov Barr (pages 37-42, 95)

Lesson Plan (40 minutes):

Introduction (5 minutes):

- ➔ Discuss the concept of self-criticism and its impact on mood and self-esteem.
- ➔ Where appropriate, include Torah sources (see the back of book excerpt)
- ➔ Share specific examples from the Handout C and ask students to reflect on how these instances might affect them personally.

Effects of Self-Criticism (5 minutes):

- ➔ Distribute Handout C and ask students to read the examples of self-criticism and identify the emotions associated with each example.
- ➔ Discuss how these negative emotions can spiral into further self-criticism, creating a cycle of negativity.

Silencing the Self-Critical Inner Voice (10 minutes):

- ➔ Introduce the three steps for silencing the self-critical inner voice and encourage students to read pages 38-42 in the “Mastering your mind” book. Give a piece of paper to each student.

1. Notice your critical inner voice. Ask the students to write down the different names and insults their critical parrot tends to call them. Are there any situations that their critical parrot “squawks” extra loudly?
2. Talk back to your inner voice. Explain how talking back to the parrot and telling it that this criticism is not helpful is a sign of emotional health.
3. Teach your inner voice a new language of love and care. Ask the students to look at the examples on page 40 of “Mastering your mind” book and write down how they could use the three steps on one of their own examples when their critical parrot squawks.

The “Best Friend Technique” (10 minutes):

- ➔ Introduce the “Best Friend Technique” as a powerful tool for promoting positive self-talk (page 41-42 in “Mastering your mind” book).
- ➔ Ask students to imagine that one of the teens in the examples in Handout C is their best friend. Instruct them to write down exactly how they would comfort their best friend in this situation, what words and what tone they would use to ensure that their response is caring, supportive, and understanding.
- ➔ Encourage students to practice these responses on their own self-critical thoughts.

Class Discussion (5 minutes):

- ➔ Open the floor to students to share their thoughts on self-criticism and the strategies discussed.
- ➔ Encourage them to discuss how they can apply the “Best Friend Technique” to specific situations.

Conclusion/ Homework (5 minutes):

- ➔ Summarize the key points of the lesson, emphasizing the importance of promoting positive self-talk and silencing the self-critical inner voice.
- ➔ Encourage students to practice the strategies discussed to improve their mood and self-esteem by choosing one self-critical thought they have encountered recently and applying the ‘Best Friend Technique’ to counter it. Instruct them to write down their self-critical thought and their positive self-talk response in their journal and reflect on how this exercise made them feel.”

- ➡ Encourage students to read the relevant sections in the book “Mastering Your Mind” by Yaakov Barr (pages 37-42) as homework or for a deeper understanding of the topic.

Lesson 3

Cultivating Gratitude & Kindness

Objective:

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- ➔ Understand the benefits of gratitude and kindness on mood and well-being.
- ➔ Learn how to use a gratitude journal and a kindness diary to cultivate gratitude and kindness in their daily lives.
- ➔ Identify and incorporate at least one act of kindness into their daily schedule.

Materials Needed:

- ➔ Whiteboard and markers
- ➔ Handouts D, E, F, G, H
- ➔ Writing materials for students (notebooks, pens)
- ➔ “Mastering your mind” book by Yaakov Barr (pages 42-43)

Lesson Plan (40 minutes):

Introduction (5 minutes):

- ➔ Discuss the concepts of gratitude and kindness and their impact on mood and well-being.
- ➔ Explain that both gratitude and acts of kindness can positively affect their mood.
- ➔ Where appropriate, include Torah sources (see the back of book excerpt) on the importance of gratitude and kindness.

Benefits of Gratitude & Kindness (5 minutes):

- ➔ Distribute Handout D on the benefits of gratitude and kindness and Handout E with two examples.
- ➔ Discuss the benefits, such as improved mood, reduced stress, and enhanced relationships.
- ➔ Discuss how focusing on one’s ‘blessings’ can help overcome jealousy.

Handout on Using a Gratitude Journal (10 minutes):

- ➔ Distribute Handout F - a gratitude journal to each student. Introduce the concept of a gratitude journal as a tool to cultivate gratitude.
- ➔ Explain to students how to use a gratitude journal for everyday use, including focusing on the small daily 'blessings,' rather than the bigger more obvious ones.
- ➔ Encourage students to fill their own entry for yesterday and today. An easier alternative to a journal is completing the one entry gratitude diary for 30 days- Handout G.

Incorporating Acts of Kindness (10 minutes):

- ➔ Discuss the example of Shua and Eli, Handout E, and how they incorporated acts of kindness into their week.
- ➔ Discuss practical ways students can perform acts of kindness in their daily lives.
- ➔ Emphasize that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference.
- ➔ Handout the Kindness diary- Handout H, to help students focus on the acts of kindness being done to them and what they do for others.

Class Discussion (5 minutes):

- ➔ Open the floor to students to share their thoughts on gratitude, acts of kindness, and their impact on mood.
- ➔ Encourage students to brainstorm ideas for acts of kindness they can incorporate into their daily routines.

Conclusion/ Homework (5 minutes):

- ➔ Summarize the key points of the lesson, highlighting the importance of gratitude and kindness for mood enhancement.
- ➔ Ask students to begin using a gratitude journal or gratitude diary to record moments of gratitude and set them the "14-day gratitude challenge."
- ➔ Ask students to incorporate at least one act of kindness into their daily schedule, and complete the 1 week 'Kindness Diary,' and write down the impact it has on the way they feel about themselves and the well-being of others.

HANDOUT A:

- › Acting
- › Animals/Pets
- › Art
- › Astronomy
- › Backgammon
- › Badminton
- › Baseball
- › Basketball
- › Beadwork
- › Board Games
- › Boating
- › Bringing food to disabled people
- › Building Dollhouses
- › Button Collecting
- › Cake Decorating
- › Calligraphy
- › Camping
- › Candle Making
- › Canoeing
- › Chess
- › Coin Collecting
- › Collecting
- › Computer Programming
- › Cooking
- › Crafts
- › Crocheting
- › Cross-Stitch
- › Crossword Puzzles
- › Cycling
- › Debating
- › Dancing
- › Digital Photography
- › Dolls
- › Dominoes
- › Drawing
- › Electronics
- › Embroidery
- › Exercise (Aerobics, Weights)
- › Fishing
- › Football
- › Freshwater Aquariums
- › Games
- › Gardening
- › Genealogy
- › Golf
- › Go-Kart Racing
- › Hiking
- › Home Repair
- › Hula Hooping
- › Jewelry Making
- › Jigsaw Puzzles
- › Juggling
- › Keeping a Journal
- › Kayaking
- › Kites
- › Knitting
- › Learning
- › Learning a Foreign Language
- › Learning an Instrument
- › Lego
- › Listening to Music
- › Making Model Cars
- › Matchstick Modeling
- › Model Rockets
- › Modeling Ships
- › Models
- › Mountain Biking
- › Mountain Climbing
- › Musical Instruments
- › Origami
- › Paintball
- › Painting
- › Papermaking
- › Paper Mâché
- › Photography
- › Piano
- › Playing Music
- › Playing Team Sports
- › Pottery
- › Puppetry
- › Reading
- › Reading to Younger Children
- › Relaxing
- › Running
- › Saltwater Aquariums
- › Scrapbooking
- › Scuba Diving
- › Sewing
- › Shopping
- › Singing
- › Singing in a Choir
- › Skateboarding
- › Sketching
- › Soccer
- › Socializing with Friends/Neighbors
- › Spending Time with Family
- › Stamp Collecting
- › Storytelling
- › Swimming
- › Shul/Synagogue Activities
- › Tennis
- › Toy Collecting
- › Train Collecting
- › Tutoring Younger Children
- › Volunteering
- › Walking
- › Woodworking
- › Writing
- › Writing Poems
- › Writing Songs
- › Yoyo

HANDOUT B:

Feel Good Activity Chart

Hobbies/Fun	Physical Health	Education/ Learning	Family	Friends	Other Stuff

**To download go to www.masteringyourmind.today*

HANDOUT C:

5 Examples of Self Criticism and its Impact

Example 1

Sheina tends to be overly critical of herself in school. Whenever she receives a test score that falls slightly below her expectations, she can't help but berate herself. "I'm so stupid," she tells herself. "I'll never get a good job with grades like these." This self-criticism takes a toll on her mood; she often feels unhappy and frustrated. As a result, Sheina finds herself caught in a cycle of self-doubt, which has actually started taking away her motivation to study and do well.

Example 2

Ruth, Sheina's close friend, struggles with a different type of self-criticism. She constantly analyses herself especially around her friends. "I'm such a misfit," she tells herself when she decides that she hasn't performed well around her friends. "Why would anyone want to hang out with me." Ruth's self-criticism doesn't just impact her mood but also her confidence. Recently she has opted to avoid social situations, leaving her feeling lonely and sad.

Example 3

David often plays sports with his friends, but he's particularly hard on himself when he doesn't play as well as he'd like. During a recent soccer game, he missed a crucial goal, and his inner critic pounced. "I'm such a failure on the field," David thought to himself. "I can't believe I let my team down." His self-criticism doesn't just affect his mood during games; it lingers long after the game has ended, ruining his enjoyment of the sport he used to really like.

Example 4

Yaakov, faces a different kind of self-criticism. He has always been a bit uneasy when he's home alone. One evening, his parents had to attend an important event, leaving him in the house to himself. As it was getting dark, Yaakov's anxiety started to creep in. He tried to calm himself, but the creaky sounds of the house made his heart race. As he sat on the couch, Yanky's inner critic took over. "You're such a coward," he scolded himself. "People your age aren't scared of being alone. What's wrong with you?" This self-criticism didn't ease his fear; but actually made it worse.

HANDOUT D:

HOW DOES GRATITUDE AND KINDNESS IMPROVE ONE'S MOOD?

Gratitude:

What is gratitude? Gratitude involves appreciating the meaningful or valuable aspects of life. It's about noticing and acknowledging the positive things, even the small moments, that we often ignore, forget and take for granted.

Benefits of practicing gratitude:

- 1.** Shifts focus: When you practice gratitude, your thoughts shift away from negativity and discomfort. Instead, you begin to focus on the good things you may have overlooked.
- 2.** Happy brain food: When we express gratitude, something pretty cool happens in our brains. Our brains release these feel-good chemicals called neurotransmitters. One of them is called dopamine, which makes us feel happy and rewarded when we do something we like. The other one is called serotonin. It's like our brain's chill pill. It helps regulate our mood and keeps stress levels low. So, when we say "thank you" or think about something we're grateful for, we're basically giving us a feel-good chemical boost.
- 3.** Building a habit: Over time, practicing gratitude can become a habit, leading to a more positive outlook on life.

Kindness:

Benefits of kindness

- 1.** More brain food: When we do something nice for someone, our brains light up with happiness. It's like a little reward for being kind. This is because kindness activates brain regions that are linked to pleasure and reward producing a chemical called oxytocin, making us feel really good inside. So, when we do something kind, it's not just good for the person we're helping, it's good for us too!
- 2.** Positive feedback loop: Here's the best part, being kind creates a chain reaction. we're kind to others, they're more likely to be kind to us in return. And when that happens, it just makes us want to be even kinder! So, not only does being kind help others, it also makes us feel great and can lead to more kindness all around. It's a win-win!

HANDOUT E:

Gratitude & Kindness Examples

Gratitude Example:

Sarah had always been a bit of a pessimist. She tended to focus on the things that went wrong rather than appreciating the positives in her life. Her mood often reflected this outlook. One day, her friend, Debbie, introduced her to the concept of a gratitude journal. She told her that she had been using it for a while and had noticed a big improvement in her overall mood and outlook on life.

Intrigued, Sarah decided to give it a try. She started jotting down three things she was grateful for every evening before going to bed. At first, it was a bit challenging for her to think of things and she often forgot to do it, but she set an alarm on her phone to remind her each night before she went to sleep. As the days went by, she began to notice the little joys and blessings she had been overlooking.

One evening, Sarah wrote about how grateful she was for the supportive friendship of Debbie, who had introduced her to the gratitude journal in the first place. She realized how much her kindness and encouragement meant to her. Over time, Sarah's gratitude journal became a daily practice. She found herself feeling generally happier, more optimistic, and in a better state of mind to handle life's stresses.

Kindness Example:

Shua was naturally just a kind person. He made it a point to perform small acts of kindness whenever he could, whether it was helping a classmate with their homework or lending out any of his stuff. He noticed that when he was showing kindness to others it not only made others feel better but also made him feel good.

One day, Shua decided to take his kindness to the next level by organizing a visit to the local nursing home. He invited his friend Eli to join him, explaining that spending time with the elderly residents would not only bring comfort to them, was a big mitzvah but would also make them feel good.

During their visit, Shua and Eli chatted with the elderly residents, listened to their stories, and shared stories of their own. They played board games, helped with puzzles, and even brought in a guitar for impromptu sing-along.

As they spent time with the elderly residents, Shua and Eli felt a deep sense of fulfillment and happiness. They realized that the simple act of companionship and lending a listening ear made a significant difference to the elderly residents. They decided to make visiting the old age homes a regular thing, spreading kindness and experiencing the positive impact it had on themselves.

HANDOUT F:

See if you can fill out this gratitude journal for one week. Start off with 3 things you are grateful for today and yesterday.

WEEKLY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

EACH DAY, WRITE THREE THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR FROM THAT DAY

DAY 1

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DAY 2

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DAY 3

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DAY 4

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DAY 5

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DAY 6

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DAY 7

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

**THIS WEEK I'AM MOST
THANKFUL FOR**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

APPENDIX G



30 Days of Gratitude

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

26. _____

27. _____

28. _____

29. _____

30. _____

HANDOUT H:

ACT OF KINDNESS DIARY

Throughout the week, Keep an Act of Kindness Dairy.

Record when you were kind to others, and when others were kind to you!

DAY	ACT OF KINDNESS
DAY 1	
DAY 2	
DAY 3	
DAY 4	
DAY 5	
DAY 6	
DAY 7	

Hack 2 – Mood Boosting Quiz

Note: Some questions may have more than one correct answer

1. What are three types of daily ‘feel-good activities’ that could boost your mood?
 - a) Fun, sleep, happiness
 - b) Enjoyment, relaxation, fulfillment
 - c) Stress, worry, relief
 - d) Learning, exercise, socializing
2. Why is it important to have three types of feel-good activities every day instead of a few times a week?
 - a) To trick your mood into being constantly happy
 - b) To impress your friends so they will lift your mood
 - c) To stop being bored and feeling lazy
 - d) Daily mood boosting brings long-term happiness benefits
3. What’s the point of rewarding yourself for your achievements?
 - a) It makes you motivated for more achievements
 - b) It can boost your mood by acknowledging your successes
 - c) It actually isn’t good, as it will make you sad
 - d) It’s a way of getting stuff from your parents
4. What does the “best friend technique” refer to in the context of silencing the self-critical parrot?
 - a) Talking to your pet parrot
 - b) Treating yourself as you would treat your best friend
 - c) Criticizing your best friend
 - d) A way to make more friends

- 5. How can one put the self-critical parrot to sleep?**
- a) Tell it to be even more critical
 - b) Ignore it completely and put a towel over its cage
 - c) Ask it to speak louder
 - d) Challenge what it says and replace it with a new loving language
- 6. Why is gratitude journaling an important tool for mood boosting?**
- a) It helps a person focus on what good things they do have
 - b) It can make a person feel ungrateful
 - c) It can make you appreciate your talents and uniqueness
 - d) It takes away boredom and helps you to sleep
- 7. Which of the following are examples of a 'loving' parrot and not a 'critical' one?**
- a) "It wasn't an easy essay so you're not a failure if you got a bad grade"
 - b) "Poor you, you meant so well by trying to help even if it wasn't appreciated"
 - c) You know you always mess up, so why bother to try again?
 - d) You are a good person even if not everyone sees your qualities
- 8. Why is exercise so effective but not a popular choice to boost mood?**
- a) It actually makes you feel worse and very sleepy
 - b) It makes a person feel invincible
 - c) It's hard to do something that you can't be bothered doing
 - d) Mostly one only feels the emotional benefits after doing it
- 9. Which of the following is not considered proper exercise?**
- a) Playing computer games
 - b) Chatting to friends on a gentle walk
 - c) Swimming
 - d) Skipping
- 10. What do we learn from the story about Alfred Noble?**
- a) Not to have a business selling dangerous things
 - b) To think about what type of life you want to have
 - c) To win a peace prize for scaring the parrot away
 - d) Not to believe everything you read in a newspaper

ANSWERS

1. D (A are not all activities)
2. D
3. A, B
4. B
5. B, D
6. A, C
7. A, B, D
8. C, D
9. A, B
10. B (D might be true but not relevant to this hack 😊)