

THE
13
LIFE HACKS



Hack 2
Boosting Mood:
Teacher Notes

Government Criteria Alignment Chart

Framework	Criterion / Theme	Covered in Hack 2
PSHE (Health & Wellbeing)	H1: Recognise and talk about emotions	Mood check-in and naming feelings
	H4: Strategies for promoting emotional wellbeing	Feel Good Activity chart, rewards, self-care practices
	H5: Benefits of physical activity	Scientific explanation of mood-lifting exercise
	H6: Maintaining healthy habits	Planning and scheduling feel-good routines
	H10: Reframing negative thinking	Parrot technique and Best Friend method
	H11: Self-worth and self-respect	Best Friend technique, self-hug, celebrating uniqueness
	H12: Impact of actions on others	Kindness and gratitude tasks and experiments
	PSHE (Relationships)	R1: Positive relationships and connection
R13: Managing emotions within relationships		Understanding how mood and self-talk affect interactions
PSHE (Relationships)	R1: Positive relationships and connection	Exploring kindness and helping others to build mood
	R13: Managing emotions within relationships	Understanding how mood and self-talk affect interactions
RSHE (Mental Wellbeing)	Recognising and managing emotions	Full focus of the hack – recognising, understanding, managing moods (entire chapter)
	Strategies for mental resilience	Activity planning, gratitude journaling, kindness actions
	When and how to seek help	Signpost to speak to an adult after two weeks of low mood

Government Criteria Alignment Chart - Continued

Framework	Criterion / Theme	Covered in Hack 2
RSHE (Respectful Relationships)	Kindness and empathy	Kindness task and reflection
Safeguarding / KCSIE	Recognising emotional distress	Tasks to notice patterns of low mood and its causes
	Knowing when to seek help	Direct guidance: if low mood persists, speak to an adult
British Values	Individual Liberty	Encouraging self-agency through mood choices and proactive habits
	Mutual Respect	Gratitude and kindness toward others
SMSC – Spiritual	Reflection and self-awareness	Gratitude, identity, self-talk, and values
SMSC – Moral	Right vs. wrong in self-talk	Replacing self-criticism with compassion
SMSC – Social	Empathy, kindness, community	Kindness challenges and peer-focused mood support
SMSC – Cultural	Respecting difference in emotional expression	Acknowledging different ways people experience mood.

Learning Focus

This chapter empowers students to take charge of their emotional wellbeing by helping them understand their moods, identify practical mood-boosting behaviours, and build emotional resilience. It teaches them how to use activity, self-talk, kindness, and gratitude to lift their mood and build a more positive, proactive mindset, even during difficult times.

Key Themes

- Recognising and understanding your mood
- Behavioural activation and feel-good routines
- The importance of physical activity for emotional wellbeing
- Replacing self-criticism with compassion (Parrot technique & Best Friend method)
- How kindness to others can lift your own mood
- Using gratitude to shift mindset and increase happiness
- Building emotional habits that create long-term resilience

Discussion Prompts

1. Understanding Mood

- “Why is it important to check in with how we’re feeling?”
- “What are signs that you’re in a low mood, even if nothing obvious has happened?”

2. Feel-Good Activities

- “What’s one thing you’ve done recently that lifted your mood?”
- “Why do people avoid doing helpful things when they’re feeling low?”

3. Exercise & Movement

- “How does moving your body change how you feel?”
- “What’s one small change you could make to move more during the day?”

4. The Critical Parrot

- “What names does your ‘inner parrot’ call you?”
- “How would things change if you spoke to yourself with kindness instead?”

5. The Best Friend Technique

- “If your best friend felt like a failure, what would you say?”
- “Why is it so hard to speak to ourselves the same way?”

6. Kindness

- “How does being kind to others affect your own mood?”

7. Gratitude

- “What’s one small thing today you’re grateful for?”
- “How can focusing on what you have shift your whole mindset?”

Imaginative Group Tasks

1. Mood Ladder

How it works:

Each student draws a quick “ladder” with 3–5 steps going up.

On each step, they write one small positive action they could do when they’re in a low mood, starting with the easiest at the bottom (e.g., “drink water,” “open the window”) and building up to a bigger mood-booster at the top (e.g., “call a friend,” “go outside”).

Then, in pairs or small groups, they compare ladders and share which step they think would help them most on a bad day.

Why it works:

This activity keeps it personal, simple, and visual. It reinforces that **even one small action can start to shift your mood**, and students walk away with their own plan that feels achievable.

2. Best Friend Rehearsal (with Parrot Twist)

How it works:

- Partner A shares a made-up low mood scenario (e.g., “I failed a test”).
{See Appendix A for a list of scenarios}
- Partner B plays the “Poisonous Parrot” using critical self-talk in a silly squawking voice.
- Then Partner B switches to the “Best Friend” voice, offering warm and encouraging words.
- Finally, Partner A repeats the kind version aloud using the Best Friend Technique.

Why it works:

It’s funny, memorable, and shows the difference between inner critic vs. inner support.

3. Feel-Good Activity Brainstorm

How it works:

Each group is assigned one column from the Feel-Good Activity Chart (e.g., “Hobbies/Fun”, “Friends”, “Learning”). They brainstorm personalised, creative ideas for mood-boosters in that area and present their favourites to the class.

Why it works:

Promotes ownership and creativity while giving students a shared bank of feel-good ideas.

Imaginative Group Tasks

4. Kindness Chain Challenge

How it works:

Each student writes one act of kindness they commit to doing this week on a paper strip. The strips are linked into a classroom "Kindness Chain" to display.

Why it works:

Creates a visible, collective goal that connects kindness to mood and class culture.

5. Gratitude Speed-Round

How it works:

In fast-paced rounds, each student must share one specific thing they're grateful for- different from what's already been said. If someone hesitates too long, the round resets!

Why it works:

Fun, energising, and reinforces the power of gratitude as a daily habit.

6. Kindness Time Machine

How it works:

Students imagine themselves 10 years older, looking back at their younger self. They write a note of encouragement to their younger self that includes:

- A kind message
- A reminder of something they've done for others
- Something they're proud of
-

Why it works:

Connects kindness, identity, and growth. Promotes self-compassion and emotional resilience through reflection.

7. Move It, Mood It

How it works:

Break the class into groups and give each one a silly but mood-lifting movement challenge to invent and name- e.g., a "3-minute stretch and bounce," "Gratitude Jump," "Stress Shake-Off," or "Happy Walk." Groups demo their routine, and the class votes on their favourite. Do it together as a quick reset.

Why it works:

Reinforces the message that **movement boosts mood**, even in small doses. Makes physical activity playful and memorable.

8. 3 Good Things Challenge

How it works:

At the end of the lesson (or the day), each student writes down or says aloud:

- One good thing that happened today
- One person they're glad to have in their life
- One thing they're looking forward to

Why it works:

It's quick, accessible, and builds the *habit* of scanning for positives — a proven way to lift mood and shift perspective.

Torah Perspectives

Theme in Hack	Source	Hebrew & English (in same cell)	Use in Lesson
Self-awareness	איכה ג'ג	נחפשה דרכינו ונחקרה ונשובה עד ה' – Let us search and examine our ways and return to Hashem.	Opens the chapter: mood check-in and emotional awareness.
Self-examination	עירובין י"ג ב'	ר'בדק במעשיו / ר'משמש במעשיו – Let him examine his deeds.	Encourages introspection into mood-shifting behaviours.
Inner reflection builds peace	עלי שור ח"א עמ' 131	מי שחסרה לו מודעות עצמית – לא ימצא מנוח לנפשו – One who lacks self-awareness will almost certainly not find peace with himself.	Builds the case for introspection and mood tracking.
Actions influence emotions	ספר החינוך מצווה ט"ז	דע כי האדם נפעל כפי פעולתו – Know that a person is influenced by their actions.	Foundation of “Go Get Active” strategy.
Behaviour shapes feelings	סוטה מ"ז א'	מתוך שלא לשמה, בא לשמה – Doing something for the wrong reasons can lead to doing it for the right reasons.	Encourages students to act even when they don't feel like it.
Lifting low mood with beauty	שמונה פרקים לרמב"ם פרק ה'	מי שהוא מעצוב... יקל מעליו... בשמיעת נגונים... ובהתבוננות בציורים נאים ובטיול בגנות – One who is downhearted can lift their spirits through music, gardens, art, and beauty.	Validates mood-lifting activities from the Feel-Good Chart.
Thoughts influence mood	רבינו בחיי דברים כ"ט:י"ח	כי כל השמחה והעצב תלויים במה שבוה הלב – All happiness and sadness depend on the thoughts of the heart.	Ties into positive thinking and the Parrot Technique.
Exercise supports health	רמב"ם, הל' דעות ד:י"ד	כל זמן שאדם מתעמל... אין חלי בא – As long as a person exercises... illness does not overcome him.	Emphasises the power of physical movement on mood.
Joy comes through effort	איוב ה:ז	כי אדם לעמל יולד – Man was born to toil.	Reinforces “happiness is earned.”
Fulfilment from hard work	תהילים קכ"ח:ב'	יגיע כפיך כי האכל, אשריך וטוב לך – When you eat the work of your hands, you are fortunate and it is good for you.	Encourages real-world effort-based fulfilment.
Self-criticism distorts reality	במדבר רבה ט"ז	בעינינו כחגבים, וכן היינו בעיניהם – We were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes.	Ties into negative self-talk and the Poisonous Parrot.
Self-kindness is real kindness	משלי י"א:י"ז	גומל נפשו איש חסד – A kind person benefits himself.	Validates self-compassion as a Torah value.
Kindness begins with self	שבת קל"ג ב'	מה הוא רחום ותנון – אף אתה רחום ותנון – Just as Hashem is compassionate, so should you be compassionate.	Forms the basis of the Best Friend Technique.
Real wealth is contentment	אבות ד:א	איהו עשיר? השמח בהלקו – Who is rich? One who is happy with his lot.	Supports gratitude journaling and reframing.
Repetition builds character	(רמב"ם, אבות ג:ט"ז) (בפירושו)	Repeating small good deeds ingrains good character.	Reinforces daily mood-boosting habits and consistency.

Suggested 5 lesson plan

Lesson 1: Understanding Mood & Feel-Good Actions

Learning Focus

- Recognise your own mood and how it changes
- Understand that action can influence emotion (not just the other way around)
- Identify small, practical ways to boost mood

Key Themes Covered

- Recognising and naming your mood
- Behavioural activation
- How actions (even small ones) shift emotions
- Creating personalised feel-good plans

Discussion Prompts

- “Why is it important to check in with how we’re feeling?”
- “What are signs that you’re in a low mood — even if nothing obvious has happened?”
- “What’s one thing you’ve done recently that lifted your mood?”

Activity Options

- **Mood Ladder** (Workbook p. 20): Create a personal ladder of mood-boosting steps
- **Feel-Good Activity Brainstorm**: Groups choose one category (e.g., Friends, Hobbies) and list creative boosters
- **Gratitude Speed-Round**: One specific thing per student — different from what’s been said

Workbook Pages: 28-34

Lesson 2: Feel-Good Activities & Planning

Learning Focus

- Understand why waiting to “feel in the mood” is a trap
- Recognise how taking action can change emotions
- Build a personal Feel-Good Activity Chart to boost daily mood

Key Themes Covered

- Behavioural activation (actions shift feelings)
- Identifying activities that bring fulfilment vs. quick distraction
- Creating a balanced activity plan across different life areas

Discussion Prompts

- “Why is it a mistake to wait until you feel like doing something before starting?”
- “What kinds of activities leave you feeling proud or accomplished?”
- “How can planning ahead make it easier to stick with positive activities?”

Activity Options

- **Feel-Good Activity Brainstorm**: Groups pick a category (Hobbies, Friends, Family, etc.) and list activities that could lift mood
- **Workbook Task**: Draft a personal Feel-Good Activities list and complete the six-part chart
- **Optional share-out**: Students volunteer one activity they’d like to try this week and why

Workbook Pages: 30-34

Suggested 5 lesson plan



Lesson 3: Rewards, Exercise & Purpose

Learning Focus

- Discover why self-praise and rewards build motivation
- Explore how physical activity boosts mood and wellbeing
- Reflect on values and the kind of person you want to be remembered as

Key Themes Covered

- The importance of recognising effort and achievement
- Exercise and movement as natural mood boosters
- Long-term purpose: thinking about your legacy

Discussion Prompts

- “Why do you think we often find it hard to praise ourselves?”
- “How can even small amounts of exercise change your mood?”
- “If people described you in the future, what qualities would you want them to notice?”

Activity Options

- Workbook planning task: Choose and plan one activity from your Feel-Good Chart
- *Self-Praise Task*: Reflect on why rewarding yourself is important
- *Move It, Mood It*: Groups create and name short movement routines
- *How Do You Want to Be Remembered?* reflection and sharing activity

Workbook Pages: 35-39

Lesson 4: Inner Critic vs. Best Friend

Learning Focus

- Recognise critical inner self-talk (the “Parrot”)
- Practise responding to yourself with compassion
- Learn how self-kindness can lift mood and build resilience

Key Themes Covered

- Replacing self-criticism with compassion
- The Parrot Technique
- Best Friend Technique

Discussion Prompts

- “What names does your inner parrot call you?”
- “If your best friend felt like a failure, what would you say to them?”
- “Why is it so hard to speak to ourselves the same way?”


Activity Options

- **Best Friend Rehearsal (with Parrot Twist)**: Role-play self-criticism vs. support using fictional scenarios
- **Workbook Task p. 22–23**: Practise rewriting self-talk using the Best Friend voice
- **3 Good Things Challenge** (if not used in Lesson 4)

Workbook Pages:

Suggested 5 lesson plan

Lesson 5: Kindness, Gratitude & Long-Term Habits

 Remember: Multiple Choice Quiz and Word Search can be downloaded from masteringyourmind.today

Learning Focus

- Use kindness and gratitude to create a long-term positive mindset
- Understand how doing good for others affects your own emotional health
- Practise daily emotional habits that build resilience

Key Themes Covered

- Kindness to others lifts your own mood
- Gratitude as a mindset shift
- Building positive emotional routines

Discussion Prompts

- “How does being kind to others affect your own mood?”
- “What’s one small thing today you’re grateful for?”
- “How can focusing on what you have shift your whole mindset?”

Activity Options

- **Kindness Chain Challenge:** Each student writes one act of kindness for the classroom chain
- **Kindness Time Machine** (Workbook p. 24): Write a note from your future self, recognising acts of kindness and strengths
- **3 Good Things Challenge** (if not used yet)
- **Multiple Choice Quiz + Word Search**

Workbook Pages: 47-51

Appendix A

Low Mood Scenarios

1. “I failed a test even though I studied. I feel stupid.”
2. “I didn’t get invited to a party that all my friends are going to.”
3. “I said something embarrassing in class and now I feel like everyone’s laughing at me.”
4. “I had an argument with my mum this morning and now my whole day feels off.”
5. “I keep comparing myself to other people online and feel like I’m not good enough.”
6. “My friends didn’t wait for me at lunch — I feel invisible.”
7. “I forgot to do my homework and the teacher shouted at me.”
8. “Everyone else seems to be doing well this term and I feel like I’ve fallen behind.”
9. “Someone made a comment about how I look and it’s been stuck in my head all day.”
10. “I feel like I’m always the one checking in on my friends but no one checks in on me.”