



*All of the service of Hashem is dependent upon the improvement of one's character traits.*

Vilna Gaon - Even Shleima, Chapter 1

## ***Judging Favorably Module Packet 2***

***אמר רב יהודה בר שילא אמר רבי אסי אמר רבי יוחנן: ששה דברים אדם אוכל פירותיהן בעולם הזה, והקרן קיימת לו לעולם הבא. ואלו הן: ... והדן את חברו לכף זכות.***

***Rav Yehudah bar Shila said in the name of R' Assi, who said in the name of R' Yochanan: In the case of six precepts, a person who fulfills them enjoys their fruits in this world, but the principal remains intact for him to enjoy in the World to Come. And these are the six: ... and one who judges his fellow favorably.***

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbos, 127a

## Table of Contents

CONTACT INFORMATION.....	2
USE OF MATERIAL .....	2
ACTT <i>JUDGING FAVORABLY</i> MODULE – PACKET 2 .....	3
GOAL OF <i>JUDGING FAVORABLY</i> 2 MODULE.....	3
MODULE DURATION .....	3
TO DO LIST .....	3
<i>JUDGING FAVORABLY</i> RESOURCES .....	3
THE SIX QUESTIONS – A GUIDE TO <i>JUDGING FAVORABLY</i> .....	4
ACTT MODULE PACKET APPENDIX .....	5
ACTT COMMITMENT FORM – <i>JUDGING FAVORABLY</i> 2 MODULE .....	6
ACTT ACTIVITY/ACTION IDEAS.....	7
ACTT DAILY ACTIVITY LOG – <i>JUDGING FAVORABLY</i> 2 MODULE.....	10
GLOSSARY .....	15

### **Contact Information**

For additional information, please contact us at:

ACTT e-mail: [info@actt613.org](mailto:info@actt613.org)

ACTT web site: [www.actt613.org](http://www.actt613.org)

ACTT postal mailing address: ACTT  
48 Edgemount Road  
Edison, NJ 08817

ACTT tel#: (732) 993-5376

### **Use of Material**

The material in this *ACTT Module Packet* is intended for the use of the ACTT organization’s members and any other individuals interested in creating and sustaining meaningful changes in their lives. If an organization is interested in using this material, the ACTT organization would appreciate your contacting us. Thank you.

Version 20071107

## **ACTT Judging Favorably Module – Packet 2**

### **Goal of *Judging Favorably 2* Module**

To develop an awareness and a mindset that results in consistently giving each person the benefit of the doubt and judging each person favorably.

### **Module Duration**

This module is part 2 of the *Judging Favorably* series and will last for 7 weeks.

### **To Do List**

- If you are not yet a member of the ACTT Organization, fill out a membership application and submit it – see Membership page of [www.actt613.org](http://www.actt613.org) or ACTT Welcome Kit
- Fill out the “ACTT *Judging Favorably 2* Commitment Form”, keep a copy for yourself and submit a copy to the organization – see Module page of [www.actt613.org](http://www.actt613.org) or this Module Packet’s Appendix
- On a daily basis:
  - Follow the Learning Schedule and record your *Judging Favorably* activity/action in your “ACTT *Judging Favorably 2* Activity Log” in this Module Packet’s Appendix – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions
  - Record your maintenance activity/action (from the *Ahavas Chesed, Kavanah During Davening, Anger Management for Positive Results, Shmiras HaLashon, and Hakaras HaTov* modules) in your “ACTT *Judging Favorably 2* Activity Log” in this Module Packet’s Appendix – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions
- Participate in the chizuk activities, as desired:
  - ACTT *Judging Favorably 2* kickoff event and face-to-face discussion group meetings
  - ACTT online discussion group and e-mail list
  - Read inspirational material from sources recommended by the ACTT organization and also distributed by the ACTT organization
  - Recommend inspirational material to the ACTT membership and submit inspirational material to be distributed to all the ACTT members

### ***Judging Favorably* Resources**

The following are some resources for learning about *Judging Favorably*:

- The Other Side Of The Story - Giving people the benefit of the doubt - stories and strategies by Yehudis Samet; Artsroll Mesorah; ISBN: 0899065198
- It Wasn't How It Seemed - Short stories about people who jumped to conclusions by Yehudis Samet; Artsroll Mesorah; ISBN: 1578194822

- Courtrooms of the Mind by Hanoch Teller; New York City Publishing Company; ISBN: 0961477245
- A Tzaddik in Our Time: The Life of Rabbi Aryeh Levin by Simcha Raz, Translator: Charles Wengrov; Feldheim Publishers; ISBN: 0873061306
- “Tisha B’Av 1999: A Positive Light: How judging with favor reshapes our world” audio tape with Rabbi Yissocher Frand; Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation
- “Tikkun Ha'Adam: Judging Others Favorably” shiurim by Rav Moshe Weinberger in MP3 audio format downloadable from the Aish Kodesh Institute web site: [www.aishkodesh.org](http://www.aishkodesh.org)

### ***The Six Questions – A Guide to Judging Favorably***

by Rabbi Kalman Packouz

Reproduced with Aish HaTorah’s permission from:

[http://www.aish.com/torahportion/shalomweekly/Ekev\\_5759.asp](http://www.aish.com/torahportion/shalomweekly/Ekev_5759.asp)

The Torah teaches that, whenever we experience or hear about the negative behavior of another person, we must "judge favorably." In simple terms, that means giving the benefit of the doubt. But how can one follow that advice when it seems that the facts clearly point to someone's guilt?

Sometimes we jump to the wrong conclusion because the facts are different from what we perceive them to be. Even if our facts are accurate, we often misinterpret the intent behind them. When we drop the assumption that there was a negative intention behind someone's actions towards us, we automatically deflate much of the anger and hurt that we feel.

Here are six possible ways to analyze a situation and jump to a good conclusion:

1. Are you sure it happened at all? Sometimes our perceptions of what we see and hear are mistaken.
2. Are you sure the details are correct? One small detail can completely alter the scenario. Something may have been exaggerated or omitted that would make a big difference.
3. Do you know if the other person intended harm? Often the consequences are unforeseen.
4. Do you know the assumptions the other person was operating under? Maybe the other person was operating under a misconception that would explain their behavior.
5. Could the other person's act have been the result of an innocent, human error? Everyone has limitations. Perhaps this person lacked experience, was forgetful, distracted or simply didn't think carefully enough before acting.
6. Do you know what events preceded the negative action? The other person may be enduring a great deal of pain, frustration or stress. This might be a response to a specific situation, like an illness or financial loss. Or it could be a deeper, more pervasive problem that affects the person's entire life.

Although the Torah requires us to judge others with favor and compassion, we are not required to accept abusive behavior from others. Physical, verbal or emotional abuse must be addressed and corrected.

# **ACTT Module Packet Appendix**



## **ACTT Commitment Form – Judging Favorably 2 Module**

*Remember, it is better to commit to less – you can always do more!*

**Please PRINT all information**

This commitment does not constitute a vow; I am doing the following, bli neder

From \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ To \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

As a zechus for:

a refuah shelaimah for \_\_\_\_\_

a shidduch for \_\_\_\_\_

parnassa for \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ *Judging Favorably act(s) daily in a ☺ mood*  
(ACTT recommends 1-2 acts daily – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions)
- *Performing one or more of the following maintenance activities in a ☺ mood*  
(ACTT recommends a total of 1-2 acts daily – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions)
  - \_\_\_ *Ahavas Chesed act(s)*  *daily* or  *weekly*
  - \_\_\_ *Kavanah During Davening act(s)*  *daily* or  *weekly*
  - \_\_\_ *Anger Management for Positive Results act(s)*  *daily* or  *weekly*
  - \_\_\_ *Shmiras HaLashon act(s)*  *daily* or  *weekly*
  - \_\_\_ *Hakaras HaTov act(s)*  *daily* or  *weekly*
- *Learning \_\_\_ minutes daily from* (ACTT recommends 5 minutes daily):
  - The ACTT *Judging Favorably 2 Learning Schedule Book* (see *ACTT Daily Activity Log*)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please PRINT all information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. number \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

☺ *Be happy with your ability to Improve Yourself and Grow!* ☺

Please email form: [commitment@actt613.org](mailto:commitment@actt613.org) or mail: ACTT, 48 Edgemount Road, Edison, NJ 08817



## ACTT Activity/Action Ideas

**Acknowledgements:**

- 1) Some Ideas for Acts of Chesed were adapted from Areyvut's 2005 "A Kindness a Day Calendar: 365 Ways to Make a Difference", see website: [www.areyvut.org](http://www.areyvut.org)
- 2) Some of the ideas for Judging Favorably were adapted from "The Other Side of the Story" by Yehudis Samet
- 3) Some of the ideas for Kavanah During Davening were adapted from Praying with Fire by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman
- 4) Ideas for Improving Anger Management were adapted from Anger The Inner Teacher @ [www.aish.com/spirituality/growth/Anger\\_The\\_Inner\\_Teacher.asp](http://www.aish.com/spirituality/growth/Anger_The_Inner_Teacher.asp)

### IDEAS FOR JUDGING FAVORABLY

<p>Don't jump to conclusions          Judge your neighbor's actions favorably          "Judge your fellow man fairly" (Leviticus 19:15)          Look for a possible explanation in another's behavior          Give your friend the benefit of the doubt          Look for the good in others          "Judge all people to the side of merit" (Ethics of the Fathers 1:6)          Think about "Love your neighbor like yourself", and apply it to others. We all find excuses for ourselves.</p>	<p>Realize that your friend did not see you carrying packages when he/she passed by          Remember, it could be a miscommunication...          Are we missing any facts?          Look for people's strengths          Remember, things are not always what they seem!          Try to explain... not complain about other people's actions          Focus on solutions - not recriminations          Remember the excuses one makes for oneself - apply these excuses to the one who wronged you</p>
---	--

### IDEAS FOR ACTS OF CHESED

<p>Offer to run an errand for a friend          Cheerfully greet someone          Bake an unexpected treat for a friend          Remember someone's birthday          Call someone going thru a difficult time          Leave a friendly note for a family member          Listen patiently to others          Clean up after dinner without being asked          Call someone who lives alone          Greet everyone you see with a smile          Introduce yourself to someone          Apologize for something you've done          Take out the garbage without being asked</p>	<p>Give someone an unexpected compliment          Spend time with a child with a disability          Help strangers in shul feel welcome          Take an elderly person shopping          Pay attention to what people are saying          Spend quality time with family &amp; friends          Call or visit someone who is sick          Cook a meal for a person in need          Visit someone who may be lonely          Call someone you haven't spoken to in a while          Say thanks - no matter how small the deed          Help a child with his / her homework          Compliment someone who helps you</p>	<p>Give someone an encouraging note          When asked to do something, respond right away in a cheerful and willing manner          Drive someone to the doctor          Help out family members even if you're busy          Help someone find a job          Buy a gift for a loved one for no reason          Greet everyone with a pleasant "good morning"          Write a letter to an elderly person          Take a neighbor's garbage cans in from the curb          Call someone who recently lost a loved one          Congratulate siblings on recent accomplishments</p>
---	--	---



## ACTT Activity/Action Ideas (continued)

<b>IDEAS FOR IMPROVING KAVANAH DURING DAVENING</b>	
<p>Meditate for 5 minutes before davening            Write translations to difficult words in your siddur            Think about all Hashem has given you            Say the words, “I am standing before Hashem” out loud            Remember that Kavanah During Davening is a Halachik requirement of prayer            Pronounce each word slowly and clearly            Use a siddur, even for Tefillos you know by heart            Establish a specific place for davening            Concentrate for 3 seconds on each word of a specific tefillah</p>	<p>Learn the meanings of words you do not know            Select one prayer a week to say with more kavanah            Write down your favorite phrases from davening and focus on them when you daven            Arrive before the minyan begins to daven and be ready when they start            When davening at home, remove distractions from around you            Select one word a day to say with more kavanah            Select one phrase a day to say with more kavanah            Before you start to daven, review what Hashem has given you in the last 24 hours</p>

<b>IDEAS FOR IMPROVING ANGER MANAGEMENT</b>	
<p>In the past, when you have been able to overcome anger quickly, how did you do it?            Learn from people who are able to remain calm in situations that get you angry            Learn from people who are able to let go of their anger easily            Give anger a chance to subside before speaking by counting from 1 to 10, 1 to 20, etc.            When you notice that you are feeling angry, breathe slowly and deeply, exhale slowly            When you are about to get angry because of something that someone did to you, focus on some good quality of that person</p>	<p>Use physical exercise to release anger: take a brisk walk, run, dance, jump rope, etc.            Meditate on: “Ein od milvado - There is nothing else besides G-d”            When you get angry, look at yourself in a mirror to see and hear yourself as others see and hear you when you are angry            Write down all your angry thoughts in a letter addressed to the person you are angry at, but do not send it            When you are about to get angry, ask yourself, “How important is this in my life?”</p>

<b>IDEAS FOR SHMIRAS HALASHON</b>	
<p>Think before speaking            Pause to think about what to say and how to say it before responding to someone            Give each person the benefit of the doubt            Train yourself to avoid judging others            Think positive thoughts and avoid negative thoughts            Stay calm and avoid getting angry            Avoid joking around that could lead to making fun of others            Develop a character of humility - avoid arrogance</p>	<p>Be extra careful with Shmiras HaLashon for 1-2 hour(s) each day            Never give up hope of one’s ability to guard one’s tongue            Accept the idea that it is possible to speak without gossiping            Train yourself to avoid complaining about others            Learn the laws of Shmiras HaLashon            Walk away from a group that is speaking Lashon Hara            If someone starts speaking Lashon Hara to you, respectfully ask them to stop            Realize and say to yourself: “It’s Not That Important”</p>





## ACTT Activity/Action Ideas (continued)

### IDEAS FOR HAKARAS HA TOV

Recognize the good that you possess  
 Appreciate what you do have rather than what you do not have  
 Acknowledge that what you possess is a gift, not something you deserve  
 Develop the habit of saying thank you for everything you receive, both big and small  
 Realize that everything comes from Hashem and is for your good, then thank Him  
 Always see the glass as being half full and be thankful  
 Focus on developing an attitude of gratitude  
 Appreciate the good that a family member does for you and say thank you  
 Appreciate the good that a friend does for you and say thank you  
 Appreciate the good that a colleague does for you and say thank you  
 Appreciate the good that strangers do for you and say thank you

Write a thank you note to express your appreciation  
 Make a telephone call to express your appreciation  
 Give a gift to express your appreciation  
 Express appreciation for routine actions such as taking out the garbage, preparing supper, doing the laundry, cleaning the house, bringing in the newspaper  
 Thank the school bus driver  
 Thank your teacher, thank your child's teacher  
 Thank the mail carrier for delivering the mail  
 Say *Modeh Ani* each morning with great feeling  
 Reflect on *Modim Anachnu Lach* in *Shmoneh Esrei*  
 Thank Hashem for every breath that you take



## ACTT Daily Activity Log – Judging Favorably 2 Module

Abbreviations: 1) Other Side of Story = The Other Side Of The Story by Yehudis Samet; 2) JF = *Judging Favorably*; 3) AC = *Ahavas Chesed*; 4) KDD = *Kavanah During Davening*; 5) AM = *Anger Management*; 6) SL = *Shmiras HaLashon*; 7) HT = *Hakaras HaTov*

		Learned (√)		Activity/Action	
Date	√	Book	Pages	√	Notes (description of activity/action, comments, etc.)
<b>EXAMPLE DAILY ENTRY – current module’s activity/action and up to 2 maintenance activities/actions</b>					
Day	m/d/07	√	Other Side of Story	x	√
					JF: Did not jump to conclusions; and/or AC: Helped someone find a job; and/or KDD: Meditated for 5 minutes before davening; and/or AM: Took a brisk walk to release anger; and/or SL: Paused to think about what to say
					and how to say it before speaking; and/or HT: Appreciated a friend’s thoughtfulness and said thank you
<b>Note: Below are suggested pages to read each day from part 2 of the <i>Judging Favorably</i> module’s new source book: <u>The Other Side Of The Story</u></b>					
Sun	11/18/07		Other Side of Story	17-18	
Mon	11/19/07		Other Side of Story	19-21	
Tue	11/20/07		Other Side of Story	23-26	
Wed	11/21/07		Other Side of Story	26-28	
Thu	11/22/07		Other Side of Story	28-31	
Fri	11/23/07		Other Side of Story	31-33	
Sat	11/24/07		Other Side of Story	33-34	
Sun	11/25/07		Other Side of Story	35-37	



**ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – Judging Favorably 2 Module**

		Learned (√)		Activity/Action	
Date	√	Book	Pages	√	Notes (description of activity/action, comments, etc.)
Mon	11/26/07	Other Side of Story	39-42		
Tue	11/27/07	Other Side of Story	42-45		
Wed	11/28/07	Other Side of Story	47-49		
Thu	11/29/07	Other Side of Story	49-52		
Fri	11/30/07	Other Side of Story	53-57		
Sat	12/01/07	Other Side of Story	57-60		
Sun	12/02/07	Other Side of Story	60-62		
Mon	12/03/07	Other Side of Story	62-64		
Tue	12/04/07	Other Side of Story	64-66		
Wed	12/05/07	Other Side of Story	67-70		
Thu	12/06/07	Other Side of Story	70-73		



**ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – Judging Favorably 2 Module**

		Learned (√)		Activity/Action	
Date	√	Book	Pages	√	Notes (description of activity/action, comments, etc.)
Fri	12/07/07	Other Side of Story	75-77		
Sat	12/08/07	Other Side of Story	77-78		
Sun	12/09/07	Other Side of Story	78-80		
Mon	12/10/07	Other Side of Story	80-82		
Tue	12/11/07	Other Side of Story	83-85		
Wed	12/12/07	Other Side of Story	85-87		
Thu	12/13/07	Other Side of Story	87-89		
Fri	12/14/07	Other Side of Story	89-91		
Sat	12/15/07	Other Side of Story	91-93		
Sun	12/16/07	Other Side of Story	95-97		
Mon	12/17/07	Other Side of Story	97-99		



**ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – Judging Favorably 2 Module**

		Learned (√)		Activity/Action	
Date	√	Book	Pages	√	Notes (description of activity/action, comments, etc.)
Tue	12/18/07	Other Side of Story	99-101		
Wed	12/19/07	Other Side of Story	103-106		
Thu	12/20/07	Other Side of Story	107-110		
Fri	12/21/07	Other Side of Story	110-112		
Sat	12/22/07	Other Side of Story	112-115		
Sun	12/23/07	Other Side of Story	115-118		
Mon	12/24/07	Other Side of Story	118-120		
Tue	12/25/07	Other Side of Story	120-122		
Wed	12/26/07	Other Side of Story	122-124		
Thu	12/27/07	Other Side of Story	125-126		
Fri	12/28/07	Other Side of Story	127-129		



**ACTT Daily Activity Log (continued) – Judging Favorably 2 Module**

		Learned (√)		Activity/Action		
Date		√	Book	Pages	√	Notes (description of activity/action, comments, etc.)
Sat	12/29/07		Other Side of Story	129-131		
Sun	12/30/07		Other Side of Story	131-133		
Mon	12/31/07		Other Side of Story	133-134		
Tue	01/01/08		Other Side of Story	134-136		
Wed	01/02/08		Other Side of Story	136-138		
Thu	01/03/08		Other Side of Story	138-142		
Fri	01/04/08		Other Side of Story	142-146		
Sat	01/05/08		Other Side of Story	147-148		

## Glossary

<b>Ahavas Chesed</b>	.....loving kindness
<b>B'li Neder</b>	.....without making a formal commitment
<b>Bitachon</b>	.....trust in Hashem
<b>Chesed</b>	.....kindness
<b>Chizuk</b>	.....moral support
<b>Davening</b>	.....praying
<b>Hakaras HaTov</b>	.....gratitude
<b>Kavanah</b>	.....concentration
<b>Klal Yisrael</b>	.....the Jewish people
<b>Lashon Hara</b>	.....evil tongue (speech) - any derogatory or damaging (physically, financially, socially, or stress-inducing) communication
<b>Midah, Midos</b>	.....character trait, character traits
<b>Mitzvah</b>	.....a commandment
<b>Mussar</b>	.....ethical teaching
<b>Neshamah</b>	.....soul
<b>Nisayon</b>	.....a test
<b>Ona'as Devarim</b>	.....causing hurt through the spoken word
<b>Parnasa</b>	.....livelihood
<b>Rechilus</b>	.....gossip-mongering - any communication that generates animosity between people
<b>Refuah Shleimah</b>	.....a complete recovery from an illness
<b>Sefer</b>	.....a book
<b>Shidduch</b>	.....a match of two eligible and marriageable Jewish singles
<b>Shiurim</b>	.....classes
<b>Shmiras HaLashon</b>	.....guarding one's tongue
<b>Siddur</b>	.....prayer book
<b>Siyata D'Shmaya</b>	.....Divine Assistance
<b>Talmid, Talmidim</b>	.....student, students
<b>Tefillah, Tefillos</b>	.....prayer, prayers
<b>Teshuva</b>	.....repentance
<b>Zechus</b>	.....merit