



# RILEY'S RAINFOREST

“Send down... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing...” –Bahá'u'lláh

## Weird and Wonderful

**D**o you ever feel different from other people? Like you don't always belong? Like you're maybe a little *weird*?

No worries! Everyone feels out of place sometimes. You might think you're too smart, not smart enough, too big, or too little. You might have a different culture, language, or religion, or maybe you have unusual hobbies.

Those qualities may not make you popular, but popularity doesn't always lead to happiness or success. A study that followed a group of kids from ages 13 to 23 found that those who were “cool” in school were more likely to have problems with drugs, alcohol, and criminal behavior later on. They also didn't get along with others as well as the kids who had been less popular.

In another study, a journalist

interviewed kids around the U.S. who felt like outsiders during a year in high school. She says that what makes kids feel “weird” are often the things that drive their success as adults.

Being true to yourself takes courage and dedication—qualities that can help you reach your dreams. We need passionate, innovative thinkers to cure diseases, invent new technology, create awesome art, and solve global problems.

Feeling different can be tough. Try not to compare yourself to others. Pursue your interests, even if others don't share them. Look for friends who appreciate you just as you are. Even one friend who “gets” you is a huge blessing.

If you're still seeking good friends, take heart. There are kids out there who are just as weird—and wonderful—as you are.

## Explore & Soar: Be True to You

**Y**ou don't have to fit in to find success. Check out some famous people who dared to be different:



Albert Einstein in 1893 at age 14

- ❑ Einstein struggled in school and was slow to speak, but he became one of the world's greatest scientists.
- ❑ J.K. Rowling was bullied as a kid and “lived mostly in books and daydreams.” She later wrote the best-selling Harry Potter series.
- ❑ Helen Keller was born deaf, mute, and blind, but became a world-famous writer, speaker, and activist.
- ❑ Bethany Hamilton lost her arm in a shark attack at age 13, but won a surfing national championship two years later.
- ❑ Stevie Wonder was born blind, but had a hit song at age 13 and became a world-renowned musician and songwriter.

## Curiosity Canopy



**T** rue or False? Doing kind deeds for others can make you happier *and* more likeable.

*True.* In one study, kids who did random acts of kindness felt more accepted by their peers. Also, kindness is contagious—people who experience kind deeds are more likely to perform them for others. What can you do today to make someone's world brighter?