



# RILEY'S RAINFOREST

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

## Gratitude Is Great!

**W**hat things make you feel most thankful? Do you focus on them often? Scientists find that practicing gratitude can make a big difference in kids' lives.

In one study, kids ages 10 to 14 were asked about their lives and feelings, and then four years later they were asked again. Over that time, the kids who were the most grateful grew happier and more hopeful. They also felt more meaning in their lives. Any negative feelings and symptoms of depression decreased. They were also less likely to use alcohol or drugs or have behavior problems.

Another study found that grateful teens got better grades and had stronger connections to their communities. In contrast, kids more focused on material things were more envious and less satisfied with life.

So if gratitude has so many benefits, why aren't people



thankful all the time? It could be that gratitude isn't always a natural habit. Experts say that our brains tend to focus on negative events more easily than on positive ones. It can also be difficult to feel grateful when we're surrounded by stores and media that tempt us to want bigger and better things.

We can choose to be thankful, but it takes effort. Pay close attention to your thoughts. Try to think positively when you catch yourself complaining—even inside your own head. Think of all the good things in your life, large and small. You may find you have more to be thankful for than you thought!

## Canopy of Questions

**W**hat do you want to know about staying healthy and happy? Health can involve your body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Send your questions to [brilliant@usbnc.org](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org). Responses are given by a health professional.

“What do you do when you are the only Bahá'í in your school and you don't fit in well?”

—August, age 12

Dear August,

It can be hard to feel different. It may help to think about the meaning of being a Bahá'í. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, “To be a Bahá'í simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it . . .” As long as there are kids who want to be kind, forgiving, and compassionate, a Bahá'í kid is not alone.

Like a treasure hunter, look for the good qualities in each person, such as courage or truthfulness. Let them know you like those qualities. You can do this with a smile, a look, or a compliment. Join those who wish to be helpful, loving, and generous.

When you lovingly approach those who seem different from you, you'll feel a stronger sense of belonging. There is so much goodness around us to discover. Remember your classmates in your prayers. If you feel comfortable, you can share your faith by telling them about Bahá'í holy days or inviting them to events.

Try to help everyone who crosses your path go away with a happy heart.

*Wishing you joy,  
Keyvan Geula  
Licensed Family Therapist*



## Explore & Soar: Bummer or Blessing?

**T**ry these tips for using your positive powers.

- When you have a negative thought, imagine popping it like a bubble. Replace it with a positive thought.
- Think about someone you love.

- Watch your words. “Problems” are less scary if they're “challenges” or “opportunities.”
- Think about a difficulty you overcame. What strengths did you use?