

RILEY'S RAINFOREST



“Send down... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing...”

—Bahá'u'lláh

What Is Your Body Saying?

Did you know that you can make yourself feel happier and more confident just by changing the way you move?

Our body language can affect how others see us, and it can also impact how we think and feel about ourselves. Research shows that people who sit up straighter have better moods and more self-esteem. People who walk with confidence experience more positive thoughts. The mind and body affect each other, and researchers are exploring how that connection works.

One thing they've found is that when we feel unsure, we tend to become more hunched and closed in, like a hedgehog curling into a ball. When we feel triumphant, we're apt to open our bodies more, like a bird spreading its wings. (Think of a runner crossing the finish line

with her arms spread wide.) Some research has shown that purposefully taking a “power stance”—holding your body in a strong, confident pose—for a minute or two a day may make you feel less stressed and more self-assured.

Other studies show that putting a smile on your face—even if it's pretend at first—can help you feel happier. The physical act of smiling appears to trigger hormones that improve your mood. So when you feel down or sluggish, try smiling, and see how it affects your attitude.

It can be fun to experiment with how you hold and move your body. Catch yourself slouching? Sit up tall. Notice you're frowning? Put on a happy face. What is your body saying right now?

Explore & Soar:

Power Poses

Try these moves to give yourself a boost.

Lighten the Load

We tend to carry the weight of the world on our shoulders when we're stressed—so shake it off! Wiggle your shoulders a few times and drop them into a relaxed position.



Smile a While

Make yourself smile—including crinkling your eyes—and hold it. Think of a happy or funny memory, and see how long it takes for a genuine smile to shine through.

Superhero Stance

Put your hands on your hips in fists, throw your shoulders back, and hold your head up high. Imagine your cape flowing in the wind.



Reach for the Sky

Stand with your feet a little wider than shoulder width apart. Stand straight and tall, and stretch your arms up toward the sky. Imagine reaching toward your dreams.

Curiosity Canopy



Did you know? Smiling is contagious! Swedish researchers did an experiment, asking people to frown while they looked at a picture of a smiling person. They found that volunteers had to fight the urge to smile, and had to make a real effort to frown. When you smile at others, their brains tell them to smile back. Keep smiling and spread joy!