

RILEY'S RAINFOREST



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

—Bahá' u'lláh

BE YOURSELF!

There's a new bird at our school named Shona. She's really cool and has a *super squawky* laugh. I love it, and it makes *me* laugh too! She wears these fun necklaces she makes from seeds. But some birds teased her and said the seeds look like dried-up dinner! So rude – it really ruffled my feathers.

But guess what? Shona just laughed! I asked her how she keeps her cool.

“I try to be **authentic**,” she said. “That’s staying true to yourself, no matter what other birds think. It’s okay if some birds don’t like me or my necklaces. My true friends support me.”

“But how do you *know* when you’re being true to yourself?” I asked her.

“I feel peaceful and happy. When my brain and my heart are in unity, I’m not afraid to express myself.”

Shona said when we’re more authentic, we have richer friendships and stronger self-esteem. It’s easier to stay positive in tough times, too.

That reminded me of when a bird teased me in third grade about my flowered backpack. I just smiled and told her it reminded me of my grandma’s garden. *That* took her by surprise!

Being yourself can take courage sometimes. Some people may not like you, and that’s okay. What’s important is that you like yourself! Check out these tips Shona and I came up with about being authentic. I hope they help *you* keep it real too!



CURIOSITY CANOPY



Want to get to know yourself better? Try journaling! Writing down your thoughts and experiences can reduce stress and help you understand your emotions, hopes, and dreams. Start small, and write a few good things that happen each day.

EXPLORE & SOAR: BE TRUE TO YOU

Try these tips and dare to be different!

- Make a list of virtues that are important to you, like kindness, humor, or honesty. Choose one to focus on each week.
- Slow down and make sure your decisions fit with your true self. It’s okay to say “no” to something that doesn’t feel right.
- Be brave and speak your mind with respect and courtesy. You may encourage others to speak up too!



- Be curious and learn new things that excite you, even if they’re not popular with others.
- Ask yourself if you’re hiding some of your thoughts or feelings. Why? How can you express them in healthy ways?
- Be kind to yourself. No one is perfect! Do your best and try to learn from your mistakes.