



LEVERAGING YOUR GLOBAL EXPERIENCE



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Leveraging Your Global Experience

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Leveraging Your Global Experience

In the **Re-Entry Workshop** you will review with your trainer the best and worst of your global experience, examine your return experience to date, and enhance your strategy for recreating a new life at home.

- CHAPTER 1** Coming Home I: Setting Expectations
In **Chapter 1** you will consider the many conditions that affect the re-entry experience and re-examine your own expectations
- CHAPTER 2** Looking Back I: Reviewing the Global Experience
Chapter 2 provides a framework for recalling significant international experiences and stories.
- CHAPTER 3** Coming Home II: The Reintegration Process
Working through **Chapter 3** will prepare you for further stages of the adaptation process and help you create a strategy for coping with it.
- CHAPTER 4** Coming Home With Kids
If you are returning as a family, **Chapter 4** will inform you of how children experience expatriation and re-entry and what parents can do to help them through the transitions.
- CHAPTER 5** Looking Back II: Assessing the Global Experience
Chapter 5 looks again at the expatriate experience, this time from the perspective of new knowledge and skills and how to capture and communicate your experience and learning to achieve your goals.
- CHAPTER 6** Moving Forward: Re-Creating Your Life, Again
In **Chapter 6** you will clarify your personal, family and professional goals and develop strategies for achieving them during the reintegration process.
- RESOURCES** Resources for Further Exploration
Finally, **Chapter 7** directs you to further readings about the experience of expatriation and reintegration for adults, teens, and children

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Chapter 1

Coming Home: Setting Expectations

Factors that Influence the Re-Entry Experience

The re-entry experience is different for each individual. The following factors help shape that experience and we will look closely at each of these as we proceed.

READINESS TO RETURN

- How ready were you to return home?
- How ready were other family members?



CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES

- Professional
- Personal
- Financial



ENTRY INTO NEW LIFE STAGE

- Are you entering a new stage in your life (empty nest, youngest child is now school age, a career change, caring for aged parents)?

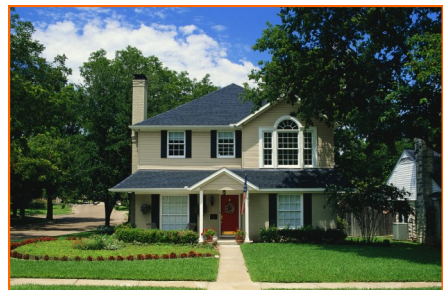


UNMET EXPECTATIONS

- What expectations do/did you have about returning home?
- What are/were your professional expectations?
- Are you returning to a new location or a place you have lived?

PERCEPTION AND VALUE SHIFTS

- Do you perceive your people and culture differently?
- Were you affected by the norms and values of your host culture?
- Do you see your social and business environment differently?



Readiness to Return

As we prepare to return home, each of us may differ in our personal and professional readiness to leave. Think about your readiness to depart your host culture and indicate which place on the continuum reflects your attitude, both personally and professionally.

Scale: 1 = far from ready

5 = very ready

Personally



Professionally



Reasons for being ready:

Reasons for not being ready:

Changes in Circumstances: Professional, Personal, Financial

The following lists common personal, professional and financial issues and concerns that may help you identify significant issues affecting your re-entry. Some of these may not be an issue, some may be apparent already, and others may appear later. Revisit these lists in six to eight weeks to see if anything has changed.

PROFESSIONAL: Circle the number that applies to your experience. We will discuss those for which you circle a 4 or 5.

	Of No Concern				Of Great Concern
	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> No relevant job	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of professional status	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> No recognition of new skills	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> No job at all	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Resentment by peers	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Bypassed by colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of job clarity	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Not enough autonomy	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	1	2	3	4	5

Changes in Circumstances: Professional, Personal, & Financial

PERSONAL: Circle the number that applies to your experience. We will discuss those for which you circle a 4 or 5.

	Of No Concern				Of Great Concern
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle loss or change:					
International friends	1	2	3	4	5
Travel opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Household help	1	2	3	4	5
Exciting life	1	2	3	4	5
High profile	1	2	3	4	5
Stimulating environment	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Role shift for accompanying partner	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Significant change for children	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational continuity for kids	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Concerns for safety	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Re-entry adjustment difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> No career/job for accompanying partner	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	1	2	3	4	5

Changes in Circumstances: Professional, Personal, & Financial

FINANCIAL: Circle the number that applies to your experience. We will discuss those for which you circle a 4 or 5.

	Of No Concern				Of Great Concern
	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of income	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduced standard of living (loss of perks)	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Inflation at home, especially in real estate	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Higher cost of consumer goods	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax problems	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	1	2	3	4	5

Life Stages

1. In what way does the reintegration process represent a **new stage of your life**? (Such as “empty nest”, youngest child beginning school, career change, re-entering workforce, caring for aging parents, retirement, etc.)



2. What does this imply for your lifestyle and responsibilities?



Expectations vs. Reality

W

hen expectations are incongruent with reality, we experience more “culture shock” and the adaptation process is more difficult and stressful.

EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY DURING ASSIGNMENT

What were the surprises, pleasant or unpleasant, in your expatriate experience and how did they effect your adaptation?

EXPECTATIONS	REALITY

EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY DURING RE-ENTRY

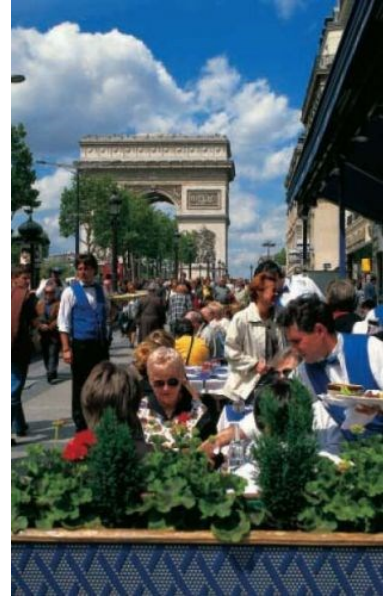
In your re-entry process, what surprises have you encountered, and how are they affecting your adaptation?

EXPECTATIONS	REALITY

Common Expatriate Assumptions

The following statements are common thoughts among expatriates prior to their return. Their actual re-entry experience often contradicts these expectations. Indicate which of these you agreed with before your return, and which have been confirmed or disconfirmed.

- I don't need help with reintegration; I'm going home.
- Because I've been successful in my international assignment, I won't experience repatriation difficulties.
- People back home are more efficient and courteous.
- Things work better at home.
- Everything is clean and well organized at home.
- Everything is basically the same as when I left.
- My close friendships will pick up where they left off.
- People can't wait to hear about my exciting experiences.
- People will understand and value my new skills and knowledge.
- I will easily fit back into my own culture.
- I am current on political, social, and cultural events at home.
- I will be able to move up in the organization as I apply what I have learned abroad.
- I'll come out ahead financially when I return.



The Impact of Culture

Cultural Perceptions

Each individual develops a way of viewing and responding to the world in ways shaped by culture. Culture is like a lens or filter that tells the individual what to attend to and how to interpret it.

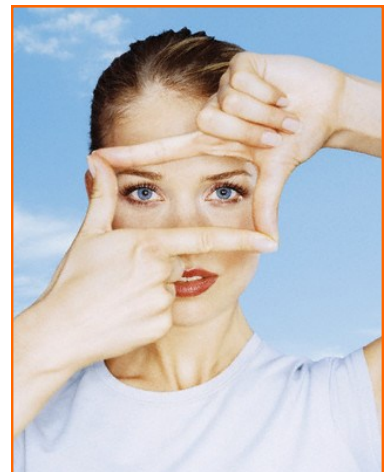
Due to culture, perception is "selective": certain symbols, behaviors, or objects may be quite meaningful to some, but quite "invisible" to the members of another culture. Subtle non-verbal cues, significant aspects of dress or conduct, or objects of symbolic importance may go unnoticed by people unfamiliar with the culture.

Or, what has positive significance to one culture may have negative implications in another. Perceptions are, then, culturally relative - members of different cultures apply their own "yardstick" to the importance and meaning of behaviors and symbols.

**We don't See Things
The Way They Are**



**We See Them As
We Are**



**(And Maybe We've
Changed Since We Left
Home)**

Culture: What is it, and So What?

What is Culture?

The concept of culture is often defined as learned patterns of behavior, belief, thought, perception, emotion, and communication that

- are held in common among members of a group of people,
- endure and develop over time, and
- organize forms of social and creative life (e.g., social systems, arts, commerce) in consistent ways.

Culture is how we perceive and interact with our environment. It's "the way we do things around here."



Cultures and Generalizations

Groups of people everywhere exhibit common traits or characteristics, which as a whole we call "culture." Various cultures are manifested in regions, countries, ethnic groups, subcultures, or even social organizations, like clubs and companies. There are ethnic cultures, socio-economic cultures, and corporate cultures.

While there are "norms" which describe generally how members of a given group or culture think, communicate, or act, there is also considerable variation in these norms among individuals. People in cultures everywhere have individual personality differences, gender differences, demographic differences, etc. Also, cultures constantly change over time. So, we have to generalize about the common characteristics of a culture in order to understand it.

Generalizations are tools for understanding, but as with any tool, there are limits to their applicability. Generalizations are a starting point for cultural understanding. The more we interact with members of a culture, the more refined, diverse, and rich our understanding becomes. This is our goal - to continuously refine, qualify, and enrich our assumptions and expectations about members of various cultures.



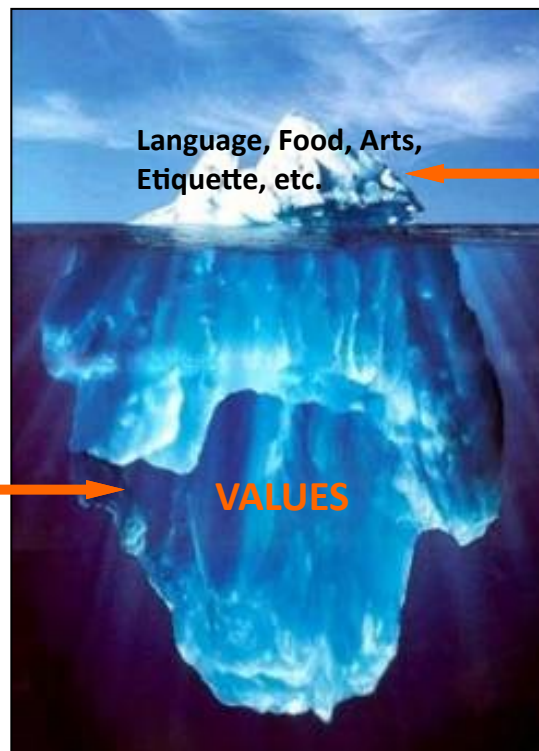
Culture: What is it, and So What?

How do we experience other cultures and our own?

A useful insight into the concept of culture is to think of culture as an iceberg floating in an ocean. The portion above the surface we perceive and adjust to relatively easily – the architecture, food, clothing, transportation, etc. However, the portion hidden below the surface we do not perceive, though we frequently encounter it in surprising and painful collisions as we slowly learn of its presence and how to deal with it. Patterns of thought and belief and attitude that would explain otherwise perplexing behaviors lie out of sight, under the cultural surface. They are difficult to perceive, but until we can perceive them and accommodate to them, our own submerged cultural base will continue to collide with that of our hosts.

The “Iceberg”
of Culture

Invisible
Culture



Culture: What is it, and So What?

What do we mean by “values”?

A value is a cultural judgment. Values express what is right and wrong, good and bad, desirable and undesirable in a culture. Each culture emphasizes certain values over others. These judgments and choices we make as a result of them are reflected throughout all aspects of a culture: in communication, protocol & etiquette, relationships, educational practices, mass media, literature, and so on.

When we compare cultures, we can think of values as different emphases that exist only in relation to each other. In this way, we can put pairs of values on opposite extremes of a continuum. One can derive an understanding of a culture’s values by looking at where its values are situated on such a continuum and comparing that to one’s own judgments.

Now that you have returned from living in another culture, it is useful to compare the values of that culture with the values of the one you are returning to. This will help to determine whether your own values have changed as a result of your international experience and to speculate how that might affect your re-entry experience.

There are two things to keep in mind with these continuums:

For each of these continuums, there are no absolutes. It is only possible to assign a position for any culture on each continuum relative to other cultures.

The values continuums represent relative emphases. In any culture, both extremes will be exhibited from time to time, depending upon circumstances. What is important, therefore, is what the general tendency of a culture is. This general tendency is what occurs in the majority of situations.

Values: Theirs, Ours, and Mine

Different groups of people throughout the world have different sets of values, attitudes and assumptions about life. Value systems other than your own work the same way, only with reversed priorities. Value preferences may change depending on the context. Thinking in cybernetic terms – both directions – helps you to reconcile cultural differences without negating one or the other.

*Where do you find some of these tensions in your behavior in your home culture?
Where do you find them in the host culture?*

<p>Individual Self-reliance, responsible for conduct of own life; independence</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Group Identity defined by group; group welfare supersedes individual concerns; interdependence</p>
<p>Competition Brings out best in individual; challenges to produce best possible</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Cooperation Harmony within group important; therefore competition may be seen as disruptive</p>
<p>Task Oriented Time is a commodity not to be wasted; result-oriented; live in order to work</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Relationship Focused Interaction takes precedence over time; quality of life important; work in order to live</p>
<p>Equality Minimizes differences in class, rules; democratic ideal; initiative valued; informal</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Hierarchy Well formed pattern of rank & authority; status well defined within the hierarchy; formal</p>
<p>Tolerance for Ambiguity Comfortable with ambiguous situation; risk-taking is encouraged</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Need for Certainty Need for stability; expects managerial guidance</p>
<p>Universalism Context is not important; strict application of formal rules</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Particularism Rules are flexible and can be bent; requires reference to context</p>
<p>Exact Time Time is a commodity; single focus; "Time is money"</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Fluid Time Time is intangible and plentiful; multi-focus; "event time"</p>

Looking Back: Reviewing the International Experience

Perceptions of the Host Country

How cultures are organized differs hugely from country to country. Of course, human beings have similar needs and desires everywhere, but how these are expressed and dealt with can vary surprisingly, reflecting varying solutions to different environmental challenges. When we encounter different cultural approaches, our response may be positive or negative, depending on how attached we are to the solutions of our first culture.

1. In terms of addressing universal human needs, what was different about your host country's approach? What surprised you? What did you like and dislike? What was better or worse? Using the list of culturally-organized systems below as a prompt, consider any such differences and how you feel about them:

- *friendship & work relationships*
- *the practice of education*
- *the practice of politics*
- *commerce & business culture*
- *economic redistribution (taxes)*
- *the practice of medicine*
- *life style*
- *transportation*
- *communication*
- *housing*
- *religion*
- *the arts*

Did your experience of different approaches to these systems change your values and attitudes about your home culture's approach?

Yes **No** **Not Sure** We'll look at this question more closely later.



What Happened While You Were Gone?

As we know from Einstein's Theory of Relativity, events perceived from different perspectives are perceived differently. A major natural disaster or violent political upheaval in Brazil or Mongolia would be experienced very differently by Europeans, U.S. Americans, Chinese, and, of course, Brazilians or Mongolians. You probably perceived the critical events that occurred in various world regions during your international assignment quite differently than did your friends, family, and colleagues at home. The events may be much more or less important to you than to them. They may even be valued oppositely. To pick a trivial example, living in the UK, you might be much more pleased if Great Britain won the World Cup than would your acquaintances of other nationalities. You may find yourself uninformed or holding unusual or unpopular opinions in conversations in your home country.

In each of the following four areas, list the significant events that occurred during your international assignment and try to compare your perception of them with the perception of those at home.

World/Host Country Events *(e.g., While I was living in Belgium, the Berlin Wall came down.)*

The event:

How they felt about it at home:

How I felt about it:

Home Country Events *(e.g., While I was in Japan, Texas seceded from the Union.)*

The event:

How they felt about it at home:

How I felt about it:

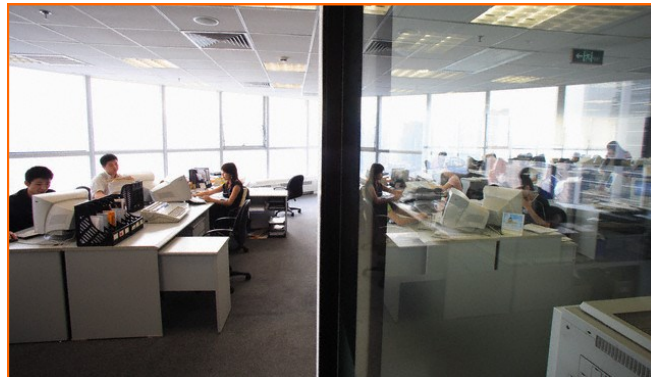
What Happened While You Were Gone? Significant World Events

Corporate Events (e.g., While I was in Europe the company was purchased in a hostile takeover.)

The event:

How they felt about it at home:

How I felt about it:



The Agonies and the Ecstasies:

I just had the most significant experience of my adult life. How come no one wants to hear about it? One of the most disappointing experiences of re-entry is that no one wants to hear about our adventures. Of course, with a little consideration, this is understandable. Since our friends and relatives haven't had an experience like ours, they have no comprehension of the profound impact it has had on us. They cannot empathize with either our struggles or our joys. Besides, their lives continued at home as ours did abroad, and their experiences are just as fresh and important to them as ours are to us. To be honest, we are probably no more interested in their experience during that time than they are in ours!

The importance of stories: However, all of this experience is writhing in us, wanting to be expressed, examined, and re-lived. It resides in us in stories. With our family or those colleagues with whom we experienced our adventures abroad, just a mention of a situation can recall the whole of that story for them and us. Because we've only referred to the stories with those who shared them with us, we haven't really learned to tell our stories. The fact is, if we put a little effort into organizing our stories, people will actually listen to them. The stories may even resonate with some experience they have had, allowing them insight into our adventures. They may find our tales interesting and enjoyable!

Your stories and their stories: As one young woman recounted after returning from a short but powerful experience of managing a multicultural group of engineers in South America, "I was so frustrated with my mother, who kept discounting my experience, saying, 'How can nine months have been such a big deal?' Finally, I got an idea. I said, 'You know, you only carried me as a baby inside you for nine months. How big a deal was that for you?' Suddenly she got it." We have to find a way to frame our experience so that resonates it for others who didn't share it. Only through comparable experiences can we understand the world similarly.

I just had the experience of my adult life. How come no one wants to hear about it?

I was so frustrated with my mother, who kept discounting my experience.

The Agonies and the Ecstasies: Significant International Experiences

Here's another example. A young wife was on assignment in Hungary, in Eastern Europe with her husband and their two young children, 18 months and 3 years old. Her husband was involved in a start-up situation and worked long hours. She did not speak Hungarian, and despite her attempts to learn it during her two years, with the demands of mothering she did not make much progress. Nevertheless, she spent a good part of every day out in the local community on various errands and shopping. On what was unfortunately a typical day late in her first year, as she explained during her Re-entry Workshop, in a small and crowded neighborhood grocery store her youngest child urinated on the floor. With one child in her arms and the other in tow, she had to make her way to the manager, who spoke no English, explain in embarrassing gestures what had happened, and that she required a cloth to clean it up, and then make her way back down the aisle and clean up the mess, making various helpless gestures to the other shoppers, some of whom sympathized with her in the local language, and others of whom were repulsed. "I was so angry, humiliated, and frustrated!" she said; "that was really my lowest moment."

She contrasted this with a recent experience since their return to the USA: You know, standing in line at the school in my new neighborhood last month with other young mothers all waiting to register their children and listening to their complaints of burdens and difficulties, I thought to myself, "This is such a piece of cake. They have no idea!" I suddenly realized the remarkable skills I had developed operating virtually alone for two years in a strange community where I had no friends and didn't know the rules or how things were organized, without even a child's communication skills. I had become amazingly independent and efficient, an excellent decision maker and problem solver, and I had acquired a patience and self-acceptance unknown to my peers at home. I realized that the common challenges of marriage, parenting, or working in my own culture would never again seem overwhelming. I had acquired competence and confidence far beyond what I had before our family went on assignment. I knew that I could now accomplish anything I set my mind to!

Stories like these help us to capture for ourselves the significance of our international experience to understand what we accomplished and learned and how we've changed. In addition they help us to relate that significance to others who haven't had the same opportunities and challenges.

Let's hear some of your stories now.

***I was so angry,
humiliated, and
frustrated! That was
my lowest point.***

***I suddenly realized
the remarkable skills
I had developed.***

The Agonies and the Ecstasies: Significant International Experiences

CAPTURING YOUR EXPERIENCE IN STORIES

Take a few minutes right now to recall some of the significant situations that you were involved in during your international experience, whether disasters or victories (try to recall some of both). Professional and personal challenges and your responses are particularly relevant.

Select two or three and “name” each incident, such as learning to motivate our bi-cultural work team, or the project that changed my management style, or navigating with children in a foreign medical system. Then select one of these and list the primary facts and descriptive details that made it so memorable and important, and that are necessary for one who wasn’t there to understand the situation. Also ask yourself what you learned from that experience. When you’re ready, tell us the story.

Story #1:

Story #2:

Story #3:

Details of Story # ____:

Why was this event significant for you?

This concludes the second piece of the Workshop, Looking Back I. Next we’ll examine the re-entry adaptation process in Coming Home II.

Chapter 3

Coming Home II: The Reintegration Process

How Is It, Being Home?

How does it feel to be back? What are the pleasures and pains? Regardless of what you thought it would be like (we looked at that briefly in Coming Home I), being back is no longer a set of assumptions and expectations. Now you're "home", and this is your reality, an all-encompassing experience, with plusses and minuses, like all of life's experiences. Let's make a list.

What's good about being back? How about work or looking for work? Housing and the neighborhood? Reconnecting with family and friends? The kids and school? Familiar entertainments? What else are you enjoying?

What's tough about being back? Missing the people and the lifestyle abroad? Being a smaller fish in a bigger pond? Missing the status and the perquisites ("perks")? Re-assembling the network of services and support? Needing a new set of friends? Any other issues?



Perceptions of Home

Obviously, when we're in one place, we don't really know what's happening in another one. However, we often unconsciously assume that since we aren't aware of what is happening, nothing is happening. That is, home will be just as it was when we left. This is never entirely true, and the longer we are away, the more likely we will be greatly surprised when we return, whether pleasantly or unpleasantly. You have returned to your home culture and had time to settle in a bit and look around. Let's consider three questions:

- 1) What's changed at home and how do you feel about it?
- 2) How have you changed (and how do you feel about that)?
- 3) What were the causes?

1) First, let's look at some of the changes that occurred in your absence and consider how you feel about them. We'll use the same list from which we examined your host culture in *Looking Back I*. What has changed, for better or for worse? What has surprised you? Consider the differences and how you feel about them:

- Friendship & work relationships _____
- Lifestyle _____
- The practice of education _____
- The practice of politics _____
- Commerce & business culture _____
- Economic redistribution (taxes) _____
- The practice of medicine _____
- Transportation _____
- Communication _____
- Housing _____
- Religion _____
- The arts _____
- Anything else? _____

Perceptions of Home

2) How have your attitudes toward “home” changed since you went abroad? Have your likes and dislikes changed? What seems better at home? What was better in your host country?

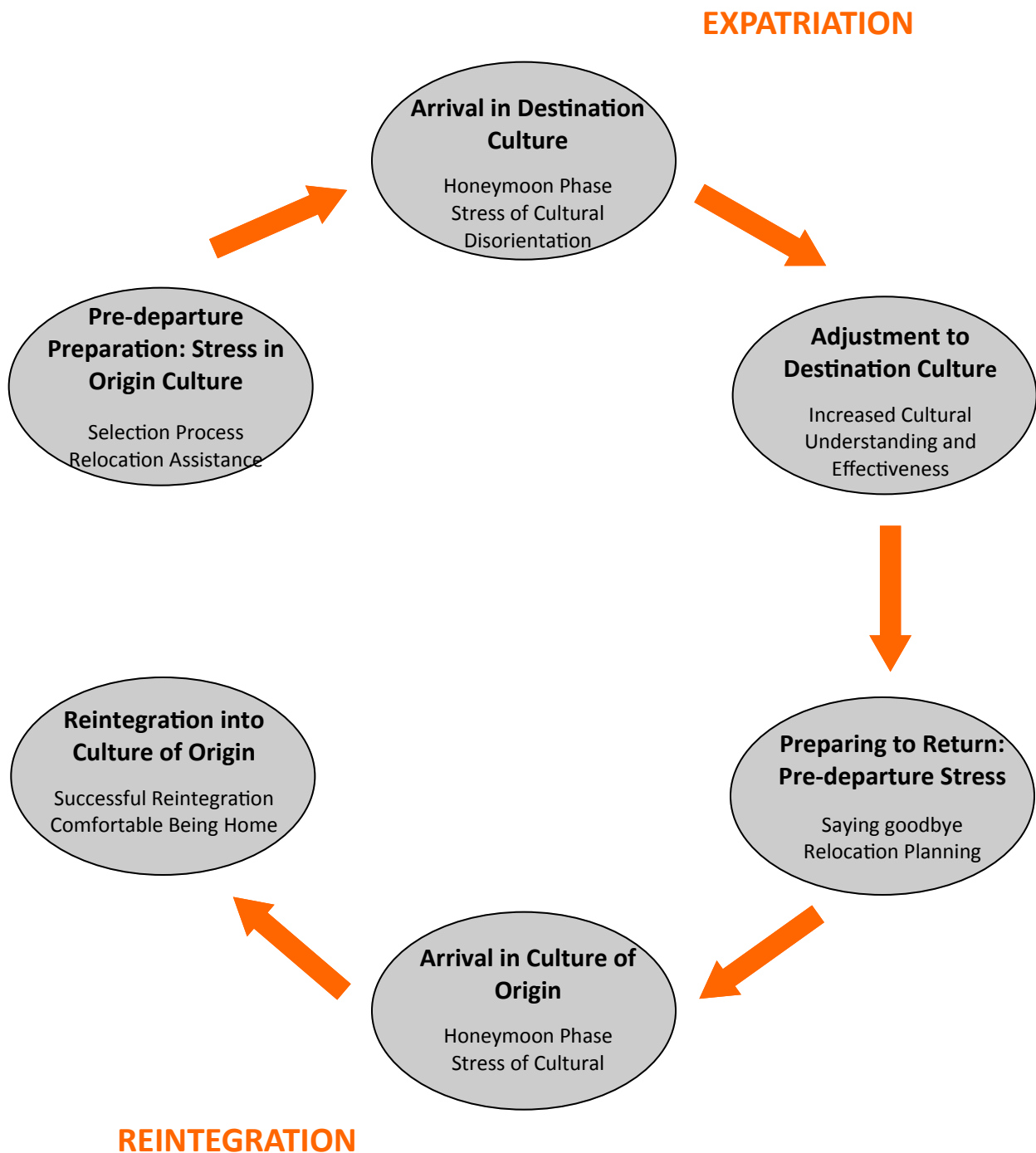
3) What international experiences contributed to reshaping your attitudes and values, slightly or significantly? What was transformative about living and working abroad and traveling, and how has it affected you?

Your answers to the above questions identify factors that may significantly influence your reintegration process. We will now examine that process and compare the outbound and return experiences.



International Transition Cycle

It is important to view an international relocation as an entire process beginning with pre-departure procedures and concluding with successful reintegration into the culture of origin.



Expatriate Adaptation Cycle The "W" Curve



1. How much of this did you experience?
2. How long did it take before you felt comfortable and competent?
3. Are you experiencing anything similar in your re-entry process?

Re-entry Stress

Adaptation to living in another environment can be stressful, even when that environment is a familiar one. Re-entry stress (or “reverse culture shock”) can be triggered by a variety of factors. Which of these are you experiencing?

Changes at home:

- Personal*
- Professional*
- Cultural and social*
- Political and economic*



Loss of:

- Familiar comfortable environment*
- Expatriate status*
- Close relationships*
- Familiar comfortable sense of self*



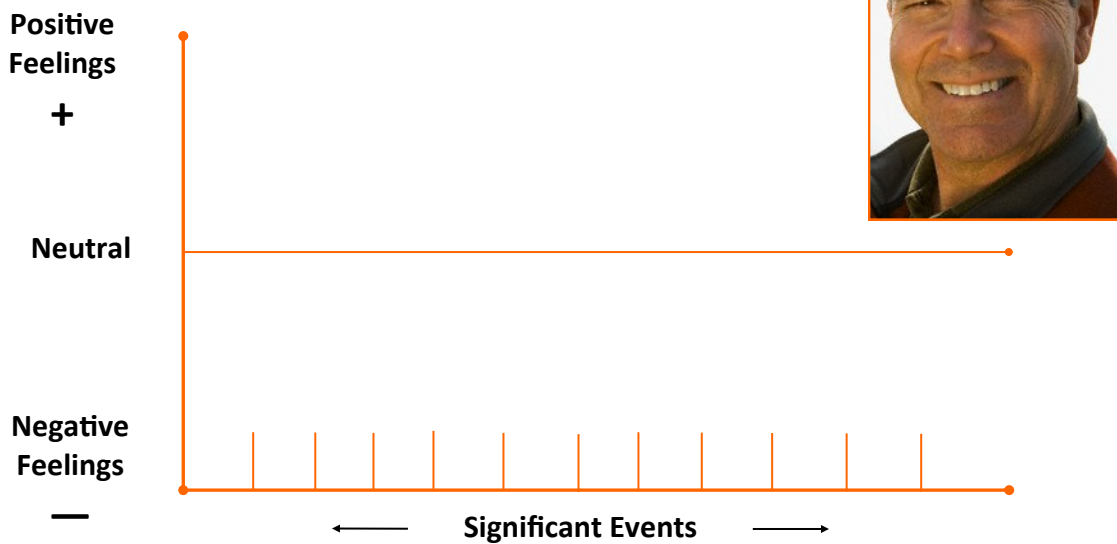
Unmet expectations:

- People value my experience*
- I'll be able to apply my new skills*

The Reintegration Process

1) **Consider your reintegration process.** Plot your cycle of physical & psychological adjustment during the re-entry transition beginning from when you began preparing to return through today and extrapolating three months into the future.

2) **How does this compare with your expatriation integration process?**

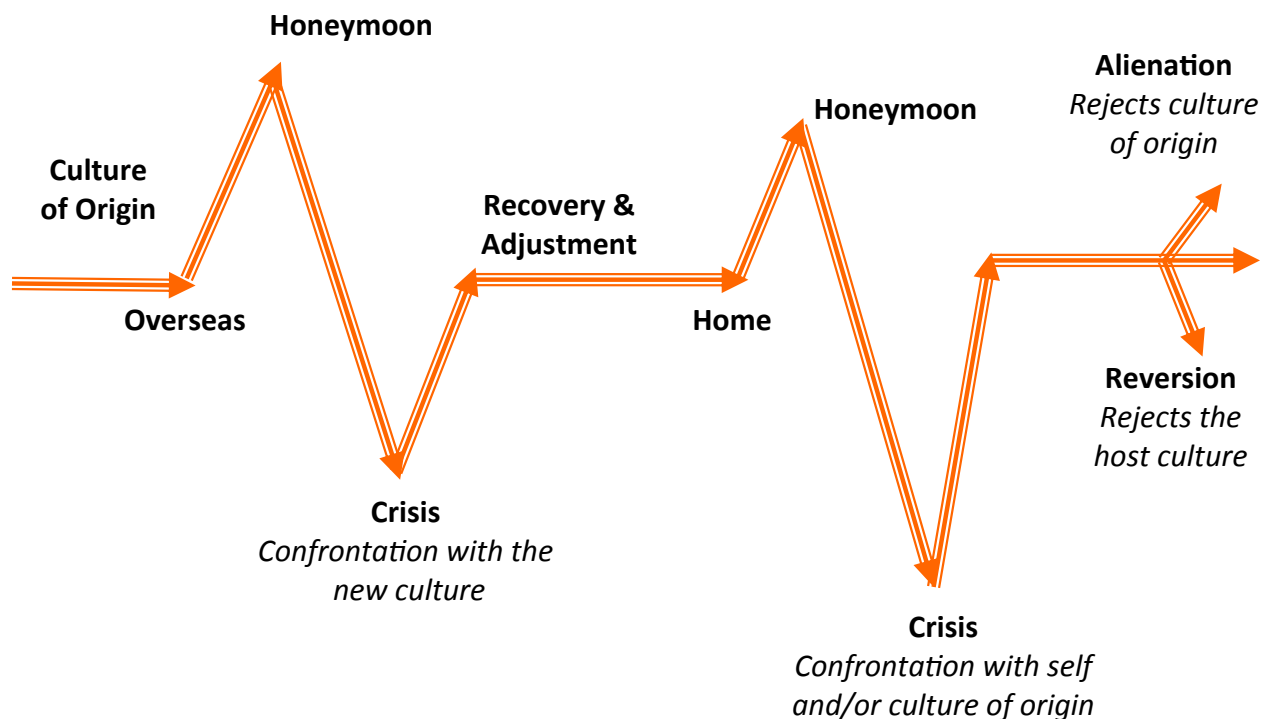


The Expatriation/Reintegration Adaptation Cycle

This diagram illustrates the typical the ups and downs experienced during the expatriation and repatriation adaptation processes. Examine the diagram and consider the following questions.

Why might the return crisis be greater than the expatriation crisis?

How likely is the alienation or reversion response upon re-entry?



Symptoms of Re-entry Stress

The process of adaptation to a new environment involves forced, rapid, intensive and extensive new learning. This creates major stress, which, in turn, causes fatigue and often exhaustion and can lead—if not managed—to moderate or even severe depression. Below are typical symptoms.

Reflect on the following responses and indicate whether or not you have experienced any of them during the expatriation/repatriation cycle. Which process (expatriation or repatriation) was easier for you?

- I have experienced this symptom
- I have not experienced this symptom

Physical

Expat	Repat	
_____	_____	Inability to Sleep
_____	_____	Excessive Sleeping
_____	_____	Chronic Fatigue
_____	_____	Headaches
_____	_____	Weight Gain or Loss
_____	_____	Frequent Illness
_____	_____	Skin Rashes
_____	_____	Backaches

Emotional

Expat	Repat	
_____	_____	Homesickness
_____	_____	Irritability
_____	_____	Boredom
_____	_____	Anger
_____	_____	Feel Like Crying
_____	_____	Arrogance
_____	_____	Low Self-Esteem
_____	_____	Stereotyping
_____	_____	Depression
_____	_____	Alienation

Behavioral

Expat	Repat	
_____	_____	Marital Stress
_____	_____	Family Tension & Conflict
_____	_____	Loss of Sense of Humor
_____	_____	Inability to make Decisions
_____	_____	Ineffective Work Patterns
_____	_____	Aggression
_____	_____	Substance Abuse
_____	_____	Excessive Exercise
_____	_____	Exaggerated Cleanliness

Coping with Re-Entry Stress

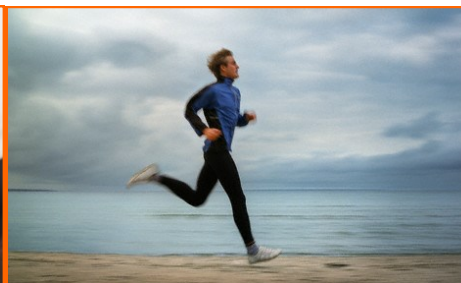
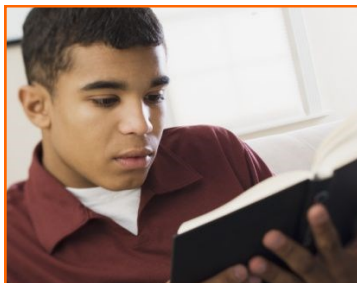
How have you coped in the past with the stress of difficult events or transitions? What did you do to manage the adaptation process of expatriation? What are the strategies you typically use, and which of those have you, or can you now, put in place during the process of re-entry adaptation?

Physical, intellectual, and creative self-affirming activities:

What activities engage you, stimulate you, take you “outside of yourself”, give you pleasure, and help to relieve stress? Name some of these below. Are you currently engaging in these? If not, how can you arrange to do so?

Emotional strategies:

How do you deal with the emotional volatility of adaptation? Do you have the social network in place to help you manage? What else do you need?



Coping with Re-Entry Stress

Consider re-entry stress as a natural process, not as a sign of weakness. Everybody experiences it to some extent. Like any process, by being aware that you will undergo it, you can manage it to some extent, diminishing both the amplitude and duration of the emotional wave depicted on the “W” Curve.

- Expect a period of re-entry adjustment stress and discomfort. It is a natural process of adaptation to another environment, even that of “home.”
- Recognize and acknowledge the symptoms when they appear.
- Discuss your feelings and attitudes within the family and circle of friends and colleagues.
- Search out links at home to the culture you have just left and make contact. Find broadcasts in which the language is spoken, restaurants serving the cuisine, cultural institutions, classes, music, films, etc.
- Seek out and participate in social networks that can provide you with social support, and enjoyment, and, as your comfort increases, seek out others returning from abroad and help them with the process of cultural re-adjustment.
- You may find yourself critical of some home country practices and attitudes. Try not to mention these outside the family, as your judgments will not be well received by natives who have not lived abroad.
- Instead, find and spend time with other repatriates, especially those who have successfully adjusted to being back. They will understand and validate your experience, your attitudes, and your feelings.
- Plan frequent enjoyable activities for you and your family. Consider trips to visit your former host country and friends there. Invite friends from your expatriate location to visit you.



The Reintegration Process: In Summary

The following facts and suggestions are based on research, studies and interviews with returning expatriates. It may be comforting to realize that much of what you are experiencing is common to everyone returning to his or her culture of origin. Your experience will be unique in some respects, as no two people experience repatriation in exactly the same way, but here are some commonalities.

- It is common to experience feelings of loss.
- It is also common to experience mood swings.
- Many will be uninterested in your international experiences, but you may be asked many "silly" questions about your past experience.
- You may feel very "out of date" or "out of step" with professional information, corporate policies, and procedures.
- You may experience feelings of insecurity and uncertainty.
- You may feel uncomfortably critical of some aspects of your home culture.
- Your "new" ideas may not be enthusiastically received, if received at all.
- You may find your organization more goal/task oriented while you have become more relationship/people oriented.
- Work and social systems and processes may seem overly complex.
- You may feel out of touch with your corporation and your community; you find it hard to "fit in".
- You may feel like your personal and professional needs are not being met. You may find it difficult to deal with financial matters that have not been a concern while abroad.
- Your personal and professional life may seem out of balance; and you feel overwhelmed.
- You may perceive changes at home that make you uncomfortable, but that others don't notice.
- You may be irritated by the apathy and lack of concern among those at home for current global situations important to you.
- The pace of life may be uncomfortably fast or slow.

The Reintegration Process: In Summary

In summary, considering all of the above, we suggest that you:

- Consider the period of adaptation you experienced during your international assignment and allow yourself a similar period for adjustment during your re-entry, which may be more or less difficult than the expatriation process. Be gentle with yourself. You are, in a sense, re-creating your life, a process which deserves care and conscious focus.
- Set realistic daily goals; do not over-schedule yourself.
- Manage the emotional side of the adjustment process through open discussion with friends, family, and, perhaps most important, with other repatriates.



Chapter 4 Coming Home with Kids

Third Culture Kids

Research has identified a cultural phenomenon common amongst the children of expatriate parents. These children, who spend a significant part of their childhood in other cultures, appeared to have a culture not defined by geographical boundaries. It was found, however, that a unique culture emerges among children with this background. “Third Culture Kids” was the term coined to identify these children.

This concept is more clearly appreciated in the following graphic. The glass on the left represents the life of a child who has spent half of his/her life in a different culture (four years for an eight year old). The glass on the right represents the life of an adult who has one-tenth of his/her life in a different culture (four years for a forty year old). Clearly, the impact of a different culture on the adult whose socialization in his/her own culture is minor in comparison to a child who is still in the midst of formulating his/her own sense of cultural values.

***8-Year Old
Spent Four Years
In Another Culture
As A Child***

***40-Year-Old Adult
Spent Four Years
In Another Culture
As An Adult***



Benefits of Being a Third Culture Kid

Seven characteristics have been singled out that distinguish Third Culture Kids from their peers who have lived their entire lives in a single culture.

Third Culture Kids generally:

1. Enjoy "closer" family relations
2. Develop quick and intense though not necessarily "deep" peer relationships
3. Are more accepting of others' differences
4. Enjoy the opportunity to travel and the experiencing of foreign countries and cultures
5. Look for careers and life styles that will enable them to continue to travel
6. Develop a greater fluency in and appreciation for foreign languages
7. Are less prone to making stereotypes or other generalizations about others based on their ethnic or religious backgrounds

Have you noticed any of these characteristics in your children?



Challenges of Being a Third Culture Kid

The phenomenon that creates **Third Culture Kids** brings with it challenges for the child who repatriates. Three major themes that are common to many children relate to:

Self Identity

- Third culture kids are challenged to determine where they fit in within the culture of origin, as when asked, “Where do you come from?”
- Leaving “home” to return to their “roots”, they will often feel ambivalent about their culture of origin.
- Third culture kids will feel a degree of difference from the children of their home culture so that they will often feel “apart of and apart from” the central group.



Relationships

- Third culture kids have had to make friends and frequently part with them.
- They make friends easily but are often reluctant to become too involved.

Perceptions

- Unlike children who have only lived in one country, third culture kids have a more diffused perception of people and places.
- Their world view is largely shaped by their international experience.

In *Coming Home 2* the stresses associated with the reintegration process were identified as resulting from:

- A loss of a familiar comfortable environment
- Significant changes in daily routines
- Unmet expectations and challenges to one’s identity

With Third Culture Kids, the challenges they face in reintegrating are similar to those associated with the initial international move.

Impact of Your International Living Experience on the Children

What characteristics have your children exhibited as a result of their international living experience? *(It may be interesting to view this in terms of skills and competencies developed.)*

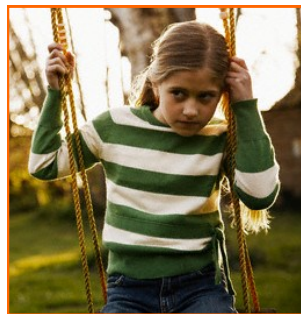


How will these characteristics assist or challenge their future progress?

Symptoms of Stress in Children

Moving is one of the most stressful occurrences in a child's life. Sometimes children sense and act on the stress they feel without recognizing the causes of their behavior. Some of these reactions are normal for short periods of time, but extended periods of display need to be taken seriously. You may have noticed the following when you relocated to another country. Which of these have you noticed during your relocation back to your home country?

- Excessive sensitivity
- Lack of communication
- Excessive complaining
- Impatience
- Excessive activity
- Moodiness
- Inability to concentrate
- Dependence, tendency to cling
- Frequent illnesses
- Negative attitude
- Regressive behavior
- Withdrawal



How many of these symptoms were exhibited in your expatriation process? What strategies did you use to deal with them then? Which of these symptoms are present now? How are you dealing with them?

An Action Plan for Returning Parents

Children can be confused about the feelings they have during repatriation and this confusion often shows in emotional upset or behavioral changes. Children do not have the tools that well developed adults have to manage and understand the feelings they are experiencing. Helping them through this adjustment period will bring stability to the family. The following are guidelines that parents have found helpful..

- Provide structure by setting reasonable boundaries. Children of all ages need to feel secure.
- Expect some "acting out" and possible anger. LISTEN. Encourage them to share their feelings and needs as they perceive them. ASK, "What can I do to help?"
- Encourage them to get "re-involved" with activities or sports.
- Know when to "back off". Encourage, don't pressure.
- Try to be objective in assessing what your children are feeling. Do not assume their concerns will simply disappear or that they will automatically adjust. If it becomes necessary, seek professional help.
- Help them to understand the reasons for the move and how they will benefit.
- Prompt them to reserve judgment on what they see and think about returning home.
- Share your feelings of sadness and loss, and let them know it's OK for them to feel sad too.
- Be aware of your attitudes and feelings. You are the model.
- Keep your sense of humor and sense of proportion.
- Involve the children as appropriate in the decision-making process. Create the new family structure together, incorporating the best of what developed during the international assignment.



Looking Back II: Assessing the Global Experience

Change and Growth

In **Coming Home I, Plotting our Cultural Values**, we looked at basic cultural values and how they can change as a result of living and working within another cultural system. In **Coming Home II, Perceptions of “Home”**, we asked how your attitudes toward your first culture had changed and what had stimulated those changes. Now we want to examine the changes in you and your family from the perspective of personal and professional growth.

The opportunity to live and work as an adult in a different culture is, for most people, one of the most stimulating experiences of their lives, and certainly the most exciting and developmental time of their adult years. The constant stimulus of a new environment is both enlivening and stressful.

New Relationships. The opportunities for new relationships, primarily within the expatriate community, are far greater than at any time since entering college. What these experiences have in common is that strangers with similar needs and challenges are thrown together intensively without the obligations and boundaries of a familiar community. In the freedom from extended family and social obligations and with the awareness of a time-limited opportunity, people form multiple new relationships quickly and forge friendships that often persist throughout their lives across cultures and continents.

“Learning Shock.” Of course, adapting to a new environment is enormously stressful. The continuous forced learning and the need to constantly and consciously process new information and make first-time decisions is exhausting, both emotionally and physically. This is both the source and the condition of “culture shock.” Once the “survival level” of new learning is accomplished, the symptoms of adaptation stress subside, but new learning continues, though at a more manageable pace.

The new environment continues to provide ongoing stimulus, with an emotional response of excitement and enthusiasm that may persist throughout the international assignment. To many, this is reminiscent of being a child, with the anticipation that every day will be a new adventure, an opportunity to explore new territory, make new acquaintances, and learn new things. Such stimulation is almost addictive.

Change and Growth

Reintegration as Withdrawal. Coming home, the return to the familiar and the loss of that constant stimulus and invigoration is a primary source of the low-level depression that many feel during their repatriation adjustment period. This can be compared to the withdrawal symptoms experienced when giving up the use of a stimulant. Life goes from Technicolor to “black & white.”

Taking Stock The period of readjustment to a familiar culture is a good time for taking stock of how you have changed and what you have learned. You have probably learned to work and communicate in new ways, to relate differently within your family, and to operate within and appreciate a different cultural framework for organizing the world.

All of this learning has transformed and reorganized you internally into a being of greater awareness and capacity, incorporating all that was previously there, plus all that was gained during the international experience. Your pre-assignment and international experiences have integrated, creating a whole larger than their sum, with greater comprehension, wider boundaries, and more complexity and subtlety. All of this yields greater potential for leadership, relationship, problem solving, and action.



Learning Stories

Let's take a moment to review an activity from this morning's session. In **Looking Back I, Significant International Experiences**, we attempted to capture some of the most important moments of life abroad, both personal and professional, in stories. About each story we asked, "Why was this event significant for you?" In our next activity we will explore that significance a little further.

Validation of experience. We have already spoken about the difficulties of communicating the depth, magnitude, and intricacy of our international experience to friends, extended family, and colleagues. Only those who shared those experiences with us can understand completely, and, fortunately, we can always return to them for comfort and validation in our frustration. Indeed, that is a repatriation *best practice*!

Another kind of validation and re-entry *best practice* is to find other people who are in various stages of repatriation, both ahead of us and behind us. Those ahead of us can confirm both the profound impact of our experience and the difficulties of re-entry. The location of their expatriation experience is unimportant, although it is always fun to share stories with those who have been where we have been. Nevertheless, it is living outside one's first culture as an expatriate that provides the fundamental experience of change and growth, and we share this with all expatriates. Thus, we can act as mentors to those who repatriate after us, corroborating their perceptions, validating their emotional responses, and easing their anxieties. On the other hand, helping others who have not had that experience to understand it will remain forever a challenge.

Assessing and illustrating professional growth. Another challenge that looms soon after re-entry is the need to inform one's employer (and oneself) about what one has learned professionally, to take a survey of new knowledge, skills, and competencies and to be able to illustrate them. Here is where we return to our stories, and where they take on *bottom-line* value.

Some of our stories are about accomplishments, while others may be about failures. However, *in every experience there is learning, and all learning has a positive value*. Thus, even (or especially) our failures become assets in both our professional and personal lives. It is up to us to discover and name the learning in a way that is meaningful in our work environment. Let's take a look at how this assessment might be done.

Learning Stories

A learning story and its summary. Managing in the Dutch workplace involved a lot of re-learning. I worked in The Netherlands for two and a half years, and it was only in my last nine months that I knew what I was doing, that I had any confidence in my management skills. Oh, we accomplished our business mission quite satisfactorily, but managing people there was my big challenge. I worked hard at learning Dutch, but of course even when I left I was barely competent in workplace communication.



I understood about 70% of what I heard and I could make myself understood, but not with any subtlety. Most of my group spoke English, although many spoke it no better than I spoke Dutch. As a result, I really had to learn to listen, to pay attention to all the cues around the words, and those were different, too. I had to concentrate in a way I had never had to in my first culture, the USA, and it was exhausting. The payoff, however, was that the kind of attention I gave every member of my team, day in and day out, created workplace relationships far richer and more rewarding than any I had achieved in my prior 10 years with the company. And that turned out to be the norm and the requirement for successful Dutch management!

The Dutch “team” operates differently than we do, better in some ways, I believe. They’re individualistic and competitive like we are, but they build more cohesive groups; that is, they form much stronger relationships than we do, and they can count on each other when the pressure is on. They can give and take criticism openly, but somehow it isn’t personal, it doesn’t offend. I learned a lot about creating and maintaining and motivating teams, about coaching, and it’s made me a better manager. I think I can bring much of it into my management style at home, and I really want to. It will be good for my teams, good for the company, and good for me.

To summarize, for me, the biggest competency gain was in *supervision*, and the particular skills enhanced were *coaching*, *motivation*, and *performance appraisal*. The illustration of what I learned and how is the story of my forming and maintaining that Dutch team as we met our performance goals in a project new to all of us.

Learning Stories

Our stories as our learning. Look again at *Significant International Experiences* (II, p. 20). For each story you named in the earlier exercise, create a sentence describing the “lesson” learned from that experience. (Perhaps you have recalled additional stories to use here.) Using the *Identifying Global Competencies* materials that follow, we will relate these lessons to workplace *skills* and business *competencies*.

STORY #1: _____

Learning: _____

Skill or Competency: _____

STORY #2: _____

Learning: _____

Skill or Competency: _____

STORY #3: _____

Learning: _____

Skill or Competency: _____

Global Work Competencies and Skills

Personal and professional competencies and skills are enhanced or developed during an international assignment. Identifying this development and how to incorporate it into one's current or future position can help further a career path.

In this section we will examine a set of generic competencies and skills, gaining an understanding of core factors applicable to most managers, regardless of location or type of organization. By **competency** we mean a cluster of related *knowledge, attitudes* and *skills* that affects a major part of one's job. By **skill** we mean an acquired ability to perform a particular task. This exercise will help you to categorize your new knowledge and skills within easily recognized business functions and competencies.

Below is a list of four global competencies, each with three skills relating to that competency. These competencies and their attendant skills are present in every culture, although the style of their performance varies considerably.

Administration

Time management and prioritizing
Setting goals and standards
Planning and scheduling work

Communication

Listening and organizing
Giving clear information
Getting unbiased information

Supervision

Training, coaching and delegating
Appraising people and performance
Disciplining and counseling

Cognition

Identifying and solving problems
Making decisions, weighing risks
Thinking clearly and analytically

Using the next few pages consider how your international experience influenced the development of these core competencies and skills.

Global Work Competencies and Skills

Culturally-influenced daily living functions. Both the employed and the unemployed spouse are learning and enhancing skills and competencies during an international assignment, though in different arenas. The unemployed spouse is frequently challenged by complex interactions with both the host and expatriate communities. Listed below are culturally influenced aspects of daily living. Indicate with a ✓ those in which you were involved. For those checked, give an example of how you handled each aspect of daily living while you were abroad. Then indicate what skills you acquired as a result of dealing with these functions in another culture.

COMMUNICATING IN DAILY BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

SHOPPING

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

HOUSEHOLD MAINTENANCE

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

ENTERTAINING IN AND OUTSIDE OF THE HOME

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

SUPERVISING DOMESTIC HELP

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

OTHER ASPECTS, e.g., organizing expatriate community activities

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Global Work Competencies and Skills

Culturally-influenced business functions. For the employed spouse, primary challenges may be in the business environment. Listed below are a variety of global business functions. Indicate with a ü those in which you were most involved. For those checked, give an example of how your style changed abroad with respect to each function and what skills you developed.

Problem Solving *Who was involved? What were the procedures?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Motivating People *What reinforced good performance?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Negotiating/Persuading *What were the procedures and strategies?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Decision-Making Process *What were the procedures? Who was involved?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Participation in Meetings *What was the format? What were the expected results?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Superior/Subordinate Relationships *What was the power structure and protocol for interactions?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Global Work Competencies and Skills

Communication Style *How was information disseminated, directly or indirectly, formally or informally?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Interpersonal Relations *What motivated/influenced the relationship?*

Example: _____

skills acquired: _____

Hiring/Dismissing Process *What were the criteria? What were the consequences?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Setting Goals *What were the time frames? What were the parameters?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Performance Expectations *How were they measured and articulated?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Customer Relations *What were the dynamics and protocol?*

Example: _____

Skills acquired: _____

Capturing Your Learning

U

Using the prior worksheets, summarize the knowledge gained and the skills and functions enhanced during your international experience for each of the global competencies listed below.

In the left column record the knowledge and skills under the appropriate competence.

In the right column identify the circumstances, situations, or activities in which you gained the knowledge or skill.

New Knowledge & Skills	Learning Environment
1. <i>Administrative Competence</i>	
2. <i>Communicative Competence</i>	
3. <i>Supervisory Competence</i>	
4. <i>Cognitive Competence</i>	

Capturing Your Learning

Next Steps. Section V, pages 47 and 49 above may now serve as prompts for revising your resume or CV, writing an assessment report of current skills and competencies, or in preparing for an oral performance review. They are also concrete reminders of what you have brought back with you from your international experience, and of who you have become. The stories become a way of sharing your experience with others who have not had such an opportunity.

Telling the Stories. Of course, your stories need to be told, and good telling takes practice. We recommend that you practice first with your family and friends, so that when it is appropriate to use them at work or in the marketplace, you will be ready. You will find much enjoyment in the telling, and, as you hone the stories, others will enjoy hearing them as well. Each telling will remind you of some of the most meaningful experiences of your life, and the remembering can be exhilarating, too. Story telling is a very healthful practice, and another *best practice* of repatriation.

With this advice, we conclude **Looking Back II**. In our final section, **Moving Forward**, we will consider a most important question: how to create a new life at home that incorporates and employs the changes in you within the confines of your first culture.

Chapter 6

Moving Forward: Rec-Creating Your Life, Again

Creating a New Life

We have spent some time defining how you have changed and grown, what you have brought back as new learning, and how you feel about being back and about the culture of your home. The next step is to consider how you will integrate all of this in the creation of a new life for yourself and your family as you proceed to make this your home.

You have just returned from creating a new life from scratch in a new country and culture about which you probably knew very little. You lacked knowledge, but you also lacked many of the constraints that you had in your first culture. You were free to recreate yourself and your life roles, professional and personal.

You have now returned home, and you may be experiencing some external pressures to resume many of your former roles and patterns. However, as we have examined in detail today, you are different now, and home is also different. In fact, you cannot recreate exactly what you had before you left, even if you desire to do so. You have a new opportunity, and in order to make the most of it, you must become aware of your choices and make conscious decisions about many things, such as:

- ***Re-establishing relationships with former friends and relatives***
- ***Beginning new relationships***
- ***Staying in touch with friends abroad***
- ***Resuming former and undertaking new activities***
- ***Rejoining former organizations or seeking new ones***
- ***Continuing present or seeking new employment***
- ***Maintaining aspects of the lifestyle created abroad***

The next exercise will help you to focus on what you want and don't want, with respect to personal, social, and occupational aspects of your life.



Creating a New Life

A New Life: Design Specifications

Take 15 minutes and think about how you desire to recreate your life. Assume a complete lack of restrictions. You can be more pragmatic and specific in the final exercise that follows.

<p>Have, But Don't Want (Change!)</p> <p><i>Bad conditions, situations, relationships</i></p>	<p>Have & Want to Keep (Celebrate!)</p> <p><i>Good conditions, situations, relationships</i></p>
<p>Don't Have & Don't Want (Celebrate!)</p> <p><i>Serious illness, financial problems, etc.</i></p>	<p>Want, But Don't Have (Change!)</p> <p>???</p>

What Now? Goals, Challenges and Action Plans

As the final exercise of this Reintegration Workshop, please take about 15 minutes to list and prioritize some of the goals and challenges you foresee in re-establishing yourself and your family in your work and community. We will conclude the session by discussing them together.

Consider: 1) personal, 2) social or family, and 3) professional goals.

1) PERSONAL

Goal _____

Challenge/Obstacle _____

Action Plan

First Step _____

Deadline _____

How to Measure _____

2) SOCIAL or FAMILY

Goal _____

Challenge/Obstacle _____

Action Plan

First Step _____

Deadline _____

How to Measure _____

What Now? Goals, Challenges and Action Plans

3) PROFESSIONAL

Goal _____

Challenge/Obstacle _____

Action Plan

First Step _____

Deadline _____

How to Measure _____

This discussion of goals completes your Re-Entry Workshop. It's been a day of good work. You have:

- *re-examined your international experience, looking at changes in your self and your home environment;*
- *looked at typical difficulties of re-entry adaptation and discussed how to deal with them;*
- *identified and evaluated what you brought back from your experience and discussed how to integrate that into the life you are creating here;*
- *identified primary personal and professional goals and have begun to plan for their attainment.*

We wish you good fortune in all aspects of that endeavor!

Resources for Further Exploration

Re-Entry Children's Books

MOVING IN GENERAL

Ira Says Goodbye, Bernard Waber & Larry Robinson. Houghton Mifflin. 2005.

Moving House, Ann Civardi, Michelle Bates, & Stephen Cartwright. Usborne. 2005.

Oh, The Places You'll Go!, Dr. Seuss. Random House. 2003.

The Reader's Digest Children's Atlas of the World. Readers Digest. 2003.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC BOOKS

Country-specific books are published in a variety of book series.

Count Your Way Through . . . James Haskins.

Family in...(Families the World Over), Lerner Publications.

New True Books. Childrens Press.

People and Places of the World Series. Silver Burdett Publishers.

Portraits of the Nations Series. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Take a Trip to . . . Franklin Watts Publisher.

Visual Geography Series: . . . In Pictures. Lerner Publications.

We Live In . . . Bookwrights Press.

A Visit to . . . (Golden Book), Western Publishing.

Enchantment of the World. Children's Press.



Re-Entry Adult Books

Bryson, Bill, *I'm a Stranger Here Myself: Notes on Returning to America After 20 Years Away*, Broadway Publications, 2000.

Pascoe, Robin, *Homeward Bound: A Spouse's Guide to Repatriation*, April, 2000.

Perelstein, Elizabeth & Jill Kristal, *Repatriation: A How-To Guide for Returning Wisely*, Plain White Press, 2007.

Pollock, David C. & Van Reken, Ruth, *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing/Intercultural Press, 2001.

Storti, Craig, *The Art of Coming Home*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth, ME, 2001.

