



# WELCOME BACK Re-entry Workshop for Teens

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**Welcome Back**  
**Re-entry Workshop for Teens**

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# Welcome Back:

## Re-entry Workshop for Teens

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

- CHAPTER 1** Coming Home: Assessing Expectations  
In **Chapter 1** you will consider the many conditions that affect the re-entry experience and re-examine your own expectations.
- CHAPTER 2** Reviewing the International Experience  
**Chapter 2** provides a framework for recalling significant international experiences and stories.
- CHAPTER 3** The Adaptation 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 as a Third Culture Kid  
**Chapter 4** focuses on how teens experience coming home and how the experience abroad has changed them to citizens of the world. Challenges and strategies for being a third culture kid will be explored.
- CHAPTER 5** Moving Forward  
In **Chapter 5** you will clarify your personal, social, and family goals and develop strategies for achieving them during the adaptation process.
- RESOURCES** Resources for Further Exploration  
These resources direct teens to further readings and websites about the experience of expatriation and repatriation.



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# Congratulations!

Congratulations and welcome back home! Though you are ending an international assignment, your experience has only just begun!

Your international experience is like a gift that keeps on giving. As the years go by, you may re-encounter, reflect upon and use your international experience in many wonderful ways.

Though readjusting to life in your home country may be difficult at first, remember that this wild, wonderful, difficult, and exciting experience has challenged you to grow and mature. It has enabled you to develop a unique perspective on the world with which you can help spread international understanding.

Enjoy this gift and share it with others!





# Chapter 1

## Coming Home: Assessing 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

- Personal
- School



#### ENTRY INTO NEW LIFE STAGE

- Are you entering a new stage in your life (starting high school, entering university, getting a driver's license, etc.)



#### UNMET EXPECTATIONS

- What expectations do/did you have about returning home?
- What are/were your personal 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 school environment differently?



# Readiness to Return

**A**s we prepare to return home, each of us may differ in our readiness to leave. Think about your readiness to depart your host culture and indicate which place on the continuum reflects your attitude.

Scale: 1 = far from ready

5 = very ready

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



Reasons for being ready:

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Reasons for not being ready:

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# Changes in Circumstances

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
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
• Educational continuity	1	2	3	4	5
• Concerns for safety	1	2	3	4	5
• Re-entry adjustment difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
• _____	1	2	3	4	5
• _____	1	2	3	4	5

# Life Stages

1. In what way does the repatriation process represent a **new stage of your life?** (starting high school, entering university, getting a driver's license, etc.)

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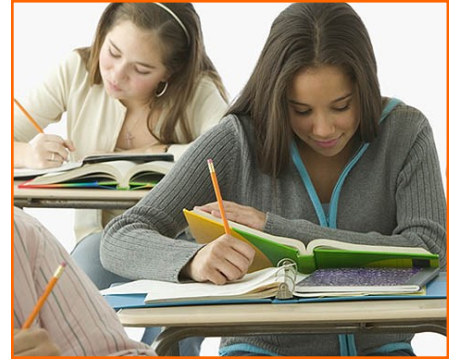
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2. What does this imply for your lifestyle and responsibilities?

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## 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 repatriation; 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.





## Re-entry

Coming home can be the hardest part of living in another country. It's difficult to understand because you feel like going home should be easy! You think it's going to be familiar, but do you think things will have changed? Or will you have changed?

Sometimes it's hard for your family and friends who didn't live in another country to understand your experiences.

Here's a hint: you are not the same person you were when you left! Even familiar things will seem different. And you'll seem different to other people. You've experienced a lot.



## 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.

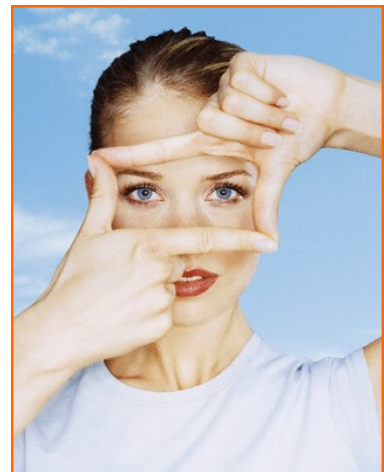
Due to culture, perception is "selective": certain symbols, behaviors, or objects may be quite meaningful to some, but quite "invisible" to the members of another culture. Subtle non-verbal cues, significant aspects of dress or conduct, or objects of symbolic importance may go unnoticed by people unfamiliar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

# Cultural Perceptions

Meaning formation and the perception of reality are socially constructed.

## Perception = Reality

USA = Pest  
China = Pet  
Thailand = Appetizer



***“We don’t see things the way they are –  
We see things the way we are.”***

Anaïs Nin

**P**erception is culturally relative: **certain symbols, behaviors, or objects may be quite meaningful to members of culture A, but quite "invisible" to the members of culture B.**

- To eat in Germany using a fork only, or in the Middle East with the left hand, may be viewed as “uncivilized.”
- The tendency to launch quickly into business before spending time building a personal relationship may be viewed as considerate and efficient in the U.S., but self-centered, insensitive and impersonal in Latin cultures.

## Concepts of Culture

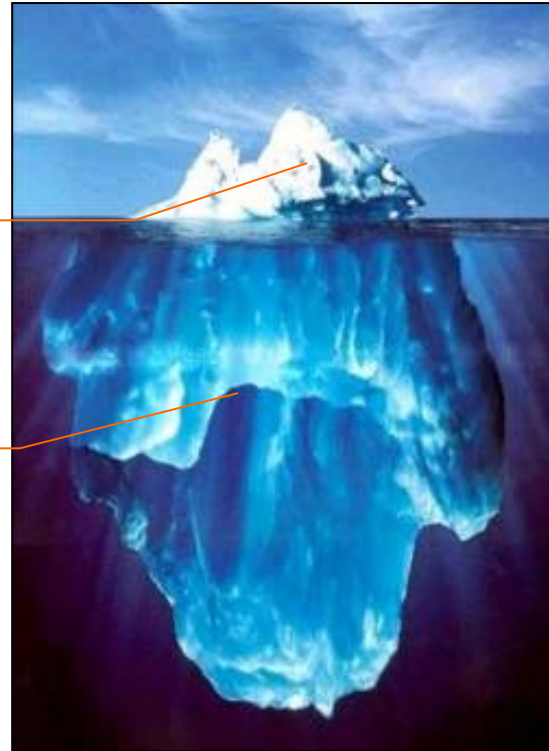
It is helpful to envision culture as an iceberg. There is much more mass underneath the surface than is outwardly visible. If you imagine two cultures – each a different iceberg – coming together, you can see that they will inevitably clash invisibly under the surface.

### Visible Part of Culture

the ways people are socialized to behave: what you can see, hear, touch, taste and smell

### Less Visible Part of Culture

motivational factors for human behavior: what you think, feel and believe



Some working definitions of culture are:

*“Culture is the **collective software of the mind.**”* Geert Hofstede

*“Culture is the **learned and shared patterns** of beliefs, behaviors, and values of groups of interacting people.”* Milton Bennett

## Concepts of Culture

To understand where behavior comes from -- to understand **why** people behave the way they do -- means learning about values and beliefs. The behavior of people from another culture may seem strange to you, but it probably makes sense to them, and vice versa.

The reason any behavior makes sense is simply because it is consistent with what a given person believes in or considers important. Conversely, when we say that when someone “makes no sense,” what we mean is that that action contradicts what we believe that person feels or wants or what we would expect in that situation..

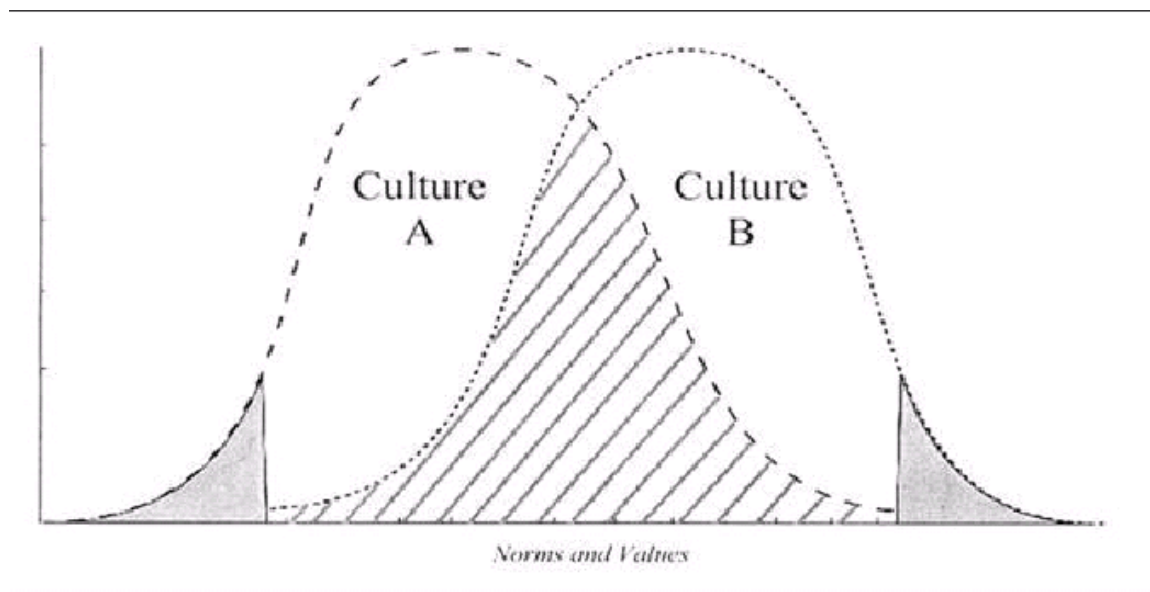
**C**ulture **shapes and develops us...**

1. Culture gives us the—mostly unwritten--rules for life.
2. Everything we think, feel and do is shaped by culture.
3. Culture tells us how to behave in ways that are acceptable to our group.



## Cultural Generalizations

Common **beliefs and values** of two cultures, shown on as bell curves.



Adapted from: Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner:  
*Riding the Waves of Culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

**T**here are national, regional, and ethnic cultures, social group, and organizational cultures. These cultures have collective preferences for certain beliefs and values. But they are not represented by everybody or at all times and there is a wide variety of behavior within each culture.

## Stereotypes vs. Generalizations

**S**tereotypes...

- Rigid, fixed
- Oversimplified
- Put people in a box
- Negative



**Example: "All Germans are blunt and rude!"**

Stereotyping is to think and act as if all members of a particular group are the same. Stereotypes are assumed descriptions of group memberships.

Stereotyping occurs when one seeks to confirm pre-existing, selective – often negative – notions of a particular group: What other people do is perceived as "impolite," "strange," "crazy," or "inferior."



**G**eneralizations...

- Fluid, flexible
- Tentative language
- Allow for individual differences
- Backed by research

**Example: "Germans tend to have a very direct communication style."**

To understand the nature of cultures, generalizing about common characteristics is unavoidable. It is a part of the way we learn about and understand the world of people.

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 that can change over time.

## Stereotype and Generalization Exercise

**Directions: Place a “G” for “Generalization” or an “S” for “Stereotype” alongside the following statements.**

- \_\_\_ The majority of Chinese people speak Mandarin.
- \_\_\_ Italians love to eat.
- \_\_\_ Brazil’s economy is always unpredictable.
- \_\_\_ Latin Americans are pretty lazy when it comes to work.
- \_\_\_ Most Mexicans are Catholic.
- \_\_\_ Arabs are religious fanatics.
- \_\_\_ African people live in grass huts.
- \_\_\_ Japanese children are very serious students.
- \_\_\_ Africans have experienced a lot of turmoil and conflict over the last century.
- \_\_\_ Hawaiians are close to nature.
- \_\_\_ The French like to smoke cigarettes in outdoor cafés.
- \_\_\_ Indian parents arrange marriages for their children.
- \_\_\_ The British are a bit cold and reserved.
- \_\_\_ Tea is the most important part of British culture.
- \_\_\_ Americans make more money than other people in the world.
- \_\_\_ Germans value efficiency.
- \_\_\_ Middle Eastern countries are always at war.
- \_\_\_ Americans drive big cars.
- \_\_\_ Asians are more formal than Americans.
- \_\_\_ The best painters are from France.
- \_\_\_ Latin men do not respect women.

*See appendix for solution.*



## 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

**D**ifferent 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?*

## Individual

Self-reliance, responsible for conduct of own life; independence

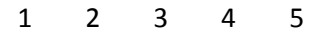


## Group

Identity defined by group; group welfare supersedes individual concerns; interdependence

## Competition

Brings out best in individual; challenges to produce best possible

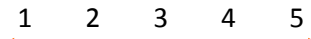


## Cooperation

Harmony within group important; therefore competition may be seen as disruptive

## Task Oriented

Time is a commodity not to be wasted; result-oriented; live in order to work

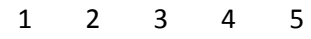


## Relationship Focused

Interaction takes precedence over time; quality of life important; work in order to live

## Equality

Minimizes differences in class, rules; democratic ideal; initiative valued; informal

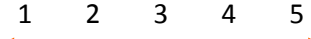


## Hierarchy

Well formed pattern of rank & authority; status well defined within the hierarchy; formal

## Tolerance for Ambiguity

Comfortable with ambiguous situation; risk-taking is encouraged

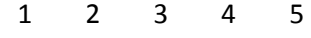


## Need for Certainty

Need for stability; expects managerial guidance

## Universalism

Context is not important; strict application of formal rules

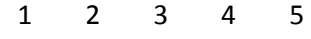


## Particularism

Rules are flexible and can be bent; requires reference to context

## Exact Time

Time is a commodity; single focus; "Time is money"



## Fluid Time

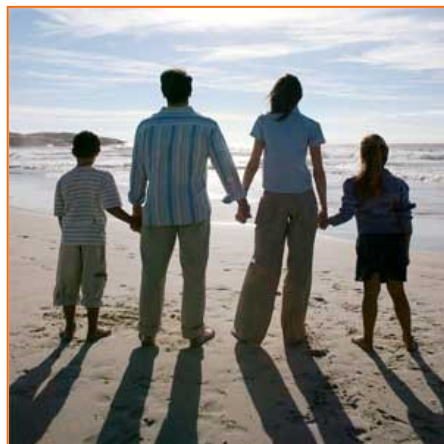
Time is intangible and plentiful; multi-focus; "event time"

## Chapter 2

# Reviewing the International Experience

### So How Was It?

1. Did your mother have a good time on the international assignment?
2. Did your father have a good time on the international assignment?
3. Did you have a good time on the international assignment?



## Things I Have Done

1. I visited these countries:
2. I saw some historic places and special things. They are:
3. Some of my school trips included trips to:
4. These people came to visit:
5. I learned many new things during my international experience. Some of the things that I learned to do are:

## My Favorite Things

List or draw some of your favorite memories of things in your *host* country.  
How can you keep these memories alive?

Favorite Foods



Favorite Games and Sports



Favorite Places to Go



Favorite Activities with Mom, Dad, siblings

## What I Learned

**By living overseas, did you learn about:**

Yourself?

People in other countries?

Other places?

**What did you do to get along with people from other backgrounds and nationalities?**

**What customs has your family adopted from the country you used to live in (table manners, ways of doing things, greeting people, etc.)?**

## How Have I Grown?

Place a check in front of each statement that describes how you have changed.

- I have a more international perspective regarding people and issues throughout the world.
- I have more self-confidence.
- I am more open—minded.
- I have more patience.
- I have more respect for the beliefs of others.
- I am more willing to accept a different way of doing things.
- I am more willing to put myself in someone else's shoes when making judgments.
- I am able to keep my sense of humor when things get tough.
- I am able to ask for and receive help.
- I am able to deal with failure.
- I am more willing to face problems and seek alternative solutions.
- I am willing to take a chance and make a mistake.
- I am more willing to try new things.
- I know myself better.



## What Have I Accomplished?

### Take time to examine yourself...

Your experiences have helped you to grow and accomplish many things. Skills such as: navigating maps, public transportation, new languages, handling introductions, being exposed to diversity, etc...



List some of your biggest accomplishments here:



## What Happened While You Were Gone? Significant World Events

**A**s 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:*

## 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).

Select two or three and “name” each incident. 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, **Reviewing the International Experience**. Next we’ll examine the **Adaptation Process**.

## Chapter 3

# The Adaption Process

### Coming Home



*“We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”*

*T.S. Eliot*

#### **CONSIDER:**

People tend to take their own culture and language for granted until they move to another country. When they return, they view their own culture in a new way.

## 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, 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?** Housing and the neighborhood? Reconnecting with family and friends? School? Familiar entertainments? What else are you enjoying?

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**What's tough about being back?** Missing the people and the lifestyle abroad? Being a smaller fish in a bigger pond? Needing a new set of friends? Any other issues?

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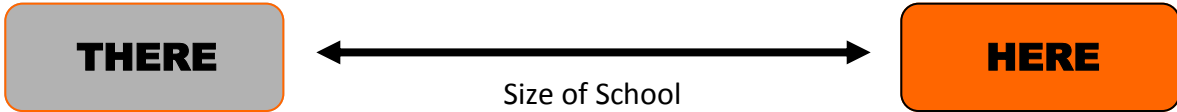
## Perceptions of Home

**O**bviously, 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.

First, let's look at some of the changes that occurred in your absence and consider how you feel

	CHANGES	FEELINGS
Friendships		
Lifestyle		
School		
President		
Commerce & business culture		
Practice of medicine		
Transportation		
Communication		
Housing		
Religion		
The arts		
Words & phrases		
TV		
Trends in clothing		
Technological changes		
Fads		
Books		
Magazines		
Anything else?		

# How is School Different?



Dress/Dress Code

Homework

Teachers

Rules

Lunch

Courses

Report Cards

Sports Teams

Extra-Curricular  
Activities

Days Off

Special School Events

Dances

Transportation To and From

Other

## What Else is Different?

**THERE**



**HERE**

Holidays

Food

Music

Sports/Games

Dating

Parties

Driving

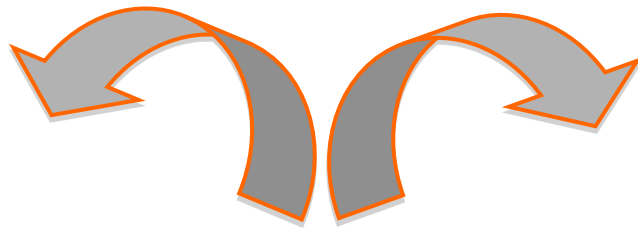
Peer Pressure

What to Do for Fun

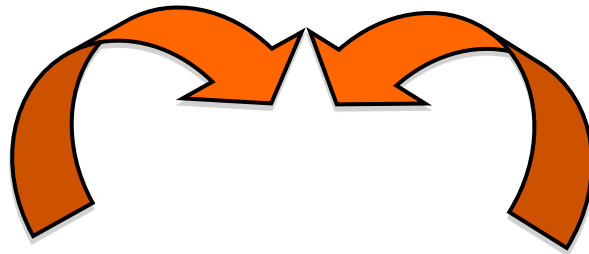
Other

## Shift in Relationships

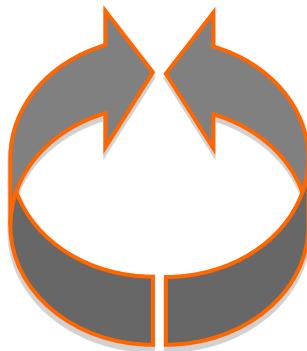
**R**elationships are formed and fostered by common experiences. When experiences or interpretations of experiences cease to be similar, relationships change.



**Some relationships, that may have been strong pre-departure, may grow apart upon your return home.**



**Some relationships, that may not have been particularly strong pre-departure, may grow now that you are home.**



**Some relationships that were close pre-departure, may have drifted apart, but are now strengthened upon your return.**



## Perceptions of Home

**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?

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

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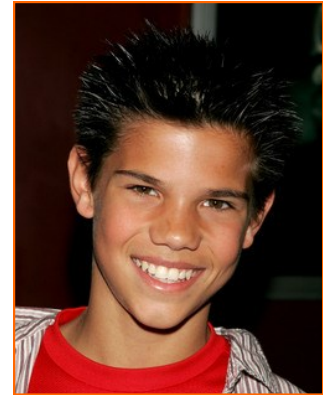
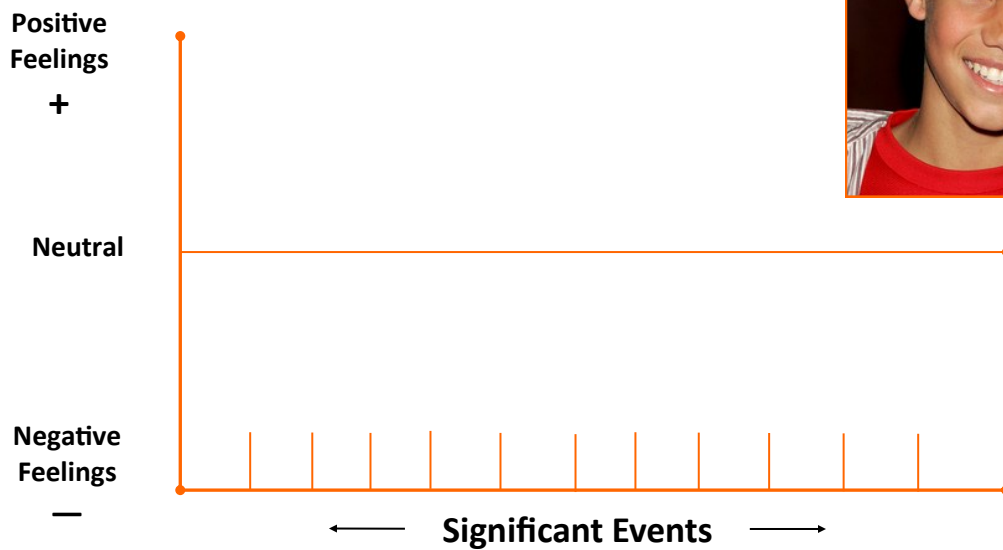
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**Your answers to the above questions identify factors that may significantly influence your re-entry adjustment process. We will now examine that process and compare the outbound and return experiences.**

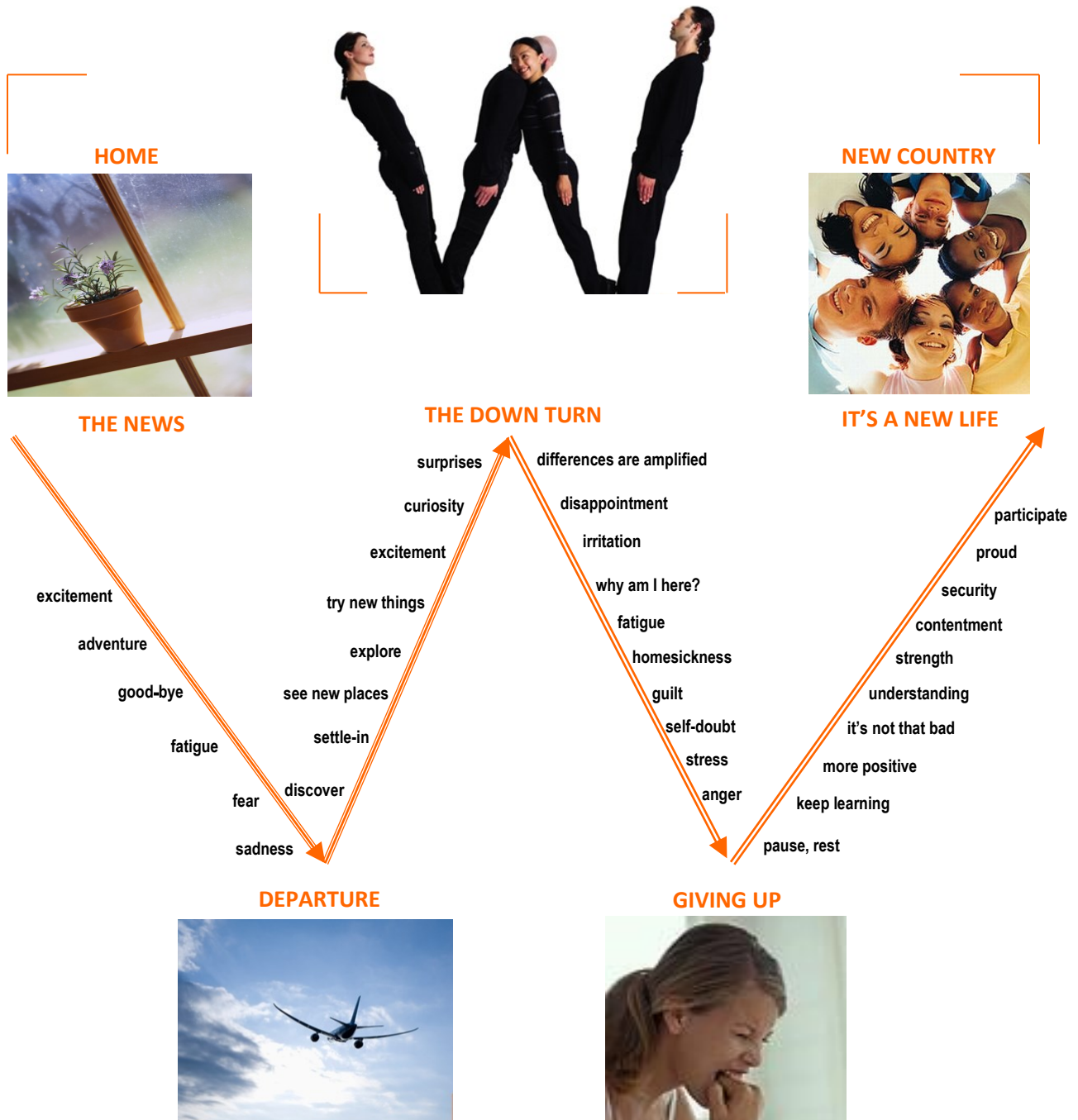


# The Re-entry Adaptation Process

- 1) **Consider your re-entry adaptation 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 adjustment process?**



# 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?

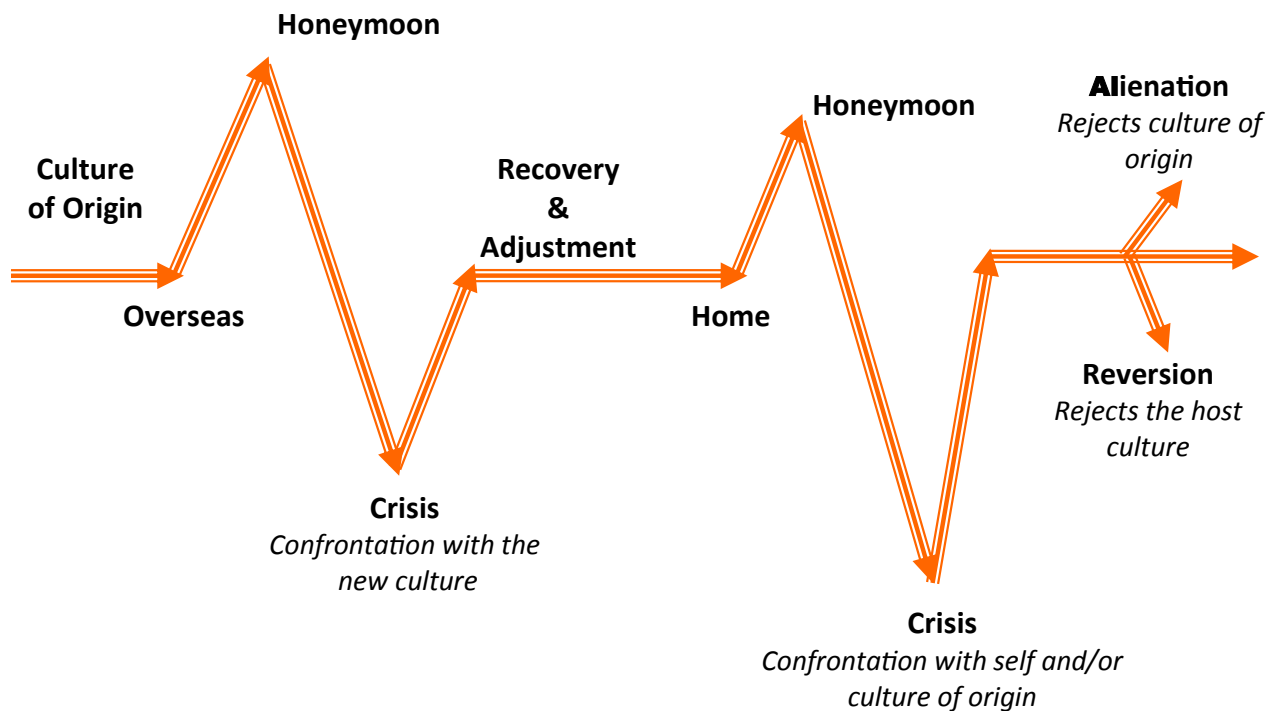
# The Expatriation/Repatriation Adaptation Cycle

**T**his diagram illustrates the typical 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?

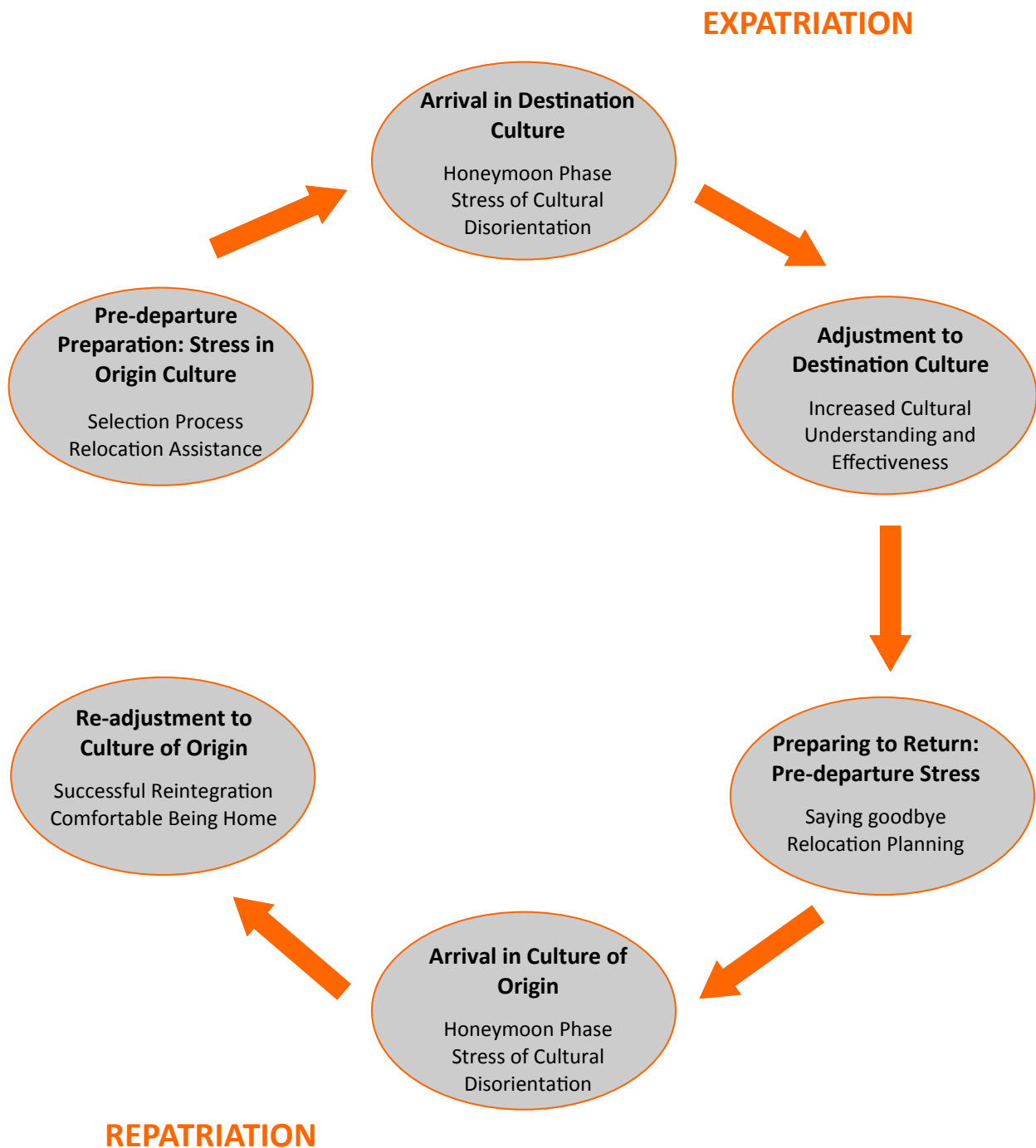
How likely is the alienation or reversion response upon re-entry?

What is meant by “confrontation with self”?



# 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.



## Reverse Culture Shock is a Feeling

Things are unfamiliar

Situations are confusing

Different things are important to you and to others

You don't always understand the way things are done



*Did you feel like this during your move to the other country?*

*Do you feel like this now?*

## Symptoms of Re-entry Stress

**T**he 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

0 I have not experienced this symptom

### Physical

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

### Emotional

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

### Behavioral

Expatriation	Repatriation	
_____	_____	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

**H**ow 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?

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### 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?

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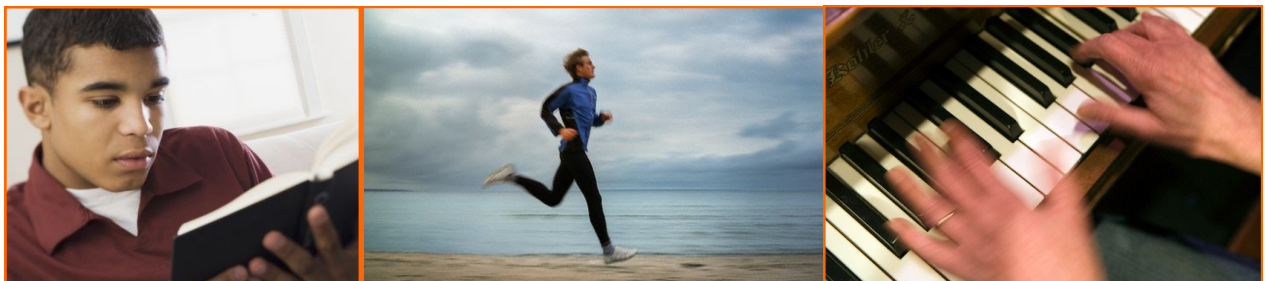
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## Coping with Re-entry Stress

**C**onsider 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.



## Tips for Coping with Re-entry Stress

**Y**

ou will have changed and everyone else will have changed, too. When no one seems to understand what you've been through or you feel confused:

- Look for other people who have just moved or who have lived outside their home countries. Help them get adjusted and they will help you!
- Become a guide for new people moving into your school, including exchange students from other countries.
- Send letters, photos, videos, and CDs to friends you just left.
- Write down your experiences and how you feel about coming home, and send your writing to your old school's newspaper.
- Join an international club at school, or start one.
- Write a letter to yourself describing your feelings. Save it and read it a few months later.
- Talk to others you know who are moving.
- What other ideas do you have?

## Adjustment Strategies

**Look for the positive!**

**Eat and sleep regularly!**

**Make an effort to spend time with friends!**

**Keep busy!**

**Find a new hobby!**

*Try not to focus on what you don't like and make an effort to rediscover the things you do like!*



## When There Are Roadblocks To Settling In

You can use your newly acquired skills to generate strategies for effective adjustment. When there are roadblocks to settling in....

Define the problem or situation.

List some possible strategies and solutions.

Choose one or more strategies that seem logical and try them out!

Remember, you're not alone. Talk to your family about your feelings.

### Practice below:

**PROBLEM**

**STRATEGY / POSSIBLE SOLUTION**



## The Re-entry Process: In Summary

**T**he 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 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 Re-entry 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 as a Third Culture Kid

### Third Culture Kids' Reflections Upon Re-entry

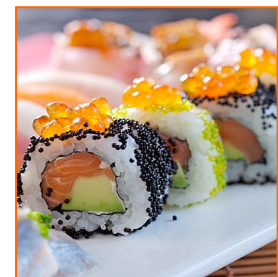
I had so many great friends in India. My school was really small and everyone knew everyone. Our families used to spend time together on the weekends. We had pool parties and BBQs all of the time. Some of my mom's colleagues had kids my age, too. We used to spend tons of time together. We even went on vacations as a group. I met girls from Ireland, Australia, and the UK. They all had the coolest accents and were really unique. We had a lot in common because we were all in India as foreigners. We sometimes laughed together when we didn't know how to do things the Indian way. We developed our own way of communicating. We had code words that included some words in Hindi. We used to dress up in silk saris and dance around in my back yard. My maid, Bindu used to dye our hands with henna as if we were getting married! It was like being at a kind of India-themed summer camp. I miss those friends a lot!



Back at home, some people don't even know where Belgium is. They say, "Is that a city in Holland?" Others ask me if I speak Belgian and if I ate waffles and chocolate the whole time I lived there. I feel frustrated at how little people know about the country where I just spent the last 4 years of my life.



In Japan we learned to eat sushi and lots of strange foods. At first it freaked me out. Then I got used to it. Now I even miss it. Sometimes my mom and I make sushi at home. Once some of my friends were over and they said "Yuck! How can you eat that? Raw fish is disgusting!" *I felt a little embarrassed that we eat "strange food" at my house.*



## Third Culture Kids' Reflections Upon Re-entry

**W**hile living in Paraguay, I saw lots of poor people. I saw how people live in simple homes with no electricity. My friends in Chicago have only seen that in movies and magazines. When I tell them what I've seen, they really can't believe it. Sometimes I think they think I'm making it up!



**I**'m glad to be back in the US because I can get my driver's license soon. In the UK, I would have had to wait until I was 18. Here, you only have to be 16.



**S**ometimes I feel like I know so much more about other cultures than my friends do. Sometimes I feel like they are really naïve. It makes me feel proud that I've traveled so much. I feel cultured. I want to go to many more places when I finish college. Maybe I'll even study abroad while in college.





## Third Culture Kids' Reflections Upon Re-entry

**A**s soon as I returned home, I invited some of my old friends over to see my photos from Japan. My dad helped me connect the laptop to the TV so we could show the photos like slides with the remote control. I spent hours arranging and labeling the photos and setting them to music. I wanted to show my friends the Japanese gardens and temples that we visited. I wanted them to see the food that I ate and the tea ceremony that I participated in. Unfortunately, they were not that interested. They kept interrupting me. They kept talking about this new TV show that I had not even heard of. I felt irritated and angry. I felt like maybe we were no longer friends. We didn't seem to have much in common anymore.



**O**ne of my favorite things about being back home is the safety and the freedom that I have. Here my parents let me go out after dark with my friends. Here I can walk around freely without worrying like in Brazil where I really stood out with my blond hair and blue eyes. Here in the US I look like everyone else. Also, we can drink the water from the tap! Yippee!



*Let's hear some of your stories now.*

## You Are a Citizen of the World

After living internationally you will have developed an **international perspective**.

### **What is an *international perspective*?**

- Interest in other people, cultures, and countries
- The ability to see what is the same and respect what is different
- Trying to understand different views on international issues
- Wanting to continue international education through travel

After you return home, think about yourself as an international citizen with international perspective a – **Citizen of the World!**

**R**esearchers who have studied children who have lived in different countries, have found that the following traits and characteristics are commonly held by those children:

- They become closer to their family members.
- They are interested in and like to learn other languages.
- They like to learn about and to celebrate the traditions and customs of other countries.
- They enjoy meeting, interacting with, and working with people from different backgrounds.
- They look for and find educational experiences which make use of and build on their international living experience.
- They make friends with people from different social and ethnic backgrounds.

*What other points have you found to be true among your international friends who have grown up in different countries?*

## Third Culture Kids

**C**hildren who have lived in other cultures often think of themselves as having several cultures in their lives. Why do you think the phrase “third culture kids” (TCKs) has been created to describe children like you?

How many cultures do you think you have in your life?

### Hint:

- *Think about the culture where you were born and lived the first part of your life.*
- *Then, think about the culture to which you moved.*
- *Now consider what we have been discussing today about how you are a different person.*



## Third Culture Kids

**R**esearch 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 young person who has one fifth of his/her life in a different culture (three years for 15 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 young person who is still in the midst of formulating his/her own sense of cultural values.

**15 Year Old  
Spent Five Years  
In Another Culture  
As A Child**

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



## Benefits of Being a Third Culture Kid

**S**even 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



## Challenges of Being a Third Culture Kid

**T**he 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.

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

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





## Chapter 5 Moving Forward

### Creating a New Life

**W**e 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*
- *Maintaining aspects of the lifestyle created abroad*



# Learning Stories

**O**ur stories as our learning. Look again at the page entitled, *The Agonies and the Ecstasies: Significant International Experiences - Capturing Your Experience in Stories*. (Chapt. 2, page 24)

1. For each story you named, create a few sentences describing the “lesson” learned from that experience.
2. Note the new skills or competencies learned.
3. Imagine how these skills might be useful to you in the future. List ways in which your international competencies might help you with:
  - university admissions
  - learning another language
  - study or volunteer abroad (Amigos, Peace Corps) applications
  - searching for a summer job, internship, or professional job
  - future travel
  - choice of career
  - choice of partner
4. If you have recalled additional stories, feel free to add them below.

## STORY #1:

Lesson:

Skill or Competency:

Future Application:

- 
- 
- 

## STORY #2:

Lesson:

Skill or Competency:

Future Application:

- 
- 
-

# Learning Stories

## **STORY #3:**

**Lesson:**

**Skill or Competency:**

**Future Application:**

- 
- 
- 

## **STORY #4:**

**Lesson:**

**Skill or Competency:**

**Future Application:**

- 
- 
- 

## **STORY #5:**

**Lesson:**

**Skill or Competency:**

**Future Application:**

- 
- 
-

## Valuing Those Who Stayed Behind

It is important to give recognition to those who stayed behind while you were away. Think about whom you would like to give special credit to:

It is also helpful to remember the following points when you communicate with those who did not accompany you on your assignment.

*They too have changed.*

*They too experienced their own ups and downs.*

*They managed without you.*

*Consider their needs and their perceptions.*

## Maintaining Former Connections and Establishing New Ties

# M

aintaining your international interests is a valuable means of perpetuating your international experience. The following suggestions may be useful:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Join an international club/intercultural group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Join a club and/or conversation group from your host country.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep a journal that outlines your significant overseas experiences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Host a foreign exchange student.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Live in an international community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enroll or continue to study the host country language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Incorporate international customs into your family's traditions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Travel internationally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Invite international friends to visit you in the United States.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write or phone international friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read international newspapers/magazines.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seek out or establish personal/professional networks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Locate ethnic grocery stores and restaurants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Join an ethnic cooking class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend foreign movies/plays or rent foreign videos.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Explore international art/music/literature at museums or the library.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer to teach English as a Second Language.

## Sharing My International Experience

First, let your family and friends share what happened to them while you were gone. It is important for them to know that you're interested.

Then, share your experiences. It may seem like they are not interested, but it may be because they don't know anything about where you lived. Share everything slowly: don't try to tell it all at once.

What are three key things that you would tell them about living in another country?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Here are some ways to share your experience:

- Share photos, souvenirs, artifacts, music, and videos.
- Dress in clothes from your host country.
- Teach them things children in your host country like to do.
- Make some typical food and share it.
- Write an article about your experience for your school newspaper.
- Give a talk at a school assembly or a group you belong to.

*Can you think of other ways to share your experience?*

## Your Representation of the International Experience

**T**here are several ways in which returned expatriates can choose to integrate an international experience into their lives:

**Alienation:** Rejection of your culture of origin by assuming the attitudes, practices, beliefs, and values of the host culture are better.

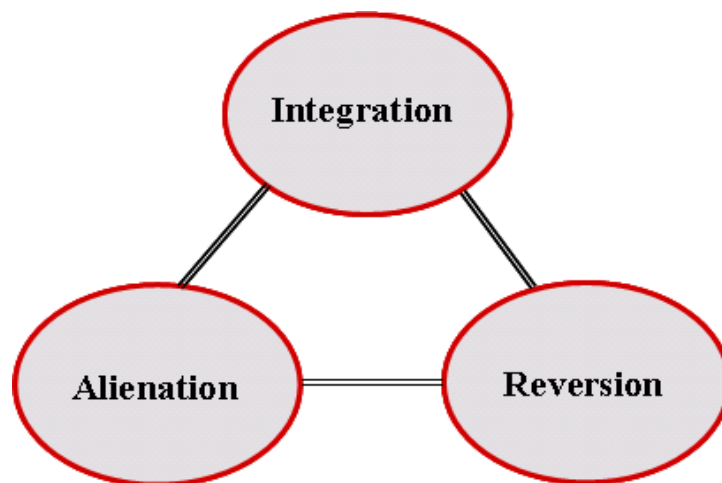
**Remember** – You have become so used to your host country that you do not realize you are experiencing cultural adjustment again.

**Reversion** — Rejection of the attributes of the host culture by adopting none of their attitudes, practices, beliefs, and values.

**Remember** – You will always be who you are but will also grow from new experiences.

**Integration** — Selectively combining the experiences, attitudes, practices, beliefs, and values from both the host culture and culture of origin.

**Remember** – If you can do this, you have accepted the fact that you are in transition and that returning home is another growth experience.



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



# What Now? Goals, Challenges and Action Plans

**A**s the final exercise of this Re-Entry 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 and 2) social or family 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

**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 goals and have begun to plan for their attainment.*

---

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

### Stereotype and Generalization Exercise Solution

**The answers to page 14 are all “S” (stereotype) except:**

The majority of Chinese people speak Mandarin.

Most Mexicans are Catholic.

**These two are “G” (generalization).**

## Recommended Re-entry Resources for Teens

### Books:

#### For Teens & Parents

*Hidden Immigrants: Legacies of Growing up Abroad*

Linda Bell  
(1997)

*The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition*

Tina L. Quick  
(2010)

*Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* (revised edition)

David C. Pollock & Ruth van Reken  
(2009)

*Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global*

Faith Eidse & Nina Sichel  
(2004)

#### For Parents

*Repatriation: A How-to Guide for Returning Wisely*

Jill Kristal & Liz Perelstein  
(2007)



### Websites:

Global Nomads Group

<http://www.gng.org/>

Third Culture Kids

<http://www.tckworld.com/>

Are you a TCK?

<http://www.tckid.com/what-is-a-tck.html#origin>

Connect with Other TCKs

<http://www.tckid.com/>

TCK Magazine

<http://www.denizen-mag.com/>

