

Repatriation Survey Results Spring 2017

This is a summary of a spring 2017 survey of over 200 expats who have returned to their home countries. The purpose of the survey was to explore the range of feelings and coping strategies experienced by different groups of expats including missionaries, corporate, educators, students, military and accompanying spouses.

Key Findings:

1. Over 50 emotions reported are best portrayed in this wordle. The most common emotional states are probably conflicted and sad. The comment we liked the best was “I felt like the unfrozen caveman from SNL.”
2. The most common challenges were grieving and missing my life abroad, feeling a loss of identity, restless, unsettled, and misunderstood.
3. Only 7% of respondents received any support from their employers either before or after the repatriation assignment. 37% sought out support for themselves – mostly other expats and other emotional support service providers.
4. Over half reported they coped with the transition by talking with friends and family and 29% joined on line support groups such as I AM A TRIANGLE. Fifteen respondents hired coaches. This wordle represents the most common coping methods.
5. Most participants wanted more help with processing their complex emotions, articulating the changes in themselves, making new friends, and with their career on returning.
6. The most surprising aspects of return included the difficulty of fitting back in to your old networks, your old town, your old life; the plethora of choices available at home in huge contrast to the foreign assignment; the self-centered attitude of most people who had not traveled.
7. Perhaps the most telling question was the last one – did you treat your return as an adventure? 23% answered that they did at least some of the time, and their responses generally indicated a better repatriation overall.



REPATRIATION SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS - SPRING 2017			
		Count	Percent
How many years have you lived outside of your "home country"?	As a child?	46	Avg 6.0
	As an adult?	188	Avg 9.7
Why were you in a foreign country (as an adult)?	International Teacher	41	21%
	Study Abroad	59	30%
	Corporate employee of host country firm	28	14%
	Corporate employee of passport country firm	15	8%
	Military or Diplomatic Services	5	3%
	Mission work	20	10%
	NGO or other volunteer work	23	12%
	Accompanying Partner	101	52%
	Other (please specify)	44	23%
What is your current age?	20 - 35	45	23%
	35 - 50	73	37%
	50 - 65	68	35%
	Over 65	6	3%
What were your primary challenges with re-entry / repatriation?	Grieving/missing my life abroad	138	71%
	Feeling restless/unsettled	118	61%
	Feeling misunderstood	102	52%
	Loss of Identity	101	52%
	Difficulty making new friends	79	41%
	Feeling overwhelmed	77	39%
	Difficulty connecting with old friends or family	77	39%
	Feeling bored with life	74	38%
	Career Difficulties	71	36%
	Relationship challenges	59	30%
	Financial Uncertainty	54	28%
Getting my children settled	35	18%	
Did you receive or seek out re-entry/repatriation support?	I did not receive any support, and did not understand I would need it	72	40%
	I sought out support on my own	67	37%
	I received support from my Company, organization or program after returning	10	6%
	I received support from my Company, organization or program before departing	3	2%
How did you cope with re-entry/repatriation?	Talked with friends & family	107	55%
	Joined an online support group	56	29%
	I didn't do anything in particular	51	26%
	Journaling	48	25%
	Read re-entry/repatriation books	47	24%
	Participated in a re-entry/repatriation course, workshop or webinar	24	12%
	Worked with a coach	15	8%
What do you wish you had more help with?	Processing my complex emotions	97	50%
	Articulating what I learned and how I changed by living abroad	91	47%
	Making new friends & connecting with other expats	81	42%
	My career path after returning	75	38%
	Getting to know my home country again	48	25%
	Financial issues	25	13%
What do you enjoy most about being back in your home country?	The familiarity of being "home"	83	43%
	Connecting with old friends	76	39%
	Everyone speaks my language	48	25%
	The chance to change my life without moving	29	15%

Survey Content Summary:

Sectors: educators, students, military & diplomats, missionaries, corporate employees and NGO workers

Questions:

1. How many years have you lived outside of your "home country"? (as child or adult)
2. Why were you in a foreign country (as an adult)?
3. What is your current age?
4. Describe your feelings when you returned to your home country.
5. What were your primary challenges with re-entry/repatriation?
6. Did you receive or seek out re-entry/repatriation support?
7. How did you cope with re-entry/repatriation?
8. What do you wish you had more help with?
9. What do you enjoy most about being back in your home country?
10. When you went overseas, you were probably going on a great adventure. Do you feel like you are on an adventure now that you are home?
11. Anything else you'd like to tell us about your re-entry/repatriation or how to support those in re-entry/repatriation?

Note: If you want more information on the survey results, please contact one of the following:

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