

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK: WELCOME HOME



Returning home after a long stay abroad seems like a relief, because you can finally relax in your familiar and beloved environment. However, it is often stressful to come home after a long absence. In other words, moving to another country is a shock, returning to your homeland is electric shock.

The ABEA Relocation team decided to figure out what kind of beast this “reverse culture shock” is, the reasons for its origin and how to deal with it.

Culture shock is a feeling of internal discomfort that occurs when traditional perspectives collide with new norms. We wrote about the stages of culture shock in a [previous article](#). **The reverse culture shock** appears when the expat has already managed to adapt to the new environment, and returning home, he again disrupts the new-found way of things.

Reverse culture shock is intensified by a psychological factor when the expectations of returned expatriates are not met. For example, working abroad for a long time, a person dreamed about his/her native places, idealized them. When he/she returned, everything has changed. A person has changed. These unconscious changes create feelings of alienation, frustration and disorientation in their own culture of expatriates.

Another reason for the reverse culture shock is that returning home may be a change in geographic location - climate, time zone, etc. Physical discomfort strongly affects the general perception of the native culture.

Knowledge of the main reasons of reverse culture shock can help you to prepare yourself in advance to return home, reduce stress, and accelerate adaptation. Ex-expats experience reverse culture shock in different ways, but effective ways of re-adaptation in their native culture are based on self-belief, cultural empathy, the ability to readjust and organizational skills. It is also important to remain in touch with family and friends who stayed at home. Upon ex-espatriate's return, they will be very supportive and will help adapt to familiar environment. In the process of experiencing reverse culture shock, it is helpful to communicate with those who have been in the same situation. From their experience, one can understand that there is no disaster and this is a normal process for the human psyche.

Getting used to home is not a matter of one day. The main thing to remember is that any difficulties are temporary.