

Host Country Separation Anxiety: Reverse Culture Shock

Everyone goes through some type of difficulty after returning from their year abroad. Depending on the circumstances, some transitions can be more difficult than others. This handout provides some general advice concerning your Rebound year, or your “second year abroad”, as we sometimes refer to it.

During your Rebound year you can expect difficulties involving your:

- Family
 - Dealing with new rules after a year of independence
 - Mutual expectations that nothing has changed
 - They don't really understand what you've been through

- Friends
 - Readjusting to high school or a new college
 - You've changed and others don't seem to have done so
 - They don't seem interested in your profound experiences

- Separation from your host country
 - Loss of contacts with friends abroad
 - Incorporating your year abroad into your life
 - Cultural values dissonance
 - Internal discord and conflict
 - Frustration

While all of this is normal and to be expected, that does not make it any less painful or stressful. Just know that others ahead of you have gone through it and survived!

Over the years, Rotex have found the following strategies helpful in easing the stress of re-acclimating to one's country of origin.

- Stay busy with a job (paid or volunteer) or hobby
- Attend to your sponsor Rotary Club meetings
- Meet the new Inbounds in your town or district
- Get to know Rotex or exchange students from other programs
 - Whether you choose to get involved with Rotex or not, getting to know other exchange students is a great way to find someone who not only understands what you have and are going through, but who also wants to hear about it.

Other resources include your:

- Parents
- New or old friends
- Teachers
- Clergy
- Rotarians

The time of transition and readjustment is different for everyone, typically taking from a few months to a year or more. Your difficulties may not even lie within these categories, but if you hang around other former exchange students you'll find someone with an experience similar to yours.

There are many resources at your disposal but Rotex is probably your best outlet and resource. We've all been through the same things, and staying connected is a great way to keep your Rotary experience a part of your life while making great friends in the process.

And remember, always feel free to contact any Rotex!

Or go to "Rotex – North Star Rotary Youth Exchange" on Facebook