

## 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMING HOME, ADDENDUM 9



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1. Coming home from your trip doesn't mean that it's over. In all actuality, it's probably just beginning in a sense. As you go back and read through your journal that you hopefully kept in your host-country, you will probably learn more as you read through and seek what God is trying to teach you after your trip than you did when you were in country. Have a teachable spirit, don't be calloused towards God. The time after you come home can be the sweetest fellowship between you and God if you allow him to guide you.
2. When you arrive back in America, take some time to lay low for a while. Process the journey you have been on. Don't rush it, wait on God, he will teach you in his timing. Seek him constantly. Ask him to show you what he wants you to learn through this process of re-entry.
3. Don't feel the need to rush into ministry as soon as you get home. Yes, you're going to feel useless after living and breathing ministry for the past few months of your life. That's okay. Take however long you need to relax for a little while and spend the time that you would be serving and use it to spend time with God. You WILL need that. Before jumping into a ministry, prayerfully consider God's will. It's okay not to have a plan.
4. For a little while when you get home, you won't want to talk about your experience overseas, mostly because you're still trying to process it yourself. And that's okay...for a little while. However, at some point, you will have to/need to spill your guts to someone. Find a friend, pastor, parent, counselor, anyone who cares about you genuinely, and just talk to them. Tell them about the hardest day you had in your host country. Tell them about the best day you had. Tell them about a native that touched your heart. Tell them whatever you feel like. If you find it hard to just talk about it in general, then get them to ask you questions about your time in country. I know for me, when people asked me questions, it was 10 times easier to talk about. Use the questions as a starting point, you'll probably find that just one question will open the floodgates.
5. Let's face it, people change. When you return, don't expect your friends to be the same people as they were when you left. Chances are, they have probably grown spiritually and made friends since you left. Just because you left for a little while, doesn't mean that life stopped for your friends. Life goes on. Don't expect them to immediately understand your experiences. Trust me, if they really love and care about you, they will desire to know about your trip, but they may not know how to express it. It's okay if they don't understand, you can still be friends. Grow through it with them. It will probably make your bond even stronger. Also understand that they had a hard time with you leaving. Be sensitive to that and let them know how much you missed them. On the other hand, you've changed and grown by leaps and bounds too. This period of coming home and figuring out how to be best friends again will be hard. Lots of grace and understanding will have to be exercised on both parts, but you're friends for a reason. Don't be closed off. They love you in the best way they know how at this point. Do the same for them.
6. Like I said, no one will 100% understand everything you've experienced and your struggle with re-entry. But you're not alone. There are PLENTY of missionaries who have come off of the field and have been through what you're experiencing now. LET THEM HELP YOU. Take their advice. Again, have a teachable spirit. Be willing to listen to what they have to say, it's valuable information.

7. God is a good listener. Vent to him. Get mad. Ask him questions. He can take it. He is a good God. You might never have answers to everything that happened in your time overseas, but he will give you a peace about it. God is a gentleman, he will wait for you to process. He will hold your hand on this journey. He's not going to leave you now that you're back in America. Talk to him. Comb through his Word. He gives greater grace (James 4:16b). He will always be there, even when you feel like no one else is. He is for you, not against you.
8. Living overseas is stressful, that's a fact. Some people actually struggle with PTSD after coming off the field long-term. Seek counseling, I swear it's normal. It's nothing to be embarrassed about, it's very real and very hard.
9. Don't suppress memories from your time overseas, no matter how much it hurts. Trying to forget will make it even worse. Let the memories hit you full-force, and remember everything thing that you can. It's okay to cry about it. Talk through it. Journal what you remember. Savor those moments.
10. It will end. You will finish processing your time in your host country. It might take a weeks, it might take months, it might take years, and that's okay. However, when the time comes, be okay with letting it go once you've learned everything that you can from this time in your life. Once you've finished processing, God will begin to prepare you for the next thing that he has for you whether it's starting college, getting a job, getting married, or going back to the field. Don't feel bad about being "finished" with this experience, it'll always be a part of you. It'll always be special to you, but you have to be okay with moving on. Even though this journey might be over, you'll begin a new one soon. He has wonderful plans for you. You will be okay.

**I have read and understand this information:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Applicant's Signature & Date**

**I have read and understand this information:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**If applicable, signature of Parent or Legal Guardian of Minor Applicant & Date**