

4 Coming Home

Reverse Culture Shock

Reverse culture shock is the feeling that some students experience after adapting to another culture and then re-entering their home country. Some of the feelings experienced are alienation from family and friends, frustration over the absence of things they got used to overseas, irritability at seemingly minor events and encounters, rejection of their own culture, boredom, and lack of direction. Other feelings students may experience are that they seem to have little in common with their old friends, no one seems interested in listening to them talk about their experiences abroad, the attitudes of family and friends seem parochial, there is seemingly no place to go with the knowledge and skills they feel they have acquired abroad, and life at home and on campus seems restrictive and unexciting.

It is important to understand that these feelings are very similar to those of culture shock. They are usually short-lived since home will never be as foreign as the foreign environment you adjusted to overseas. If you are aware of these feelings and changes and you seek to learn from them, then a smooth transition is likely. You can volunteer with OIE, make presentations to local civic clubs (Rotary, Lions, etc.), or write an article about your studies abroad for your hometown newspaper or the *Plainsman*.

Talk about a study in contrasts! Lindsey Harris studied in Australia in spring of 2003 (and interned with the Crocodile Hunter in her spare time!) and later studied in Antarctica during spring of 2005.

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