Putting the ‘Good’ in Goodbye
“Saying goodbye is tough. And saying goodbye is a two-way street. Saying goodbye can keep a door open or slam it shut. And for those left behind, not just for those leaving, the way you say goodbye matters. It matters for remembering and it matters for closure. It matters for honouring the time spent together. And it matters for moving on - and into - new relationships.”

Do you remember when…

...you first arrived?

Did your **adjustment process** go something like this?
The whole picture looks something like this...
(Reverse) Culture shock...

What is it?
- Feeling **out of place** in your environment; a sense of **disorientation**.

But we’re going “**home**”?
- Do your **children** think of it as “**home**”?
- Your **unique experience abroad** means that there will be a **natural period of readjustment** when you return.
- You have **grown and changed**. The people and things you are returning to **have changed as well**.
- **Awareness** of the adjustment process is the first step to managing a **successful transition**.
Saying **goodbye**

“**The very reason ‘goodbyes’ are hard, is the very reason we need to do them well**: because we’re leaving something, and **if we don’t fully leave it, we can’t be fully present in the next thing.**”

- Tsh Oxenreider

**How do you say goodbye?**

- Traditions, rituals, emotional responses, past experiences…

We are **not sure** that we are actually leaving?

- Think **pro-actively**
  - "It is better to transition and stay than not transition and go.”
Preparing to say **goodbye**

**Build your RAFT**


**Reconciliation:** Resolve any conflicts with friends, colleagues, family members.

**Affirmation:** Express **appreciation** for your personal relationships and experiences.

**Farewells:** Say **clear farewells** to friends, colleagues, pets, possessions, and places.

**Think ahead:** Keep **expectations** in line – be mindful of over-glamorizing your return or your next destination.
Anticipate the **rapids**!

- What are the **rapids** (**rough waters**) that you **anticipate**?
  - When preparing to say goodbye?
  - When you are in your new home?

- A sturdy **RAFT** can help you to **navigate** the rapids **successfully**.
Preparing to stay

Use your RAKE

Reconciliation: Resolve conflicts with friends, colleagues, and family members.

Affirmation: Express appreciation for your personal relationships and experiences.

Keep in touch: Plan to reach out to your friends to see how and what they are doing so you can continue to be a part of each others’ lives.

Explore: Explore ways to make new friends at school and in the community—clubs, sports, activities, etc. They won’t replace your old friends, but in time, they may become an equally important part of your life.
Preparing to stay

- Plan a short change of scenery and then re-engage with your current environment.
- Allow time to grieve + find time to express gratitude.
- Make a plan to meet again...or not.
- Make an effort to be a model of transition for your child.
- “It hurts because it’s good.”

Staying Well | Ripple Effect | Transitioning TCKs
The #COVIDCoaster conundrum

• Virtual goodbyes?
  • Facebook Messenger Group Calling (fun filters!) | Zoom | Google Meet
• Unique ways to say goodbye?
  • Padlet | Flipgrid | Kudoboard | VidHug
  • Car parade – friends and family drive past the house
Ideas to support your children

**Before** you leave:

- Maintain **consistent** practices at home.
- **Involve** the whole family in packing.
- Make a special box of **photos** and **memorabilia**.
- Keep a **journal/blog** of the move.
  - [Global list of expat blogs | 100 expat blogs, websites & influencers](#)
- Take a **farewell tour** of favorite places.
- **Discuss** the choice of house, neighbourhood, schools, etc.
- **Visit** the new school virtually.
What else can you do?

When you arrive:

• Keep everyone involved with unpacking and decorating decisions.
• Take a break from unpacking to explore and (re)familiarize.
• Seek out new and/or familiar places to visit or things to enjoy.
• Encourage (virtual) visits by old friends and new ones too!
• Acknowledge and discuss upsetting feelings.
What else can you do?

At the new school:

- **Make school aware** of any health or learning issues.
- **Inform** the school counsellor or administrator about any concerns.
- **Visit** the school before the first day to get familiar.
- **Do a schedule run-through** and find your classes.
- **Try to meet** new teachers and support staff.
- **Research** extra-curricular activities – find out when tryouts/auditions happen.
Other ideas to support you and your child(ren)?

• **Share** some (other) strategies and skills that have worked for you in the past.
Personal changes – Adults

Red flags to watch out for include:

- Changes in **sleep patterns**.
- More **illnesses** (colds, headaches, lack of energy).
- Becoming more **accident prone**.
- Changes in **eating habits/diet**.
- **Loss of interest** in activities.
- Inability or **unwillingness** to make friends.
Personal changes – SRS Children

- Emotional **acting out**.
- **Drop** in grades/achievement.
- Being **negative** or **argumentative** (more so than your typical teen).
- **Withdrawing** or being **over-sensitive**.
- Needing frequent **reassurance**; being ‘**clingy**’.
- Premature **independence**.
- **Discipline** problems.
Personal changes – ES Children

- Regressive behaviours.
- Attention seeking.
- Non-compliant.
- Fears – abandonment/loss.
- Deterioration in school work.
- Inappropriate/misplaced anger.
- Increased dependence on family.
Letter from the future....

- **Think ahead** to December.
- **Imagine** that you have been *very pleased with how the transition has gone* for you and your family.
- **Write** a letter to yourself from the present explaining what you have done to make it so successful.
  - **Smaller children**
    - Draw a picture.
    - Record a video.
- **Keep** this letter and re-read it in December.
  - **Discuss the picture / watch the video** with your child.
Thank you!

Good luck with your journey!