

## Top Ten Words to internalize to Enjoy the Expat Lifestyle

Thrive don't just survive! The Expat lifestyle will be what you make it. Keep these ten words close to your heart and mind and you will enjoy the ride!

### **1. Openmind**

Enjoy the differences. View the new culture from the angle of “what can I learn”. Remember that there is always an explanation for why a culture or person behaves the way they do. Seek with an open mind and you will realize there is an alternative to every viewpoint. Oh and yours isn't always the right one, it's just yours.

### **2. Patience**

“This too shall pass” is one of my favorite mantras since living abroad. New language, new systems, actions or attitudes different from your own, timeframes that may conflict with yours and rules that you often want to argue. These are common experiences for someone in a new country. Hold onto your patience and remember, this too shall pass”.

### **3. Humor**

Laugh! Every chance you get. Is there anything worth getting that upset or serious about? Yes, a few things. But overall, life is funny. Find the humor in each day and each crazy experience. Share them with friends and family back home. Laughter heals, laughter mends and it is much better than focusing on a negative situation. Turn it around. Every situation has a chance for humor.

### **4. Adventure**

Look at the opportunities to explore and challenge yourself and your family. See new things, taste new foods, hear new languages or accents. Live this adventure – use the opportunities presented to you to fully experience all that is ahead of you. Every country, every culture has its own adventure – find it!

### **5. Growth**

One of the best ways to find out what you can't and can handle is to move to a foreign country where you don't speak the language or know the customs. Here is a chance to expand your awareness of yourself and others. Use this chance to overcome fears and rethink your values and goals.

### **6. Boundaries**

Be certain of who you are and what you believe in. Remain flexible within the culture and situation but also remain true to yourself. Know your limits and you will prevent unnecessary emotional struggles when your limits are challenged by culture shock or the various issues that come up while abroad.

## **7. Acceptance**

You and I are different. Within each state or province, we are different. Within our own families we are different. So of course we are different from those who were raised in a society different from our own. Tolerance is often masked by a negative emotion. I encourage you to take it a step further and accept the differences and not try to compare or change them.

## **8. Curiosity**

Try the local foods. Put on some of the clothes. Take the time to get to know your neighbors if possible. Learn the language or at least enough to do daily activities. View the new culture with child's eyes. Your whole experience will be richer and more rewarding if you remain curious to all that is around you.

## **9. Courage**

Going to a new country is not for the "weak at heart". You can be challenged daily with opposing views, cultural norms and even isolation and loneliness. Your normal support system is often an ocean away and the time zones seem huge when you want to call someone back home for a simple chat. Knowing up front that you are courageous for taking the assignment or choosing to go abroad can be a powerful reminder when you feel down. How many of your friends and family would ever consider "up and moving" to another country? Let's face it. Somewhere inside you, you have courage.

## **10. Attitude**

This one is so simple. You have 2 choices here. Positive or Negative. Avoid the expats that fall into the latter category. Their pessimism is like a virus that spreads and darkens all your thoughts and experiences. Sure there are tough times when living abroad. Either way you're going to get through them. Which way do you wish to spend the time while you're doing it? Happy and enjoying the ride or griping and bitching while being dragged the whole way?

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