



lifestyle

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Have You Read All the Books on Moving to Switzerland but Still Feel as if You Haven't Landed?

*Contributed by
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Whether you've been in Switzerland for two weeks or two years since arriving to take up your international assignment, there are no doubt mornings when you wake up asking yourself: "Why did I ever leave home?" Or worse: "What am I doing here?"

As hospitable as your country hosts might have been in showing you where to buy groceries and how to use the public transportation system, adjusting to a new culture never seems to end. Life's daily challenges on foreign soil can range from how to make small talk with the locals; to helping your kids adapt to the new school system; to settling in to the new neighbourhood. All of which can at times be a bit daunting.

I know, I've been there too. My background is unique in that I've experienced two cultural assimilations - from both sides of the Atlantic - first as a Swiss assimilating in California to then repatriating back to Switzerland after ten years of living abroad.

Take charge in making the most of your transition.

We shouldn't be surprised when we read that 40 percent of all ex-pat contracts in Switzerland are terminated early because the workers and their families could not integrate to the new environment. But don't let yourself become part of these statistics!

As a member of the International Coach Federation and having trained at "The Coaches Training Institute" (CTI) of London; I can assist you in taking concrete steps toward assimilating and integrating - while having fun in the process. One of my ex-pat clients came to me with the following:

Case in point - The challenge of a new arrival

Jenny recently moved from Hong

Kong to Zürich and felt a bit like a fish out of water. She gave up her promising advertising job back in Hong Kong to be with her boyfriend in Switzerland. This was no small sacrifice; she let go of an independent lifestyle as well as her source of income.

Soon after arriving in Switzerland, Jenny began to tire of having to justify to everybody as to why she was not working, and this has brought pressure on her relationship. Not being in command of the local language and having a sense of no real purpose, her self-esteem and motivation shrank to an all time low.

After a series of one-on-one coaching sessions with me, Jenny got her life back into perspective and regained some balance. She now could motivate herself to "get out there" and meet some people. With the positive change she created she was better able to integrate herself into her environment.

One reason for her success was the following of a structured approach to tackling these issues. The following tips can be applied in many similar situations.

Helpful Tips

1. Get in touch with your inner values.
2. Find out what makes you tick! - What is fulfilling you? - What excites you?
3. Group together all values that came up so that you end up with 6.
4. Rank the 6 core values in priority order.
5. Make them big - get them out there - have them remind you daily (mirror, wallet, book mark).
6. To each core value ask yourself how much are you honouring it right now on a scale from 1-10 and how much do you want it to move up in the rankings?
7. Project yourself into the future and imagine that you did do make those changes. How would you feel about it?
8. Focus on what you need to do to get

there and establish a concrete action plan.

9. Start with two steps that you could take immediately forward toward making the greatest difference in your current situation.

My background

When I moved back to Zürich after more than ten years, I joined American Express International, where my areas of focus included the management of the risk and customer service departments and heading up a travel division.

Since 2001, I have dedicated myself fully to personal coaching.

My involvement with Hello Zürich

I've come on board to offer advice on assimilation and integration issues. I'm also here to answer questions that readers may have related to transitioning and integrating into a foreign culture (even their own).

We want this to be an interactive column and this won't happen without you. So please send your questions to the below e-mail address and they will be included in upcoming issues.

Each month, different subjects will be covered that are of interest to you. So look out for next issue which will take an inside look at the interesting topic of procrastination: the art of putting things off - something most of us are extremely skilled at!

Contact information

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