

SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL ADAPTATION

U. of Haifa

כנס דוקטורנטיות

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www.maavarim.biz



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ומשאבים בע"מ

Transitions & Resources Ltd.

ייעוץ אירגוני - תעסוקתי והנחייה

My background:

Graduated from:

- Cornell
- Brandeis
- Columbia

Family:

- 2 relocations to the US
- 1 sibling and 1 child in the UK, family in US

Background:

- Brandeis University
- U.of Louisville
- Hebrew University
- Lead cross cultural training for Intel, Motorola, start ups, students, olim
- Edit doctoral student college essays and create resumes
- Career transitions support for second careers, spouse career transition and relocation support



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Topics:

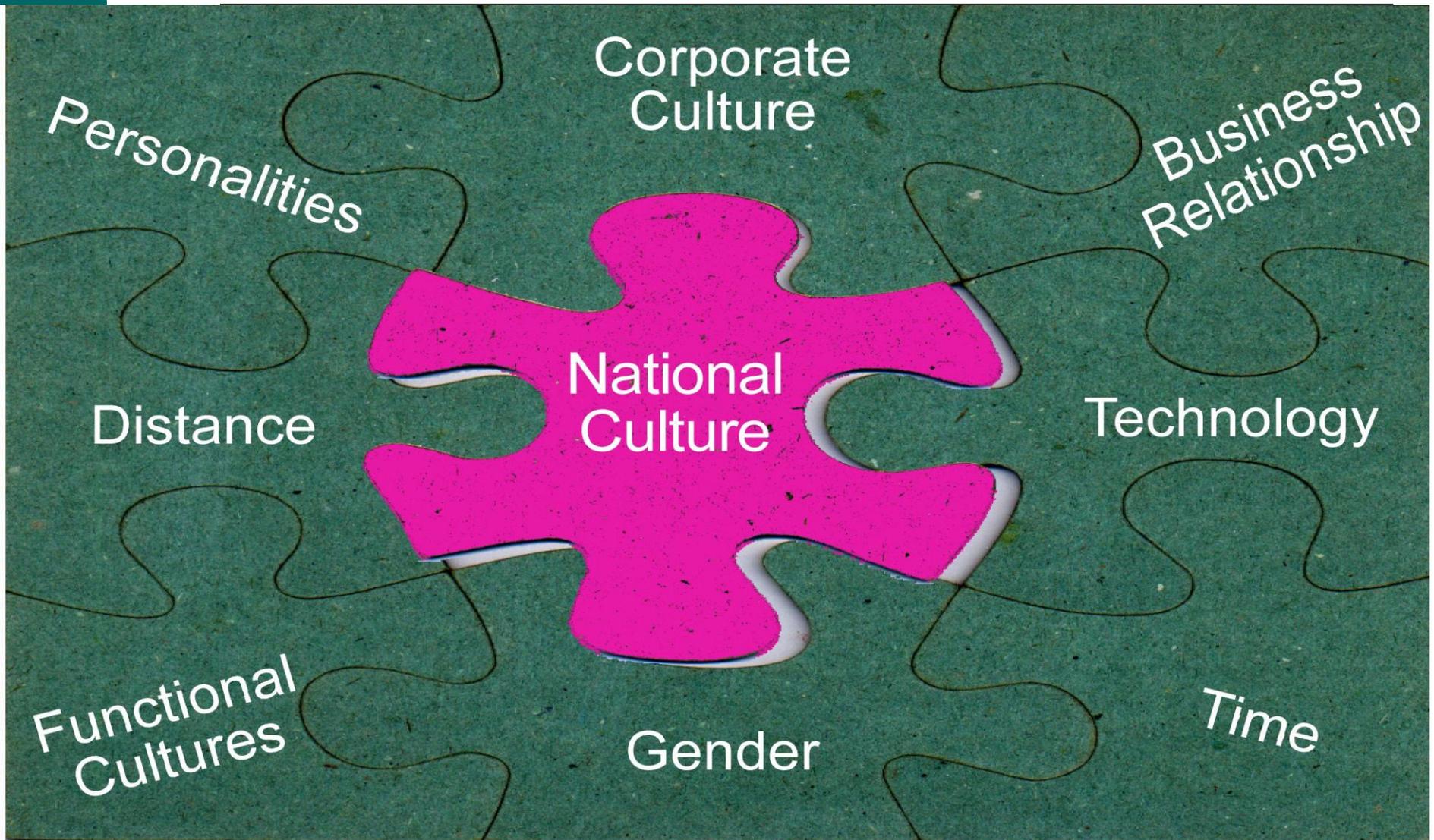
Cultural Differences

- CAP
- Cultural iceberg
- Intercultural communications
- How are Israelis perceived?
- Preparation for relocation
- New challenges
- Discussion points with university
- Pitfalls
- Spouse's career options
- Family matters
- Stereotypes
- Tips

WHAT IS CULTURE?

- **Culture is to a group what memory is to an individual.**
- **Culture is the collective programming of the mind.**
- **A system of behavior that helps us act in a familiar or accepted way.**
- **It includes behavior patterns, norms, expectations, basic values and implicit assumptions.**
- **The way in which we're programmed to behave.**

Multiple Factors at Play



The Cultural Iceberg

Surface Culture

Food
Flags Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

Deep Culture

Communication Styles and Rules
facial expressions gestures eye contact
personal space touching
body language tone of voice
handling and displaying of emotion
conversational patterns in different social situations

Notions of:

courtesy and manners
friendship leadership
cleanliness modesty beauty

Concepts of:

self time past and future
fairness and justice
roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.

Attitudes toward:

elders adolescents dependents
rule expectations work authority
cooperation vs. competition
relationships with animals age sin death

Approaches to:

religion courtship marriage raising children
decision-making problem-solving

Deep Culture Unconscious Rules - Far Below Surface

- Notions of Modesty
 - Ideas about Leadership
 - Tempo of Work
 - Ideals of Childrearing
 - Social Interaction Rate
 - Nature of Friendships
 - Tone of Voice
 - Attitudes Towards Elders
 - Patterns of Group Decision-Making
 - Preference for Competition or Cooperation
 - Problem-Solving Roles and attitudes in Relation to Age, Sex, Class, Occupation
-
- Individualism vs Group focus
 - Often times aren't even realized.
 - Value-Based
- “You just don't DO that!”**

“What are you DOING?”

Unspoken, invisible rules are ingrained in each society regarding:

- Courtesy
- Conversational Patterns
- Concept of Time
- Personal Space
- Rules of Conduct
- Facial Expressions
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Body Language- Touching, Eye-Contact
- Patterns of Handling Emotions
- Uncertainty avoidance vs certainty
- Risk and change aversion

5 ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

1. **COMMUNICATION STYLE**

- Direct.....Indirect
- Expressive.....Reserved

2. **PERSONAL BOUNDARIES**

- Private.....Public
- CloseDistant

3. **TIME**

- Linear.....Multi-tasking
- Short-term.....Long-term

4. **RULES/ STRUCTURE**

- Fixed rules.....Flexible rules

5. **AUTHORITY**

- Equality.....Hierarchy,
use of titles

Indirect vs Direct Communication

Neutral:

- That's an interesting viewpoint.
- Let me think it over.
- Can I get back to you on that?
- I will do what I can.
- You may have a point.
- Thank you for your time.

Israeli:

- I don't think it will work.
- My research team will not like that.
- I will tell you later.
- I know it won't work.
- You don't know what you are talking about.
- Don't waste any more of my time.

PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Examples

- Distance
- Touching
- Using other's property
- Sneezing
- Alcohol gel
- What is private?
- What borrowing signifies
- Kissing
- Handshakes
- Elevators
- Opening doors
- Sharing an office

RELATION TO RULES

- How to fail a driving test
- IF you dial 911 instead of 011
- Walking your dog
- Leaving children home alone
- Offering candy
- Who can pick up your child from daycare/school
- School manual and rules
- Put it in writing
- Tax return in US
- Children undressing in public at the beach
- Standing in line
- Overdraft

RELATIONSHIP TO TIME

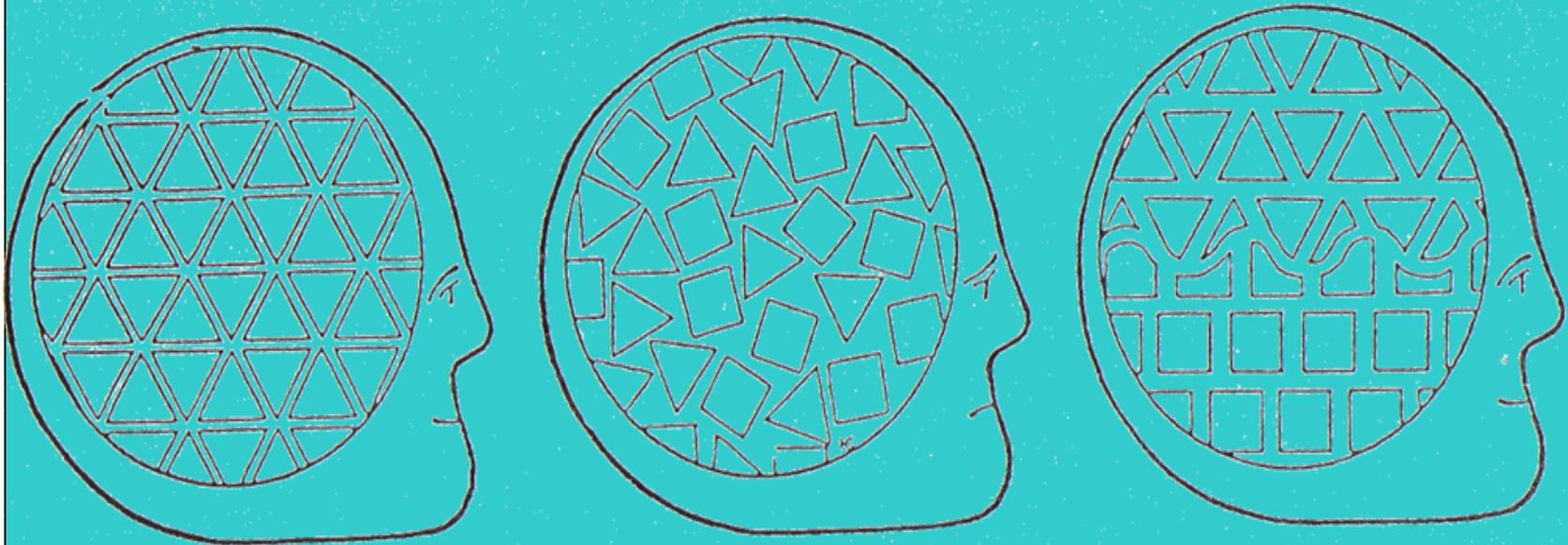
Common issues:

- Advance notice time
- Arriving on time
- When is too early/late to call
- Weekend time= holy
- Not multi-tasking during faculty meetings
- Showing up to events
- Need to RSVP
- **Relationships are slower to develop abroad.**
- **Don't expect instant rapport.**
- **Promptness in attending meetings.**
- **Concept of 9-5, lunch hour**
- **Non-Jewish holidays, vacation days**

RELATION TO AUTHORITY

- How to address teachers, service providers, police
- Standing in line
- Follow protocol
- Politeness= phony? or friendliness + respect
- Tone of voice
- In UK, you have to register with police.
- In UK, clinic appointments are not made with you but for you.
- BY THE BOOK

OUR HEADS ARE WIRED DIFFERENTLY



Decoding British Speech

Use of understatement

- “You could say that”.
- That is an interesting project, we should consider it.
- Your child works very intuitively.
- **What is behind the language?**
- I would advise you not to say that.
- I would shelve that project.
- He is completely disorganized.

Foreign vs Israeli Communication Patterns

Direct Eye Contact:

Vocal patterns:

Animation/Emotion:

Gestures:

Turn taking and pause time:

Touch

Timing

Personal Space (distance) -Bubble

**Focus (on individual vs
group)**

Public display of affection PDA=

Negative Stereotypes about Israelis

Arrogant
Dismissive
Argumentative and loud
Aggressive
Impolite
Never on time
Stick to their own
Tactless
Talk about taboo issues- vote,
age, money, religion, marital
status

Why are Israelis called "sabras"?

Positive:

- Proud
- Highly intelligent
- Very family oriented
- Good business people
- Patriotic
- Hard working
- Creative
- Good innovators

תקלה בין-תרבותית

DO NOT ASSUME ○

Behaviors that are viewed as ○
normal by one side have a
completely unexpected impact on
the other.

○ מה שרואים מכאן לא רואים משם



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How to disagree varies in each country.

DISAGREEMENT

Definition of what is best way to be professional and correct business practices varies across borders.

Differences often lead to surprise, disappointment, and even anger.

RESULT:

- **mutual blaming**
- **disagreements**
- **misunderstandings, demands**
- **slowdowns**
- **defensive behavior**
- **criticism of your work**
- **mutual lack of trust**



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British stiff upper lip



**KEEP
CALM
AND
CARRY
ON**

Different Communication Styles:

WHAT I HEAR

- NO way!
- You are challenging my authority.
- YOU DON'T CARE.
- NO CHANCE IT WILL BE DONE ON TIME.
- You totally disagree and think you are the one who decides.

WHAT YOU SAY

- לא נראה לי, ככה זה פחות נכון לעשות.
- אנני יכול להסכים לזה.
- אין לי זמן בשביל זה.
- אולי זה יהיה מוכן בעוד שבועיים.
- לא מקובל עלי.

Power Distance- Hofstede

High Power Distance Culture

- Subordinates expect to be told what to do.
- The ideal department head is a kind autocrat, good parent.
- Everyone knows his/her place.
- Subordinates do not bypass authority.
- Privileges and status symbols for more senior professors are accepted and expected.

Low Power Distance Culture

- Subordinates challenge authority.
- Director encourages subordinates to challenge him/her.
- Authority has to be earned.
- Hierarchy tends to be flatter and less defined.



Bottom line:

- **Don't expect to be treated with the respect you may be used to.**
- **Show respect and deference to those higher up the ladder, reflected by language, behavior and protocol.**
- **Relationships with staff may be more distant than you are used to.**
- **Do not base judgments of people on appearance, demeanor, privileges or status symbols.**

CULTURAL ADAPTATION PROCESS

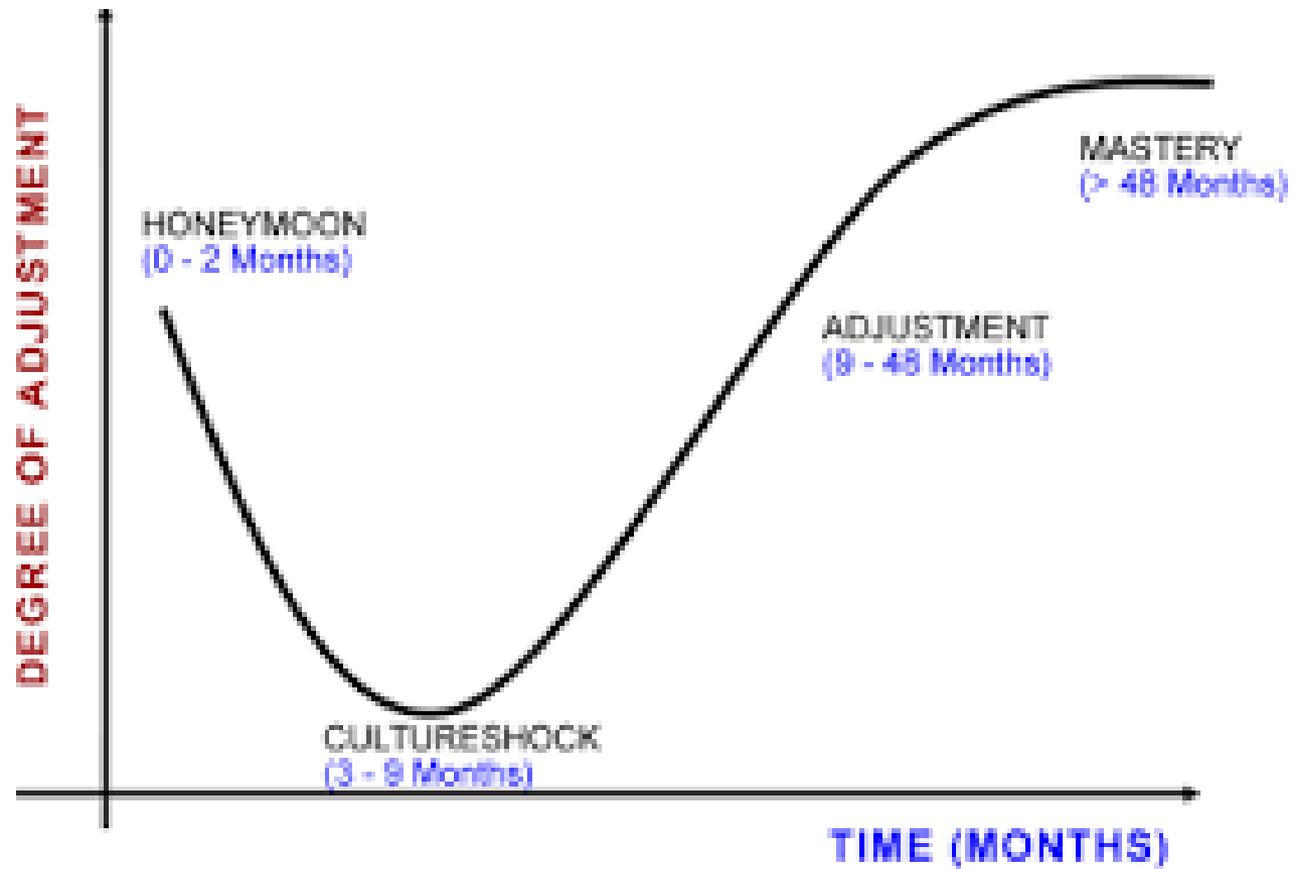
- מצב נורמלי IN ISRAEL
- התלהבות ראשונית HONEYMOON
- הלם תרבות CULTURE SHOCK
- הסתגלות חלקית PARTIAL ADAPTATION
- הסתגלות מושלמת IMMERSION, MASTERY
- BI-CULTURAL

CAP

U-CURVE

- Honeymoon: euphoria, enjoyment, newness, excitement
- Culture shock: frustration, disappointment, loneliness, comparison with home country געגועים
- Adaptation: recovery, learning, adjustment, accepting differences
- Mastery: feel more at home, integration, bilingual, dual culture, identity
- Reverse culture shock upon return

CAP TIMEFRAME



סימפטומים של הלם תרבות

- ◊ פריצה בבכי ◊ געגועים לבית
- ◊ הסתגרות
- ◊ אכילה, שתייה ושינה כפייתיים ◊ ביטחון
- ◊ עצמי נמוך
- ◊ סטריאוטיפ שלילי לגבי אנשים מקומיים
- ◊ חוסר התמצאות
- ◊ חולניות ◊ עצבנות ◊ חוסר יכולת לעבוד וללמוד
- ◊ עייפות ◊ דיכאון ◊ חרדה ◊ ניכור

Discussion points with university:

- **Salary or grant -amount; will it be federal tax exempt in US?**
- **Medical/dental/vision insurance - extra benefits (or you pay) & when does it begin?**
- **Relocation help - tickets, finding housing, shipping books/when to arrive**
- **Accommodations - lists? options? advice?**
- **Requests/assumptions (office space, lab equipment, budget)**
- **Campus parking permit (can cost a small fortune)**
- **Ask for their help to get you priority in the university's daycare/housing queues.**
- **Do not assume anything just because others get it there/elsewhere. You need to ask.**
- **Job board/ ride board/ faculty housing**

What do these mean?

1. asap
2. Bank holidays (UK)
3. playdate
4. EST
5. double coupons
6. TBA
7. TDA
8. CPA
9. K-p
10. the john
11. PC
12. the Brownies
13. blue laws
14. lose your marbles
15. Ivy League
16. in UK: alright

Pitfalls

- How to write dates
- Paying credit card bills, getting bank account
- Overdraft – fudgetaboutit
- Timing- promptness, don't call too early
- Use of slang
- Dress code
- Use of cellphones, road behavior
- Email etiquette
- Small talk

Challenges

- Establishing credit
- Family password
- Cross cultural minefields (Don't try to make people more comfortable by asking them personal questions, or by giving your department head feedback.)
- Kids' behavior-lining up, playdates, noise

Family Matters

Preparation

- Discuss, explain
- Use bedtime stories to share and prepare together
- Bring photos, favorite books, objects, toy
- Register kids **way** in advance
- Connect with other Israelis
- Create realistic expectations
- *Create a countdown*
- *Arrange housing: Craig's list*
- *Read kids books about moving*

Adjustment

- Join free PJ library
- Weekend Skype dates
- Look into JCC, Bet Hillel, synagogues, Jewish summer camp, Israel – X Chamber of Commerce, Israeli House eg: in Boston, DC
- Freebies: public library, adult ed, JCC lectures
- Select fun shared activity for each of you on long weekends
- *Maintain routines and traditions*
- *Try new activities*

“Trailing” Spouse Issues

Career Transition

- Plan way ahead.
- Develop a job search plan, skills and needs assessment, resume
- Explore new directions and effective self-marketing tactics.
- Explore goals to work, study, intern or volunteer.
- Get coaching and support throughout.
- **Have official university transcripts translated and notarized here.**

Couple Issues

- **Revised division of labor in home**
- **Make sure your family is happy.**
- **Spouse adjustment takes longer.**
- **Spouse often faces issues of lack of identity, derailed career plans and self-worth.**

ומה לגבי הקריירה של בן או בת הזוג?

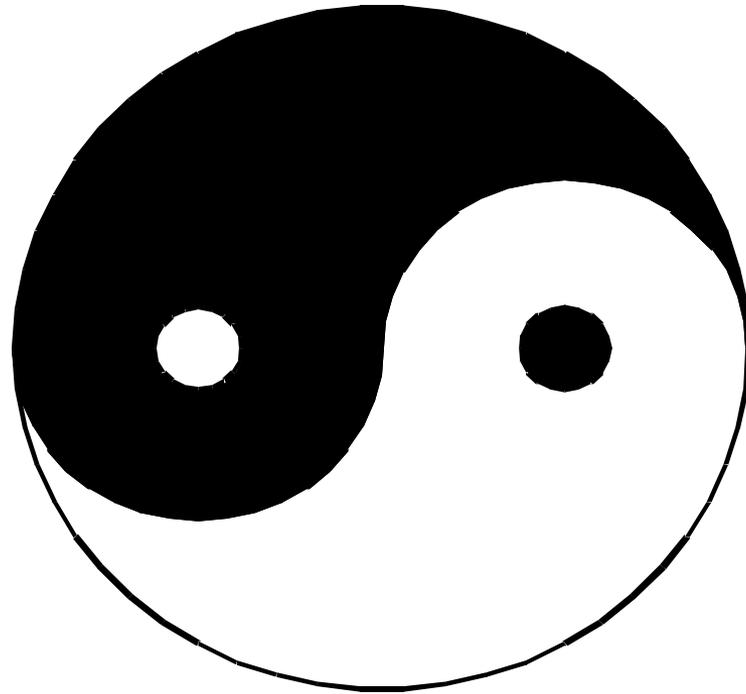
- שדרוג ידע
- שיפור השפה ESL
- עבודה מהבית כעצמאי/ת
- סטאג' OJT
- צבירת ניסיון חדש
- השגת תעודה או השלמת תואר-
- NON MATRICULATED STUDENT, STATE RESIDENCE STATUS
- עבודה מרחוק
- JVS
- עבודה בקהילה היהודית HEBREW SCHOOL

Israeli names

- Hallel= Halal
- Yoni = Joni
- Raya= Ray ah
- Drori= Dori
- Maoz= ?X!?\$%!
- Gad
- Moran
- Dudu
- Osnat
- Yifat

BDS on campus

- Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
- Anti-Israel activity and anti-Semitic incidents on campus are on the rise.
- There is a surge in attempts to pass academic boycotts of Israel.
- How to react if you are boycotted or slandered?



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Success Factors

- Openness to working differently
- Flexibility
- Diversity as an opportunity
- Quick adaptation to differences
- Show cultural empathy
- Be less judgmental → understanding
- Work on your stereotypes



Dealing with cultural adaptation

- Israeli at home but not at work?
- Find and create a support system.
- Ask other foreigners for advice.
- Challenge your comfort zone.
- Read [www.israelisabroad](http://www.israelisabroad.com).
- Develop an aptitude for adventure.
- המועצה הישראלית-אמריקנית **IAC**
- When in Rome...

6 skills that can enhance your intercultural competence:

1. Acceptance
2. Sensitivity
2. Compromise
3. Humor
4. Adaptability –open mindedness
5. Situational flexibility
6. Learning agility



GOOD LUCK!

○ Judy Feierstein, CEO
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