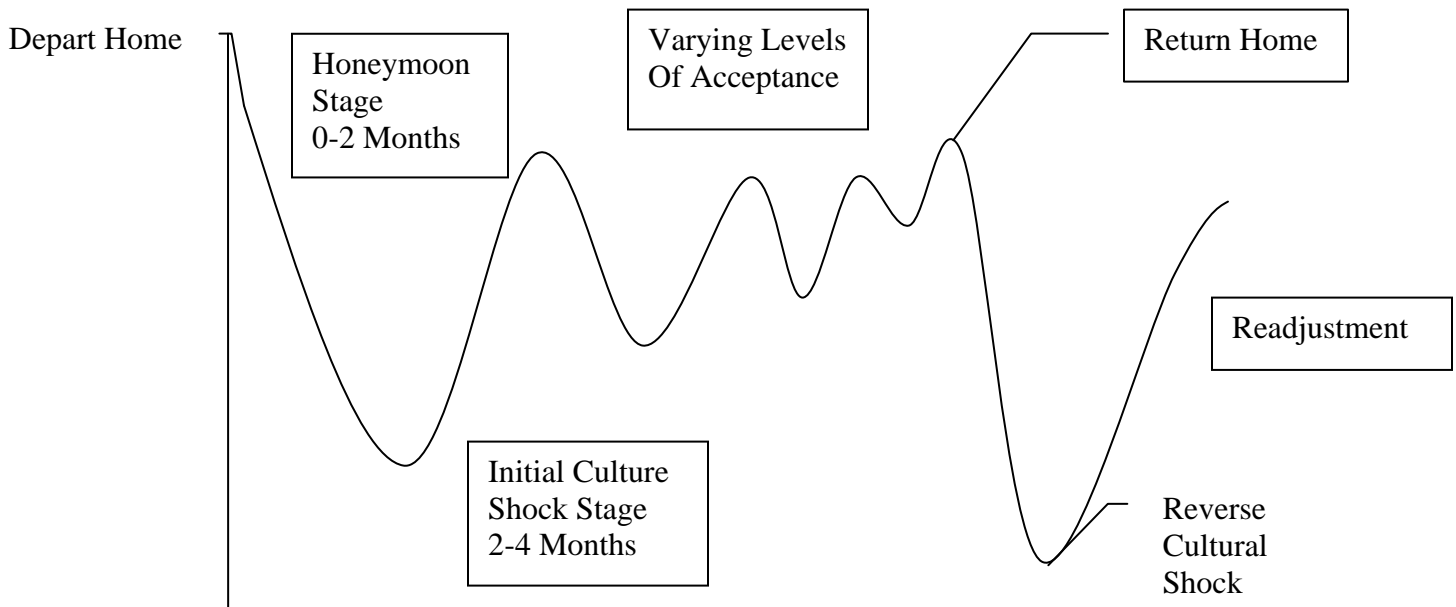


Stages of Cultural Shock



Culture Shock

The discomfort experienced while adjusting to life in a culture different from one's own

Symptoms:

Strain – due to having to make so very many psychological adaptations without any sort of respite

Sense of loss and feelings of deprivation – regarding the status, friends possessions, etc. to which you had become accustomed and feel you are due, but no longer have

Rejection – feeling that you are rejected by members of the new culture and/or you are rejecting members of the new culture

Confusion – in roles, expectations, values, feelings, and self-identity

Surprise, anxiety and indignation – after becoming aware of the many cultural differences that exist between your home and the host cultures

Feelings of inadequacy – due to fear of not being able to succeed in the new culture

Art of Empathy

The practice of empathy can be seen as a three-stage process

- 1 Recognize that the other person does, in fact, have a different point of view. He or she is looking at the situation through his or her own unique filter of experiences, biases, and values. This is the easiest part of the empathy process because it is so obvious and because it is a rational, logical and intellectual step.

- 2 Accept the idea that it is all right for another person and this one in particular, to have a viewpoint that is different from yours. Most people find this much more difficult stage of the empathy process. Often when we find that another person has a different viewpoint, our impulse is to ‘get it shaped up.’ Note that this second step doesn’t mean adopting, or even approving of, the specific opinion another person has, only accepting the idea that it is all right for that person to be unique and have a different set of experiences from those you have.
- 3 The final step in the practice of empathy might be expressed. “I really want to understand your point of view – not judge it, shape it up, argue with it or endorse it – I just want to understand.” If that is your attitude, the way that you are feeling about the relationship and the discussion, then it will not be necessary to verbalize that attitude. It will be apparent in your behavior.

Adapted from L. Robert Kohls

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