

SOS Détresse

Stay or leave again?

And if one day, we realise that things are not going well, that we have not found in the host country what we were looking for, that the place where we should be is not here, that our work and house do not suit us...Little by little we lose confidence and hope of realising the projects which were the reason for migrating in the first place. At that point, we may feel like we made a mistake in coming here. Thoughts crop up in our mind, such as *I wish someone would have told me what it would be like before I came here, I could have been better prepared or even, should I leave again?*

Having the courage to leave again

The feeling of not belonging in this place and the desire to go back to one's old life can become so strong that returning seems inevitable. It is not easy to accept that the solution is to go back. After so much effort and risk to get here, it is painful to be faced with a different reality than we hoped for. If the return is forced, it is done reluctantly. As our projects were not successful here, we can have the impression that we failed and thus feel ashamed. It is like having to start from scratch.

If the experience of migration has to end this way, this does not erase the courage which we showed by migrating, and should not at all be considered a defeat. It is normal to feel despair in the face of returning, but we are once again proving enormous courage by reconsidering our situation and making every effort to change it again.

Ending up feeling at home

For others, this calling into questioning can be temporary and overcome. If we overcome this crisis and doubts, we open ourselves up to the new culture. By learning the customs of the country, we feel less powerless and more competent. We can express ourselves more and more and learn how to better accept the practices of the new culture. What seemed like new before will slowly become more familiar. And by being more at ease in our interactions with the new environment, we also discover more pleasure in our experiences. The people we meet, and the friendships that may result from this will end up lessening the solitude. Of course, not all problems will be solved at the same time and certain issues will remain, but little by little we will conquer them by regaining our self-confidence.

It takes time, sometimes years, to learn to feel at home in the host country. By finding

a true balance thanks to work, place of living and a group of friends, we gain a new routine in the host country. It is not the surroundings that will change, but our attitude which allows us to appreciate our double belonging as an asset.

Dreaming of returning

Even though some people leave and say they will never return, for most people the idea of returning is always there. Also, faced with the disappointment of a different life than expected, many idealise the country left behind and aspire to return there. It is like a future consolation, an ultimate exit from troubles, or an imaginary refuge.

We feel a strong sense of nostalgia and recall the good times spent there. Certain people have the chance to slightly appease this nostalgia with regular holiday visits. But this return, strongly anticipated, can also be a disappointment as we realise that things have changed there too.