

# How Transitions Affect Mobile Families



**INTERNATIONAL  
FAMILY TRANSITIONS**

*Success and adventure in transition*

Tina L. Quick  
For AAS  
October, 2013

[TQuick@InternationalFamilyTransitions.com](mailto:TQuick@InternationalFamilyTransitions.com)

# Talking Points

---

- ❖ The impact of a globally mobile lifestyle.
- ❖ How children are affected by transitions.
- ❖ Issues affecting globally mobile families.
- ❖ Challenges facing you as parents raising children across cultures.

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Your Children are Unique

---

- ❖ Their life experiences are very different from someone who grows up in only one culture.
- ❖ Two Realities:
  - Cross-cultural world
  - Highly mobile world

*Success and adventure in transition*



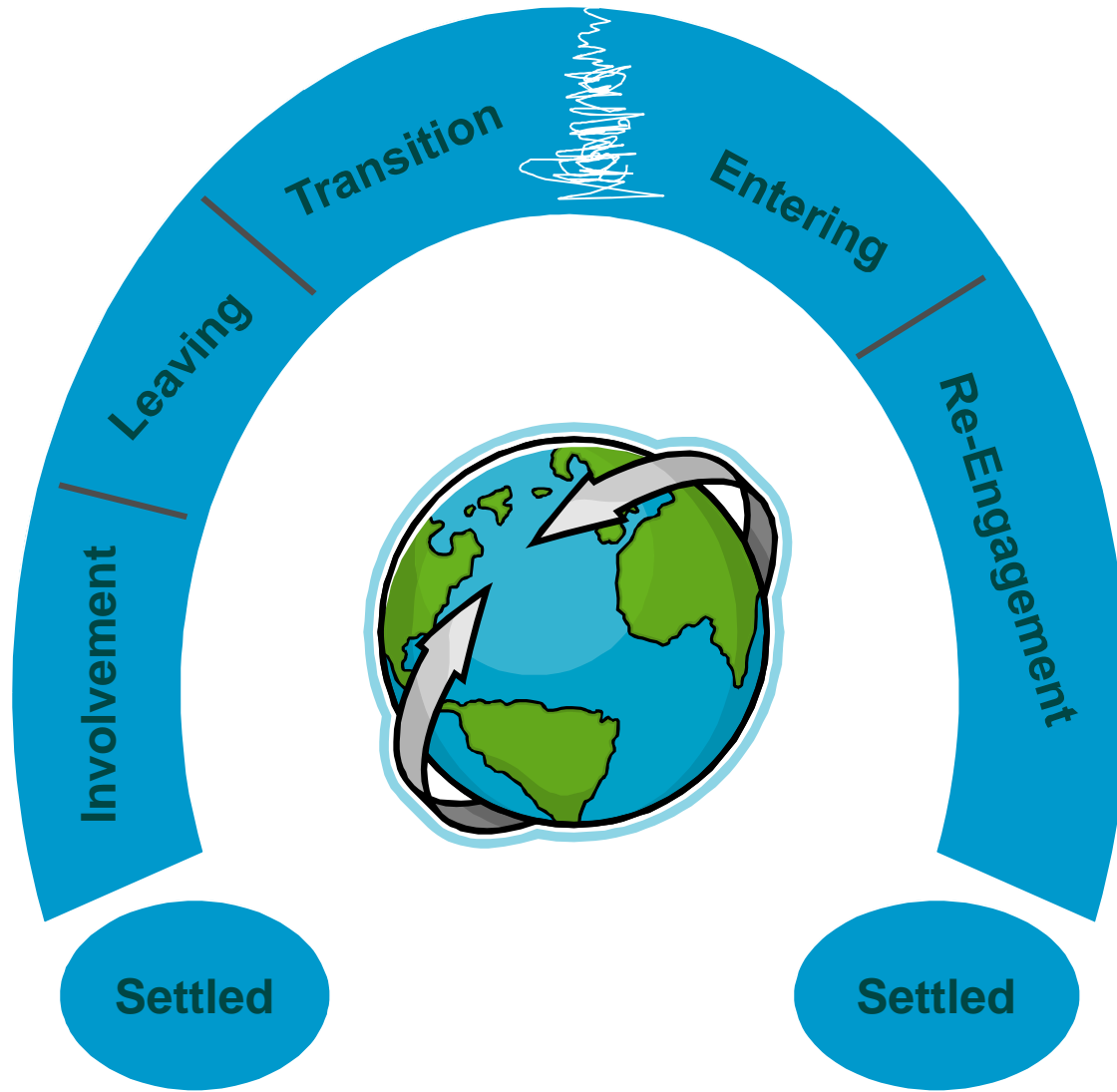
# Why Does Mobility Matter?

---

- ❖ What creates “high mobility” in an international lifestyle?
- ❖ Other factors that create “high mobility”.
- ❖ What is the result of “high mobility”?

*Success and adventure in transition*

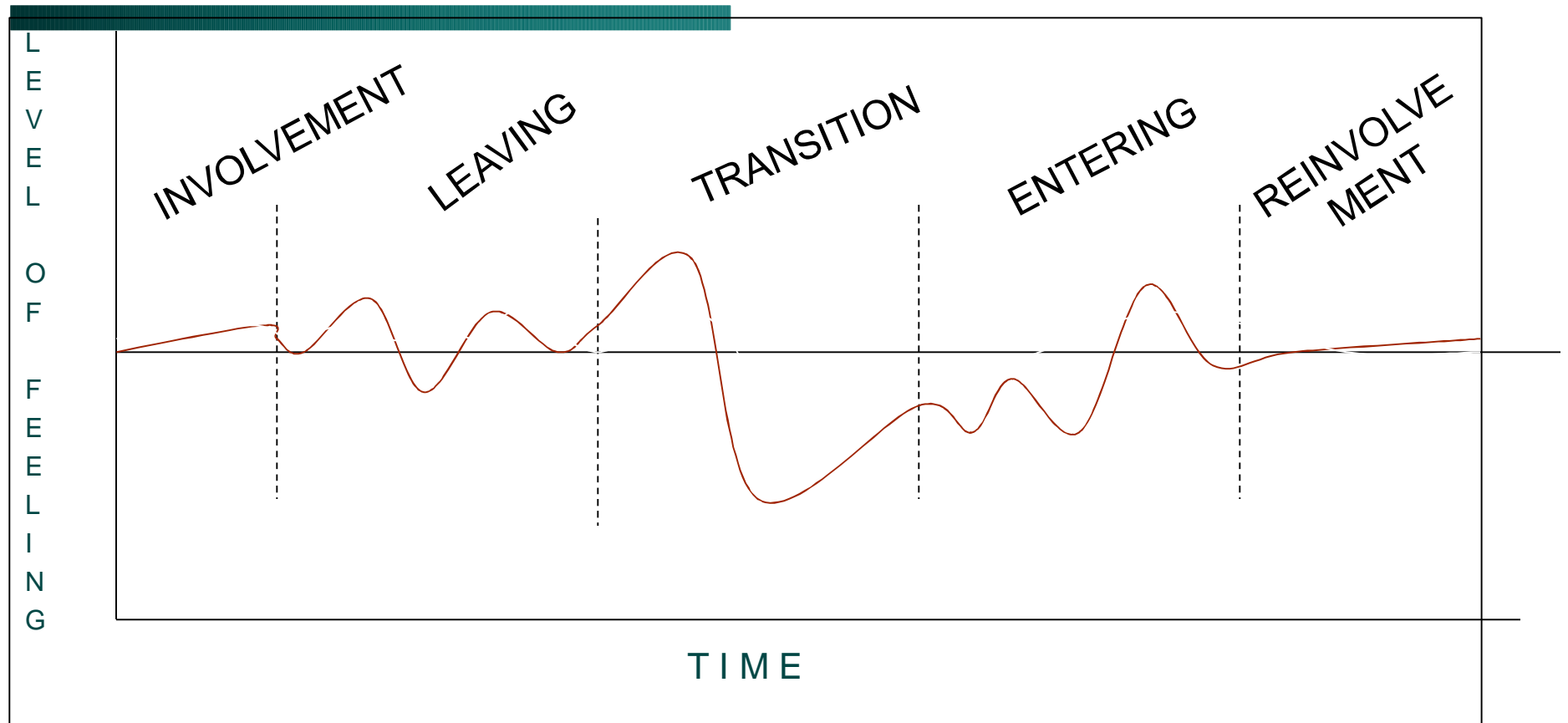




*Success and adventure in transition*



# Emotional Side of Transition



*Success and adventure in transition*



# Children's Reactions

---

- ❖ Children are amazingly resilient BUT...
- ❖ Acting out can occur:
  - **Toddlers**
    - Most easily moveable
    - May have delayed reactions
  - **School-age children**
    - Periods of anger
    - Need to have some ownership in the situation

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Culture Shock in Children

---

- ❖ Children go through it too, but differently.
- ❖ Recognize the symptoms
  - Toddlers:
    - Wetting the bed or pants after being toilet trained
    - Tantrums
    - Mood swings
    - Crying for no reason
    - Sleeplessness
    - Lack of appetite

*Success and adventure in transition*





# CS in Children (cont.)

## ❖ Older children and adolescents:

- Regressive behavior
- Recurring physical ailments and illnesses
- Crying, irritability, change in eating, sleeping, leisure activities
- Discipline problems at school
- Inability to make friends
- Inattention to homework
- Accident prone
- Not as outgoing and friendly as before

\*\*NB

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Family Culture Shock

---

- ❖ Every member of the family is going through it.
- ❖ May go through it at different times and stages. (3 Apples)
- ❖ Don't let children pick up your worries or discontent.
- ❖ Try to keep a positive attitude.
- ❖ May take a year or more to get through it.

*Success and adventure in transition*



# How Transitions Affect Children

---

❖ “Children are silent partners in relocation.”

*Robin Pascoe*

❖ Transitions work best when:

- people, including children, are informed,
- they know what they are getting into,
- they are reminded of their strengths.

❖ Children need their parents – at least one of them – even more so after a relocation.

❖ N.B. – Mothers – take care of yourselves also!

*Success and adventure in transition*



# How to Help Our Children

- ❖ Sacred items
- ❖ Familiar items, routines and rituals
- ❖ Typical rules of discipline may need to be changed at first.
- ❖ Indulge a bit in the beginning, especially with choices.
- ❖ Help them to make and meet friends.
- ❖ Give them the language

*Success and adventure in transition*



# How Global Mobility Affects Children

---

- ❖ They feel different
- ❖ Repeated separations and loss = grief
- ❖ Gravitate to others like themselves
- ❖ Rootlessness
- ❖ Restlessness
- ❖ Issues of adolescence and rebellion are delayed

*Success and adventure in transition*



# How Global Mobility Affects Children

---

- ❖ High mobility lifestyle – brings about a lot of loss (tangible and hidden)
- ❖ Loss = Grief

“For most TCK’s the collection of significant losses and separations before the end of adolescence is often more than most people experience in a lifetime.”

Pollock and Van Reken, Third  
Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds, 2009

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Grief

---

## ❖ Grief is:

- Multiple
- Simultaneous
- Intense
- Unresolved – Can show up later in life
- Lonely

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Reasons for Unresolved Grief

---

- ❖ Fear of Denying the Good
- ❖ Hidden losses
- ❖ Lack of Permission to Grieve
- ❖ Lack of Time to Process
- ❖ Lack of Comfort

*Success and adventure in transition*





# How to Help Our Children

---

- ❖ Say proper good-byes
  - Helps bring closure
- ❖ Allow them to grieve
  - Confront the losses – name them
  - Spend time with them
  - Grieve over them
  - Come to closure

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Leavers and Stayers

---

## ❖ Leavers – Build RAFT

- Reconciliation
- Affirmation
- Farewells
- Think and Talk destination

## ❖ Stayers – Build PIER

- Prepare to say good-bye
- Identify special memories and places
- Express feelings and engage in activities to meet new friends.
- Remain open to new friendships

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Expatriate Marital Stress

- ❖ Super parents don't exist.
- ❖ Dynamics may change
- ❖ Issues of the "trailing spouse"
- ❖ Dual career families

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Expatriate Marital Stress

- ❖ Everyone goes through challenges in moving their relationships.
- ❖ The stresses in the marriage from the move are common stresses in any marriage – just more apparent.
  - N.B. - counseling

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Restoring Work-Expat Life Harmony

---

- ❖ Share one meal together every day possible.
- ❖ Fully focused family time.
- ❖ Hold regular family meetings even if virtual.
- ❖ Call or send emails from the road.
- ❖ Get regular exercise, sleep and eat well.
- ❖ Give the family time to re-adjust when you've been away.
- ❖ Learn to listen.

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Resources for Parents and Children

---

- ❖ Third Culture Kids, David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken
- ❖ Raising Global Nomads, Robin Pascoe
- ❖ Home Keeps Moving, Heidi Sand-Hart
- ❖ A Broad Abroad, Robin Pascoe
- ❖ Homeward Bound, Robin Pascoe
- ❖ Expat Teens Talk, Pittman and Smit
- ❖ The Art of Coming Home, Craig Storti
- ❖ The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition, Tina Quick

*Success and adventure in transition*



# Tina Quick Contacts

- ❖ [www/internationalfamilytransitions.com](http://www/internationalfamilytransitions.com)
- ❖ [TQuick@internationalfamilytransitions.com](mailto:TQuick@internationalfamilytransitions.com)
- ❖ [tinaquick@comcast.net](mailto:tinaquick@comcast.net)



*Success and adventure in transition*



This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.  
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.