

1 Reverse culture shock can hit you with full force pretty soon after you arrive home from an adventurous life overseas. But it can also creep up on you piecemeal – little by little showing you the differences between your new self and your old friends, relatives and countrymen. You’ve grown and changed so much on your travels; you’ve lived in a foreign place where almost every day became an adventure. And then, once home, suddenly it feels like you’re stuck in a pool of quicksand. Cat Holladay, of ***The Compass is Calling***, and her whole family went through this process of reverse culture shock. However, they took drastic (but amazing) measures to overcome ***its*** impact.



quicksand

2 ‘When we moved to Finland in January 2017 for work, we represented the typical American family from an immensely competitive society where they had endeavored to live “the dream”. But that dream was always another day, year, paycheck away. No matter how hard we worked or how many times we achieved our goals for the year, there was always something else to strive for. Working 60-hour weeks was the norm and packed schedules a routine. Finland was a refreshing change of pace. Since ***then*** and for the first time in our lives, we were able to slow down and relax, enjoying the moment rather than living for what could be around the corner. We were more productive in less time and happier as a result. We travelled, worked, made friends and connected with our surroundings in meaningful ways.’



3 ‘Returning to the United States, our home, was a difficult transition. We jumped right back into our old habits. But something had changed inside us. We no longer enjoyed the monotonous regularity of being overworked. We couldn’t keep up with our overburdened schedules and lacked quality family time. We felt out of place and even depressed. What had seemed normal ***here*** before no longer held any appeal at all. In short, we were experiencing reverse culture shock.’



4 ‘This feeling was so overwhelming that we took some measures. After being home just three months, we decided to sell everything we owned, quit our jobs, pull our son out of preschool, buy a motor home so as to travel for a year and reconnect with our native country. No schedule, no commitments. Just living our life and finding our place in America. We have no idea exactly what the future holds, and that’s OK. We’ve already made progress in falling back in love with our home country. We’ve also decided that the typical American Dream is no longer our life goal ... and that’s OK, too.’

