



A HAPPY  
EXPAT



# A Happy Expat

A Quick Guide



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# About the Founder



## **Tanya Arler**

Speaker - Author - Mindset Coach  
Founder of A HAPPY EXPAT

I'm a seasoned expat spouse having lived in the USA, Belgium, Italy, Singapore, Japan and Sweden, raising two kids on the way.

In my 20-some years of expat living I've had highs and lows, but one thing is sure: Life was never boring. The friendships I've forged and the memories I've made are truly beyond my wildest dreams. Having said that, there've been times where it all felt too hard. What I've learned is that if you give it time, it will pass and life will open up to you again. Sometimes just a small change of perspective is all it takes.

I now dedicate my coaching to helping expat spouses find their footing in this crazy new world. Because really, once you get a hang of it, you too can become A Happy Expat.



@ahappyexpat



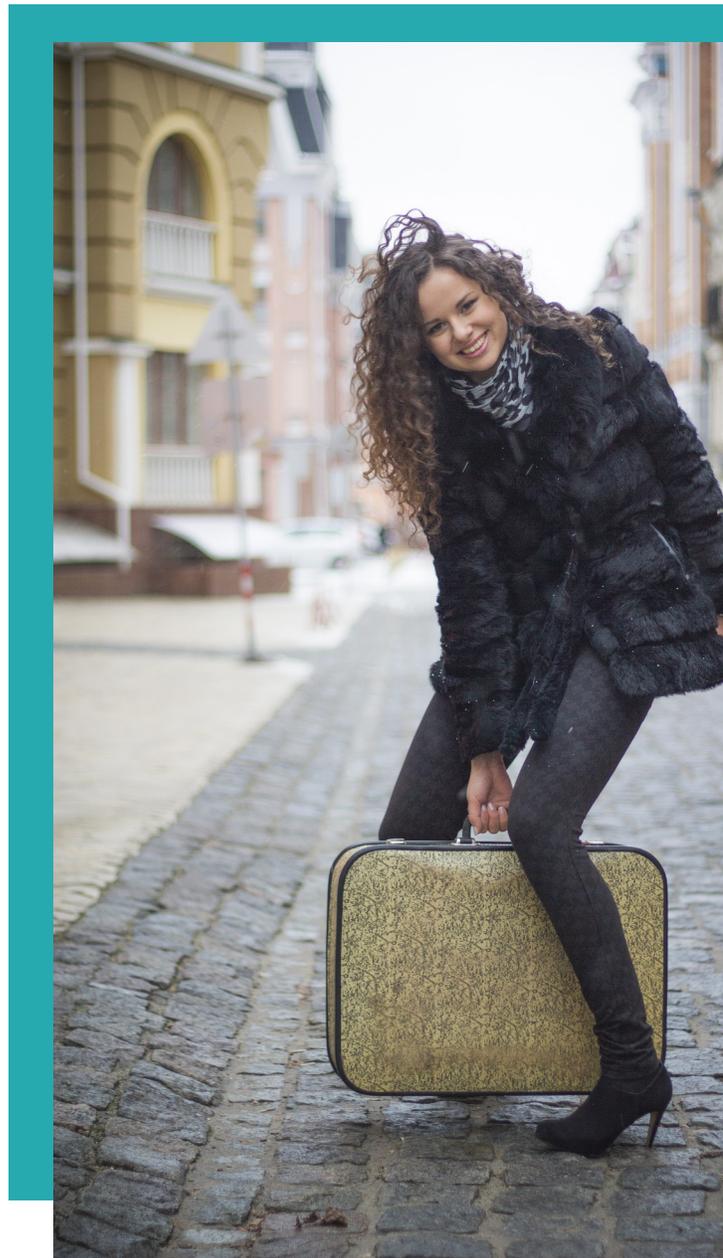
@tanyaarler



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# Introduction

Life as an expat can be one of the most rewarding adventures of your life. It's a unique opportunity see the world from a new perspective and have experiences that most people can only dream of.

From the outside looking in, it's easy to believe 'expats have it all' and certainly difficult to believe that there is anything to complain about.

The thing is this: Life is life. No matter where you are in the world or what your circumstances, you will have good and not so good times. Moving to a foreign culture doesn't change that and in many cases, it makes life that little bit more complicated to navigate.

Here I'd like to share my 3 keys to successful living as an expat spouse: Attitude, Expectations and Identity. As extra bonuses I'm including my top, top, top tip and some basic expat spouse realities.

I'd like to point out that life as an expat spouse is very different than being the working partner or child.

As the spouse, you're a stable pillar for the working partner and the emotional mainstay for your children at a time when they all need it most.

To boot, unlike the rest of the family who walk into a structured environment full of social opportunities and clear cut objectives, you've left your identity behind and have to rebuild everything; your home, your life, your support network...etc.

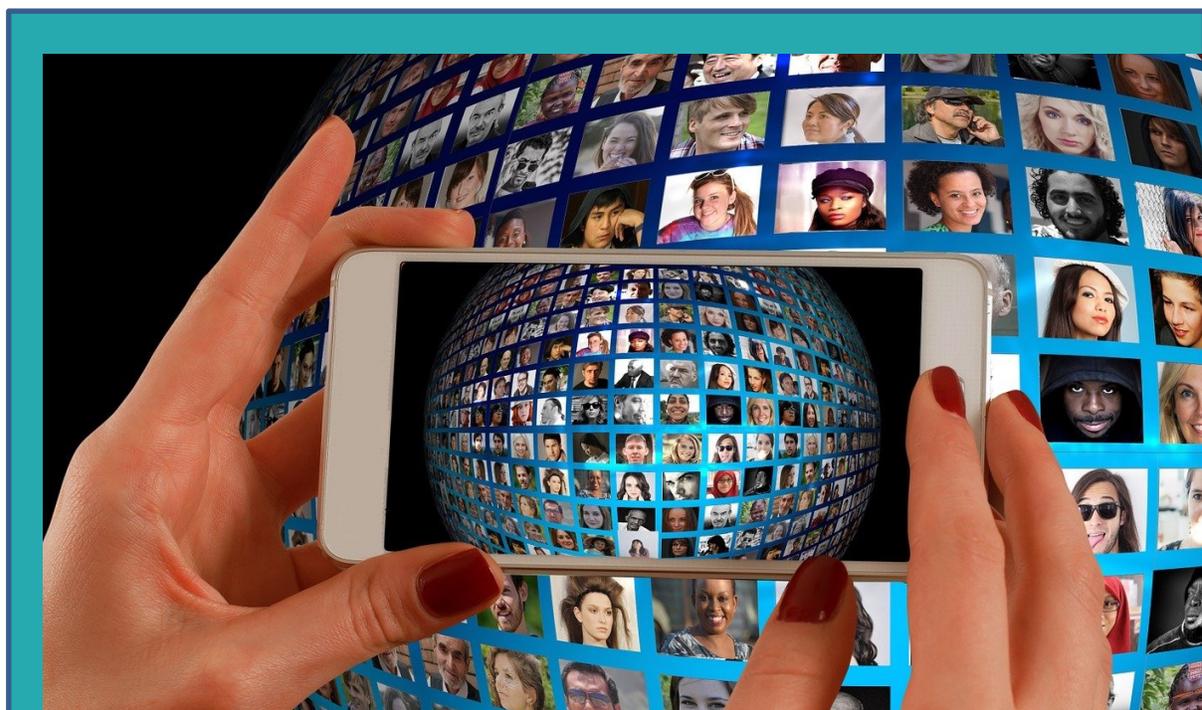
It also means you have the opportunity to become a whole new you!

I've experienced the spectrum of ups and downs and I wouldn't trade them for anything. I hope my insights will help you too, become...

A Happy Expat.



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# 1

## Attitude, Expectation & Identity

Framing these correctly  
can change everything.



# Attitude

- You *have* a positive attitude, or you wouldn't be here.
- But that doesn't mean you need to be 'happy' every day.
- So give yourself a break when it's all a bit much.
- And communicate the ups and downs to your family.

*"The challenges of adjusting are both different and greater for the expat spouse."*

- Dr. Yvonne McNulty

You're taking on a lot, this is a roller coaster, it's ok to have a bad day.

*You don't have to be the  
perpetual cheerleader.*



# Expectations

- Expectations are inevitable, our subconscious predicts patterns.
- Challenges will come from expectations you didn't realise you had.
- So when you feel anger, frustration, sadness... etc, ask yourself:

Is this situation wrong, or just not what I expected?

*"Expectation is the root of all heartache"*

- William Shakespeare

Learn to laugh when confronted with unmet expectations, knowing that it's just different, not wrong.

*Learn to identify expectations you didn't know you had.*







2

## My Top Tip

Practice your answer to the  
worst question ever.



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# What do you do?

- If someone asks this, there's no answer that can help them understand what being 'an expat spouse' entails.
- And if unprepared, it will drain your self-confidence.
- So prepare a short answer to this that makes you feel good about yourself.

*"I watch TV."*

*"I'm a stay-at-home parent"*

*"I'm looking for a job"*

*"I'm a domestic CEO"*

All of these answers (and more) are acceptable if they roll off your tongue. Something that will just move the conversation forward.

*Be prepared and make it  
short and sweet.*



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### 3

## Basic Expat Spouse Realities

My top 10 realities as an expat spouse, no matter where you live in the world.



# 10 Realities

- This can be hard at times,  
*So give yourself a break.*
- Your partner won't understand what you're going through,  
*So find an expat spouse friend that will.*
- It won't go 'to plan' because you couldn't have imagined 'this,'  
*So make a new plan.*
- No matter how positive you are, everyone will have bad days,  
*So be honest, you don't have to be the perpetual cheerleader.*
- You need to re-build your identity,  
*So look to replicate how you felt about your life, not what you did.*
- There will be a grieving process for all that you've left behind,  
*So allow yourself space to grieve, it's part of the deal.*
- Things in your new culture WILL frustrate you !  
*That doesn't mean it's wrong, just different than you expected.*
- Your kids'll have hard times no matter where they live,  
*So don't let your 'moving guilt' over-shadow your parenting.*
- You're working partner will travel a lot,  
*It's part of the deal... so make expat friends. They will understand*

## You Are Not Alone

*If you think this comes easy to others, I assure you, you're wrong. Every expat spouse goes through this one way or another. Put yourself out there and meet them! Expat friends are the biggest key to becoming*

**A Happy Expat.**

Was this helpful?

## Do you want more?

Get my book, **UNPACK - a guide to life as an expat spouse** which offers straightforward answers to all your questions.

*Start reading to discover time-tested advice that will transform your expat experience into a truly amazing adventure. It's all right here for you to enjoy, so start Unpacking!*



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