

A faint, light blue world map is centered on a dark blue background, serving as a backdrop for the text.

# **The Inbound Syndrome**

## **(Expatriate Bonding)**

**NAYEN Conference**  
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# The Inbound Syndrome

An almost universal tendency for Inbound students, and expatriates of any kind, to gather together and become very close when living in a foreign country

Often this can be to the detriment of their ability to immerse effectively into the host culture.

# The Inbound Syndrome



Syndrome:

A set of concurrent things  
(as emotions or actions) that  
usually form an identifiable  
pattern

# The Inbound Syndrome



**Expatriates:** People living for any period of time in another country

**Bonding:** The formation of a close human relationship, as between friends

# The Inbound Syndrome



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# Culture



An integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of any given society. It refers to the total way of life, including how people think, feel and behave.

# The Cultural Iceberg

Conscious  
behaviors

$1/8^{\text{th}}$  above the  
surface

Unconscious  
beliefs and  
values


$7/8^{\text{th}}$ s below  
the surface



# Culture Shock



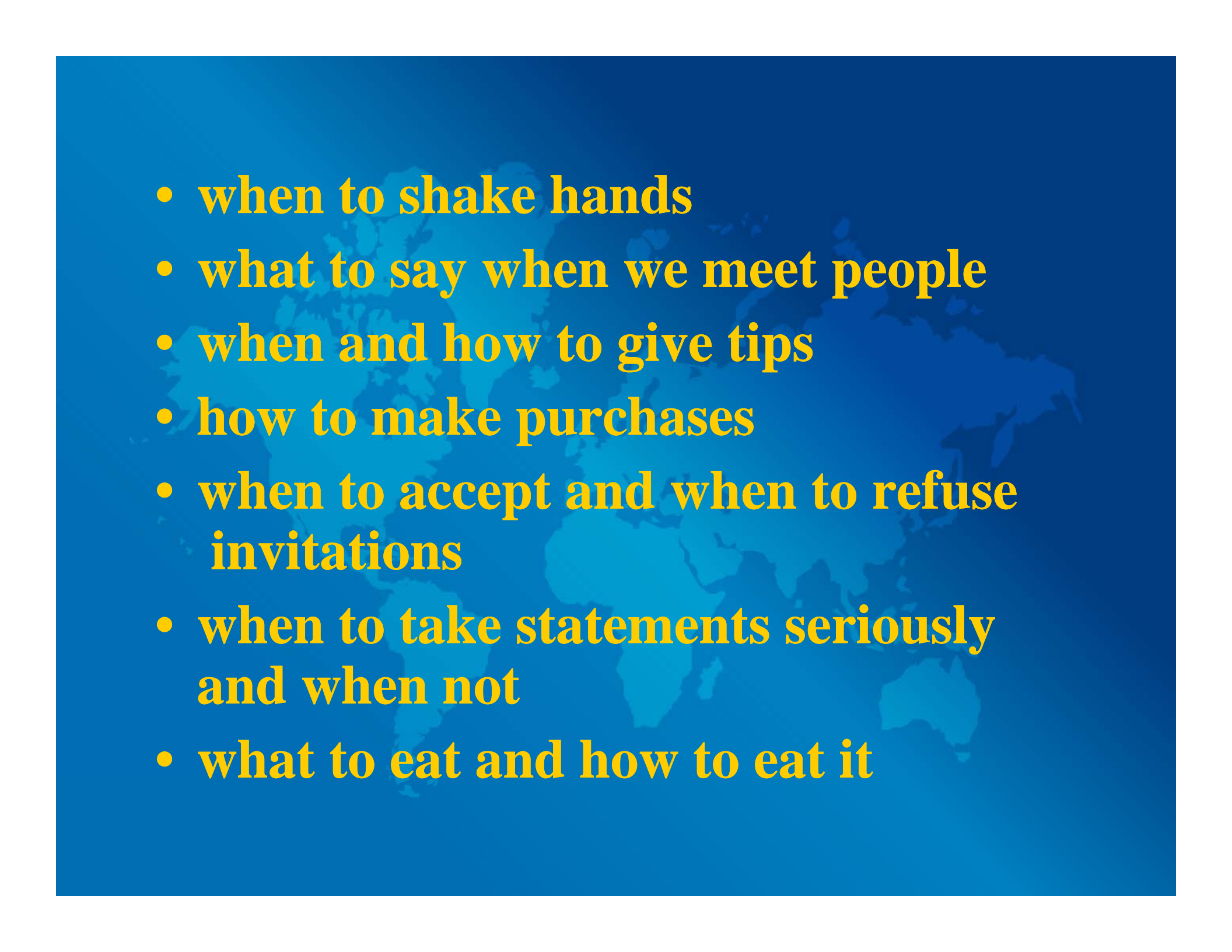
**The profound sense of disorientation and discomfort that comes with extended travel or living in a foreign culture markedly different from one's own.**

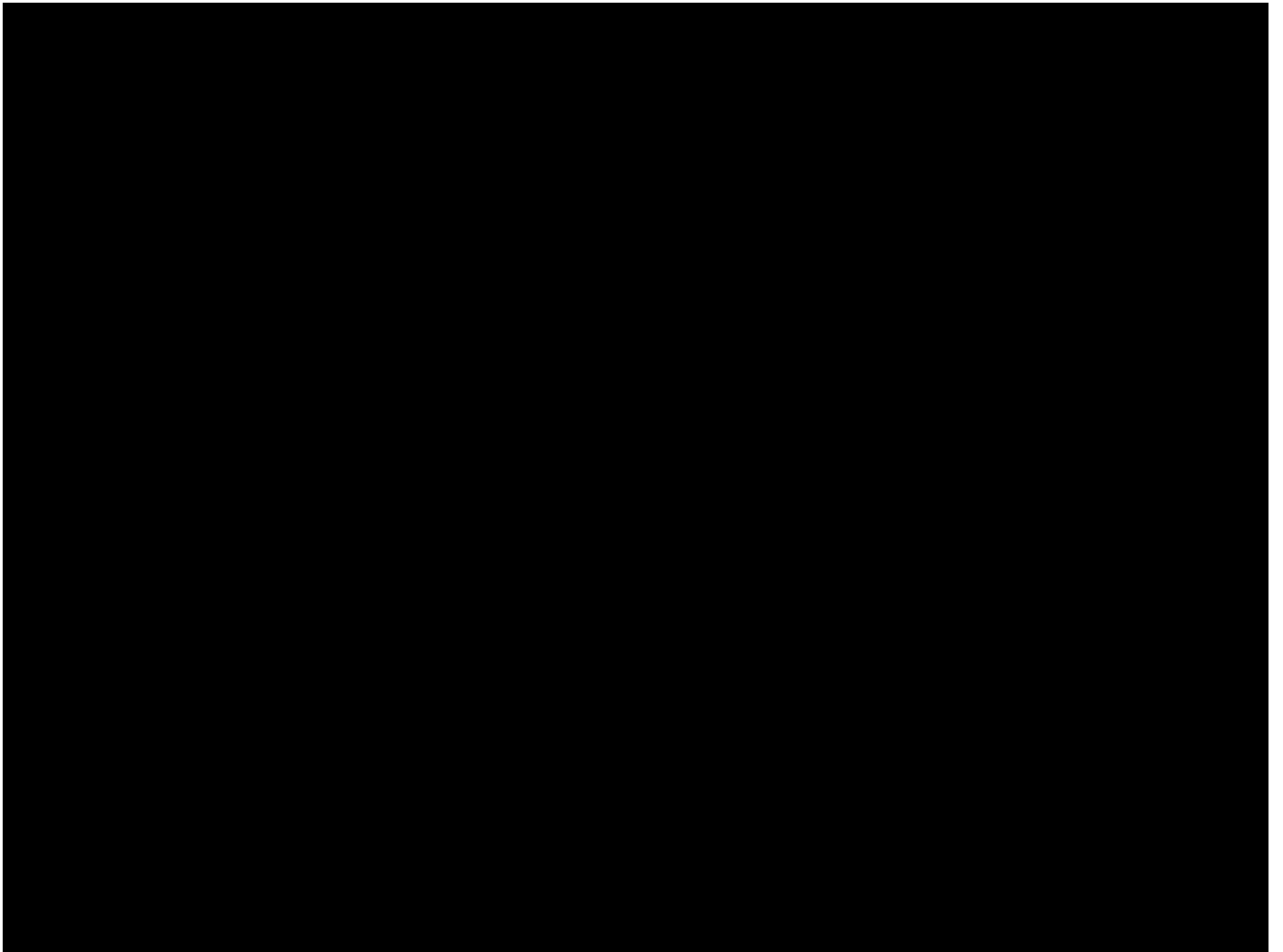


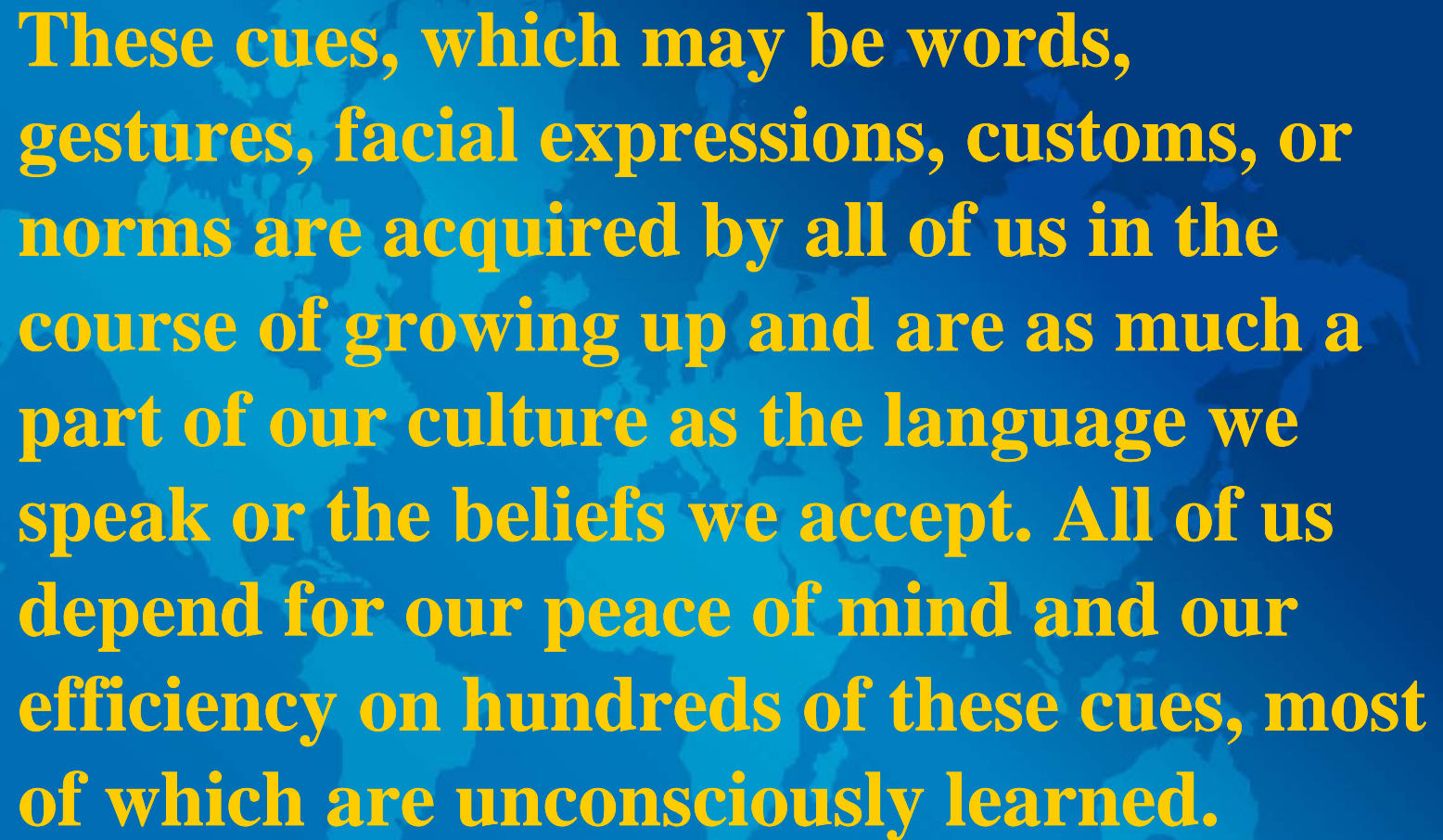
**Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social interaction.**



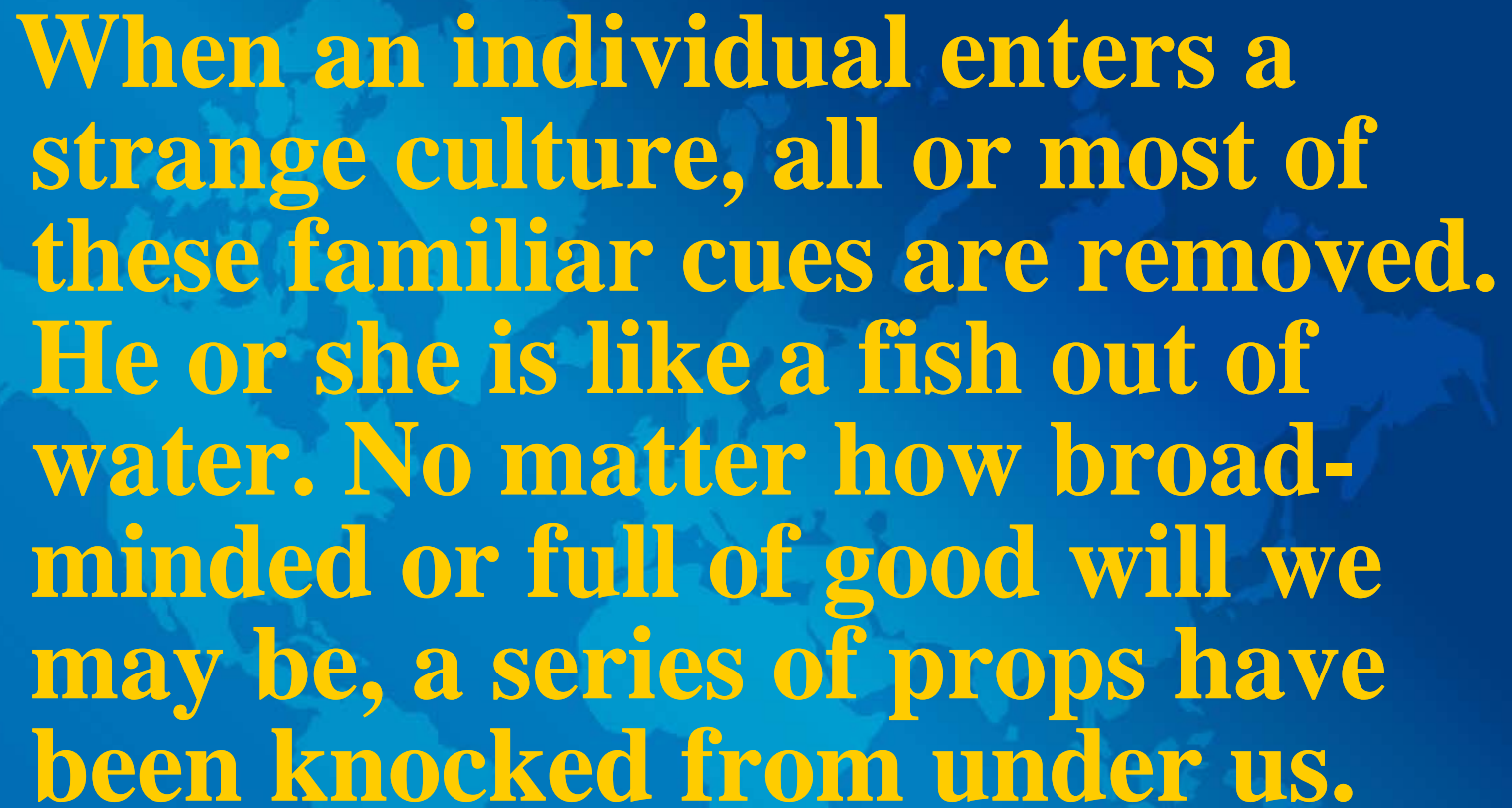
**These signs are the thousand  
and one ways in which we  
orient ourselves to the  
situations of daily life:**

- 
- **when to shake hands**
  - **what to say when we meet people**
  - **when and how to give tips**
  - **how to make purchases**
  - **when to accept and when to refuse invitations**
  - **when to take statements seriously and when not**
  - **what to eat and how to eat it**





**These cues, which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, or norms are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind and our efficiency on hundreds of these cues, most of which are unconsciously learned.**



**When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of these familiar cues are removed. He or she is like a fish out of water. No matter how broad-minded or full of good will we may be, a series of props have been knocked from under us.**



**The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.**

**Bucharest Hotel**

**Would you like to ride on your own ass?**

**Ad for donkey rides in Thailand**

From hastily written church bulletins:

The low self-esteem group will meet  
Thursday at 7:00 pm...

Please use the back door.

For those of you who have children  
and don't know it ...

**There is a nursery downstairs.**

**This is followed by a feeling of frustration and anxiety. People react to the frustration in much the same way. First they reject the environment which causes the discomfort: "the ways of the host country are bad because they make us feel bad."**

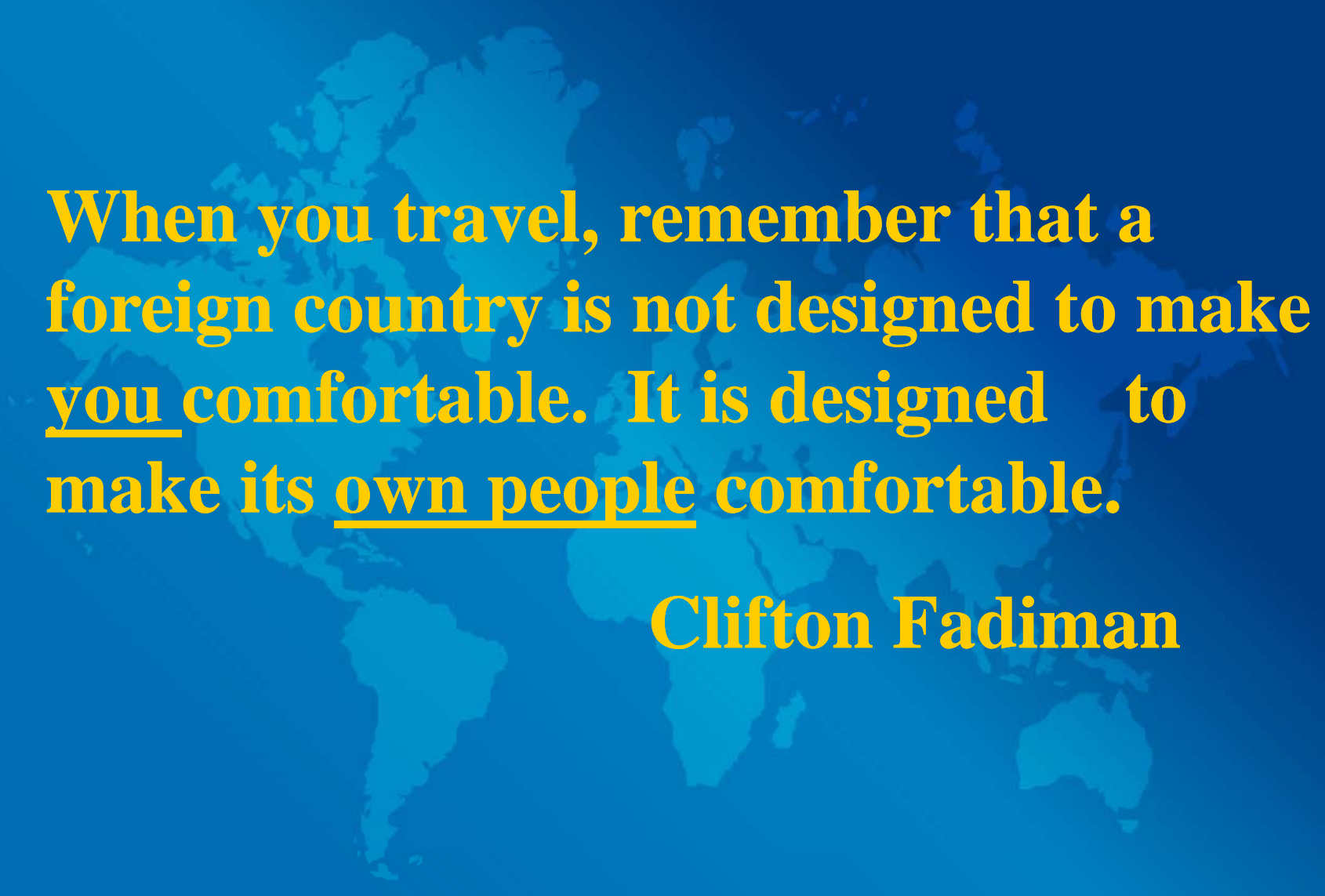
A world map is visible in the background, rendered in a lighter shade of blue against the darker blue background. The map shows the continents of North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia.

**"the ways of the host country are bad because they make us feel bad."**



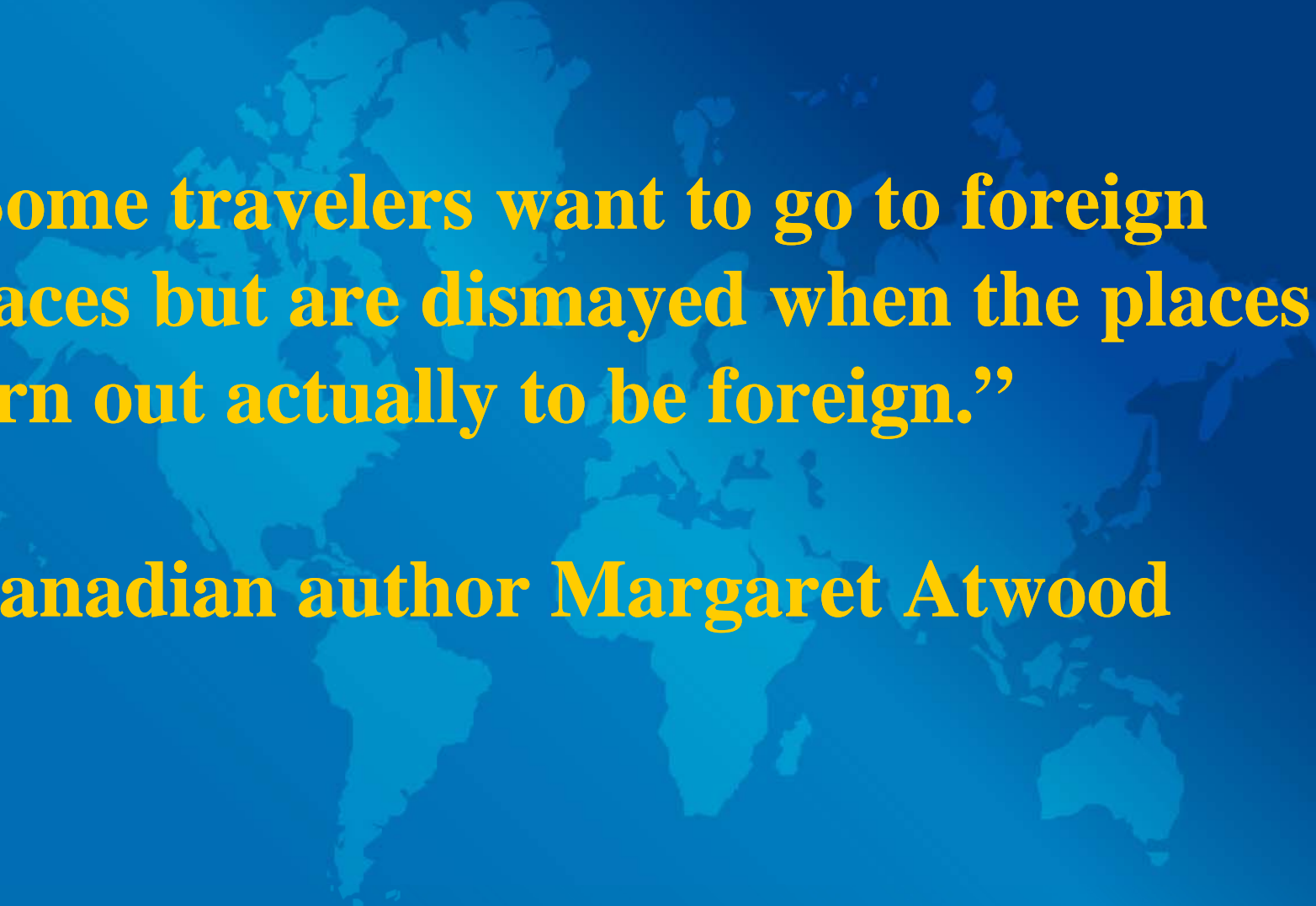
**“Culture Shock takes me  
outside my comfort zone”**

**Exchange student journal, 2 months**



**When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable.**

**Clifton Fadiman**



**“Some travelers want to go to foreign places but are dismayed when the places turn out actually to be foreign.”**

**Canadian author Margaret Atwood**

**So it is only natural that when confronted with all of these difficult differences, Inbounds will look for anything or anyone that will help them feel more comfortable. This can be a fellow countryman, but it can be and often is anyone from anyplace who is also a foreigner**

# **What Do Inbounds (and all expatriates) Have in Common?**

- **They are all from somewhere else**
- **They are all going through basically the same experience**
- **They are likely to be critical of similar things in the host culture**
- **They are very sympathetic to one another**
- **They feel “instant” acceptance**
- **For the most part, they all speak English**

# Stages of Culture Shock:



- **Initial enthusiasm and excitement**
- **Irritability and negativism**
- **Gradual adjustment and adaptation**
- **Integration and bi-culturalism**

# Stages of Culture Shock:

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**"the ways of the host country are bad because they make us feel bad."**

## Examples of Irritability and Negativism

- Why don't they ever hug or touch one another?
- Why do they always hug and touch one another?
- Why don't they make their street signs easier to read?
- If they mean "no" why don't they say "no"?
- Why don't they just tell me what something costs?
- Why can't anyone stand in line?
- Why do they drive so fast?
- Why do they need so much stuff? (material goods)
- Why don't they do something about their poor?
- Etc., etc., etc.



**If the easiest response to the  
Irritability and negativism stage is  
to find comfort with other Inbounds  
or electronically with friends and family  
at home, the student may get stuck going  
back and forth from stage one to two,  
back and forth**

# Stages of Culture Shock:

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  - Irritability and negativism 
- 
- Gradual adjustment and adaptation
  - Integration and bi-culturalism

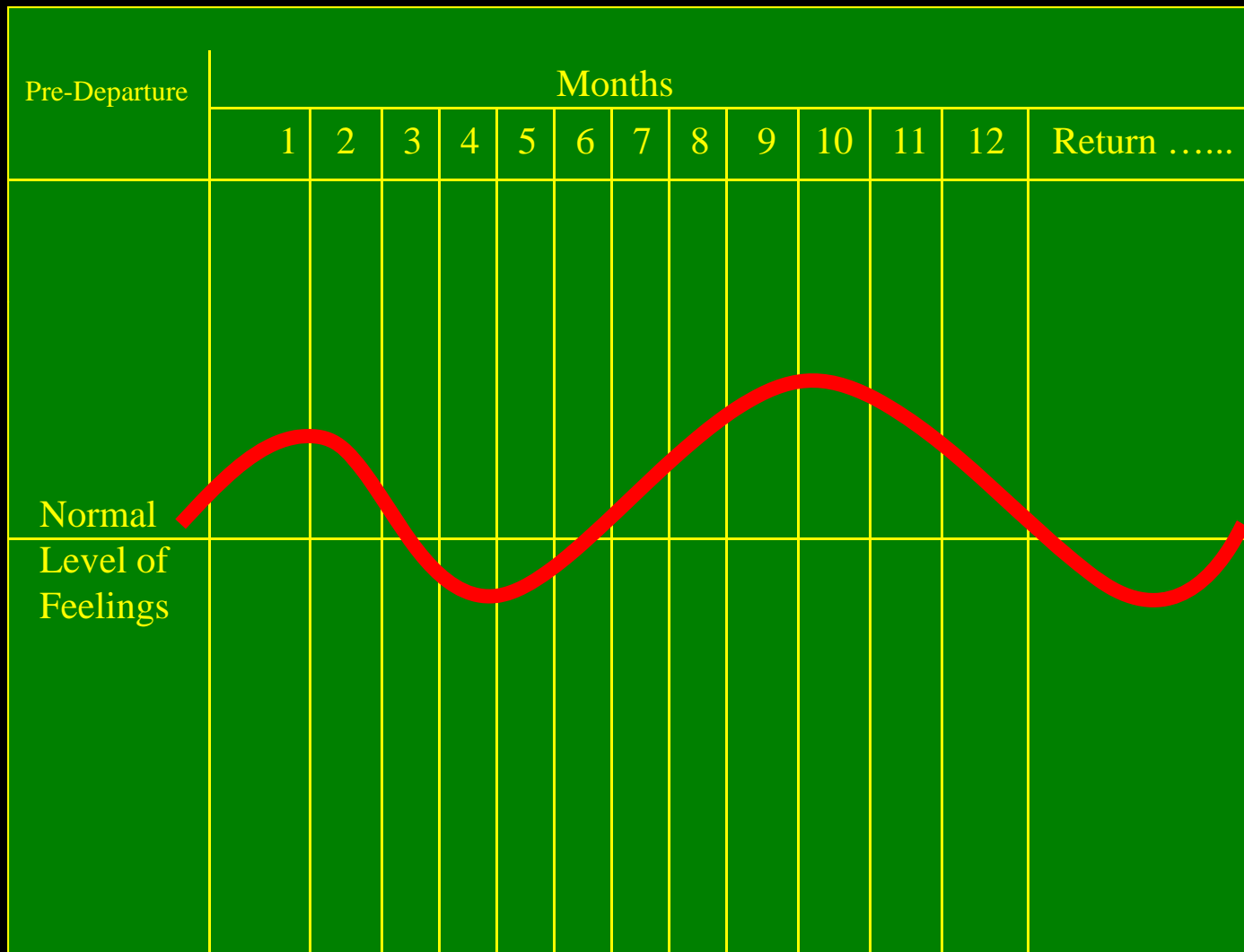
# Enculturation:

The successful adoption of the behavior patterns and customs of the surrounding culture.

(also called acculturation, immersion, assimilation, adaptation)

Rotary Youth Exchange

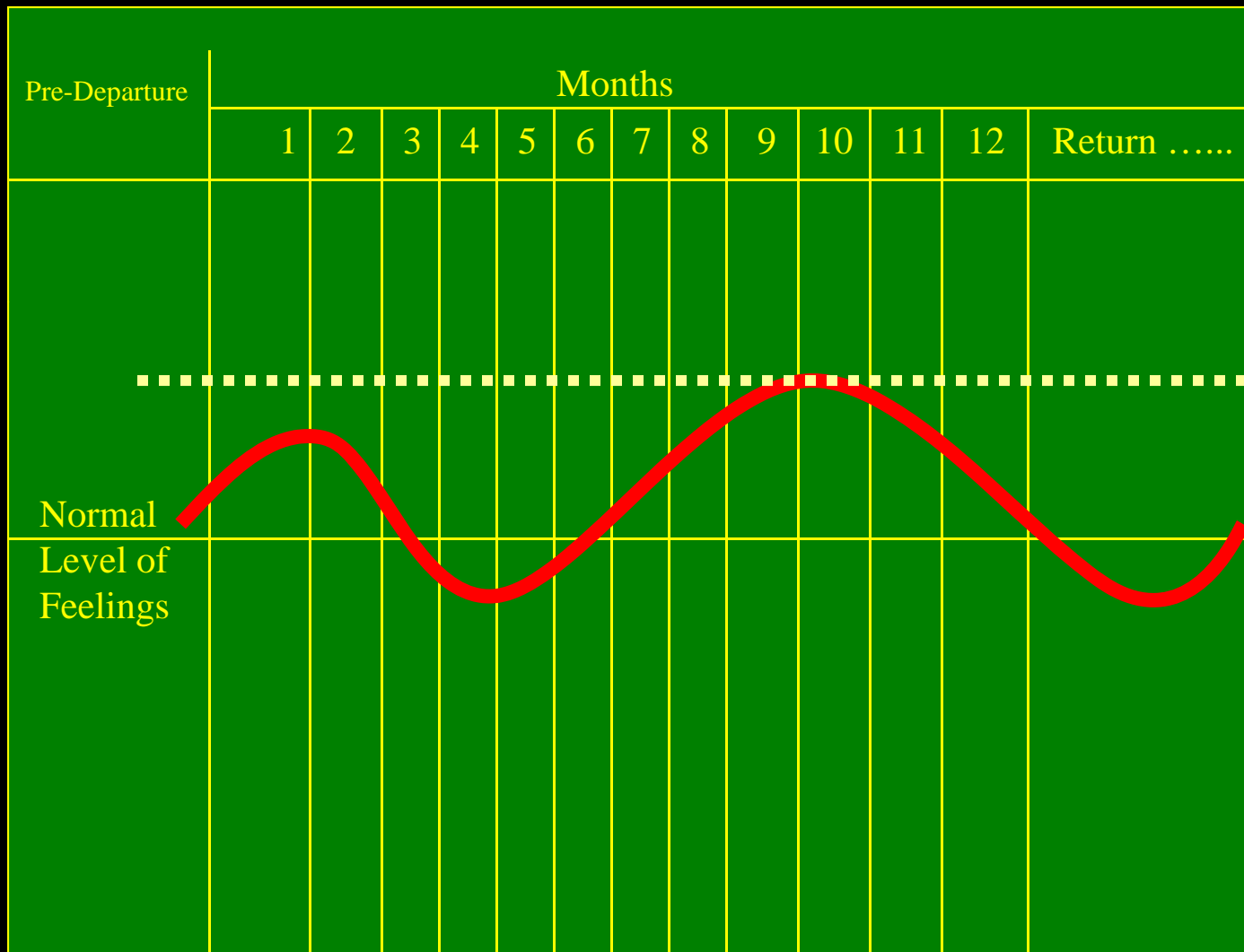
# Culture Shock Cycle




Adapted from a model by Robert Kohls

Rotary Youth Exchange

# Culture Shock Cycle



Adapted from a model by Robert Kohls



**So, under the stress of culture shock, it is very tempting to turn to other Inbounds, just as it is very tempting to turn to friends and family back home, for understanding and support**

**Equal to the Inbound Syndrome as a  
threat to quality exchanges is:**

**The Electronic Umbilical Cord**  
**Keeping in instant contact with family  
and friends back home**

## **Examples of how students manage the Inbound Syndrome:**

- **The student who insists that people speak in the host country language, even when very difficult**
- **The student who voluntarily restricts internet and text messaging to a few hours a week**
- **The student who first goes to host parents and local RYE officer with problems, rather than someone back home**

## **Examples of how students minimize the Inbound Syndrome:**

- **The student who volunteers in a local orphanage or other service project**
- **The student who speaks with other Inbounds in the host country language, rather than English**

# **Examples of how YEOs manage the Inbound Syndrome:**

- **Explain the Inbound Syndrome to students early in their stay**
- **Challenge them to voluntarily manage contact with other Inbounds**
- **Limit the number of Inbounds in any one club or school**

# **Examples of how YEOs minimize the Inbound Syndrome:**

- **Limit the number of Inbound gatherings**
- **Limit unofficial gathering of Inbounds**
- **Insist Inbounds speak the host country language at Inbound events**

# **Aren't these the things we tell students anyway?**

- **Sometimes we get caught up in the good feelings that come when Inbounds gather**
- **Sometimes we confuse a good time with a good experience**

**Remember WE can see the pattern ahead of time – the SYNDROME.**

**We know from experience it is likely to happen.**

**We can resist the temptation to satisfy our own need to feel good when we know it will lead to greater growth for the students**

# **Advantages of Inbound Bonding**

- 1. It really does promote international goodwill and understanding**
- 2. Inbounds can be support to one another and can give useful advice about adapting**
- 3. It is highly motivating and helps promote our program**

# **Advantages of Inbound Bonding**

- 4. Inbounds need to gather for orientations, tours and district conferences**
- 5. It makes everyone involved with the program feel good**

A world map is visible in the background, rendered in a lighter shade of blue against the darker blue background. The map shows the continents and is centered on the Atlantic Ocean.

**Inbound Bonding or the  
Inbound Syndrome cannot and  
should not be eliminated**

**It should be understood and  
managed**

A world map is faintly visible in the background, rendered in a lighter shade of blue than the overall background. The map shows the continents and oceans, providing a global context for the text.

# **Why is this so important?**

**In its extreme form, it can ruin an exchange**

**In moderation it can enrich an exchange**

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# **Why is this so important?**


**The students who understand and manage the Inbound Syndrome create the possibility of truly amazing, outstanding quality exchanges**

**But it takes a conscious effort and work**



# **Why is this so important?**

**Let's challenge our students to not just  
have a good exchange – but instead to  
have a great exchange**



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