Overcoming Homesickness

Homesickness, it’s universal. Psychologists call it “separation anxiety” and few people are immune. It is experienced by the kindergartner going off to school, as well as the businessperson starting a new job. Here are a few tips to help you through it now or in the future.

1. Admit that you have it. Much of what you know and can rely on is back home. Homesickness is a natural response to this sense of loss.

2. Talk about it with an older sibling or friend who has gone away from home. It takes strength to accept the fact that something is bothering you and to confront it.

3. Bring familiar items from home to your new location. Photos, plants, even stuffed animals help to give one a sense of continuity and ease the shock of a new environment.

4. Familiarize yourself with your new surroundings. Walk around. You will feel more in control if you know where buildings, classes, and services are.

5. Invite people along to explore. Making friends is a big step to alleviating homesickness.

6. Keep in touch with the people back home, but put a limit on telephoning. Write them reports of your activities and new experiences. Let them know you’d like to hear from them, too.

7. Plan a date to go home and make arrangements. This often helps curtail impulsive returns and keeps you focused on your goals in staying.

8. Examine your expectations. We’d all like to be popular, well-dressed, well-organized, well-adjusted. Well, we’re not. Setting a goal of perfection is the most predictable way of creating trouble for yourself. Laugh at your mistakes. You’re learning.

9. Seek new opportunities. As scary as it is to see all those people, all those classes, all those buildings, all those choices, they will provide opportunities to meet people who like what you like. Take classes that you’re interested in and get involved in your favorite activity, or try new ones.

10. Do something. Don’t wait for it to go away by itself. Buried problems often emerge later disguised as headaches, fatigue, illness, or lack of motivation.

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