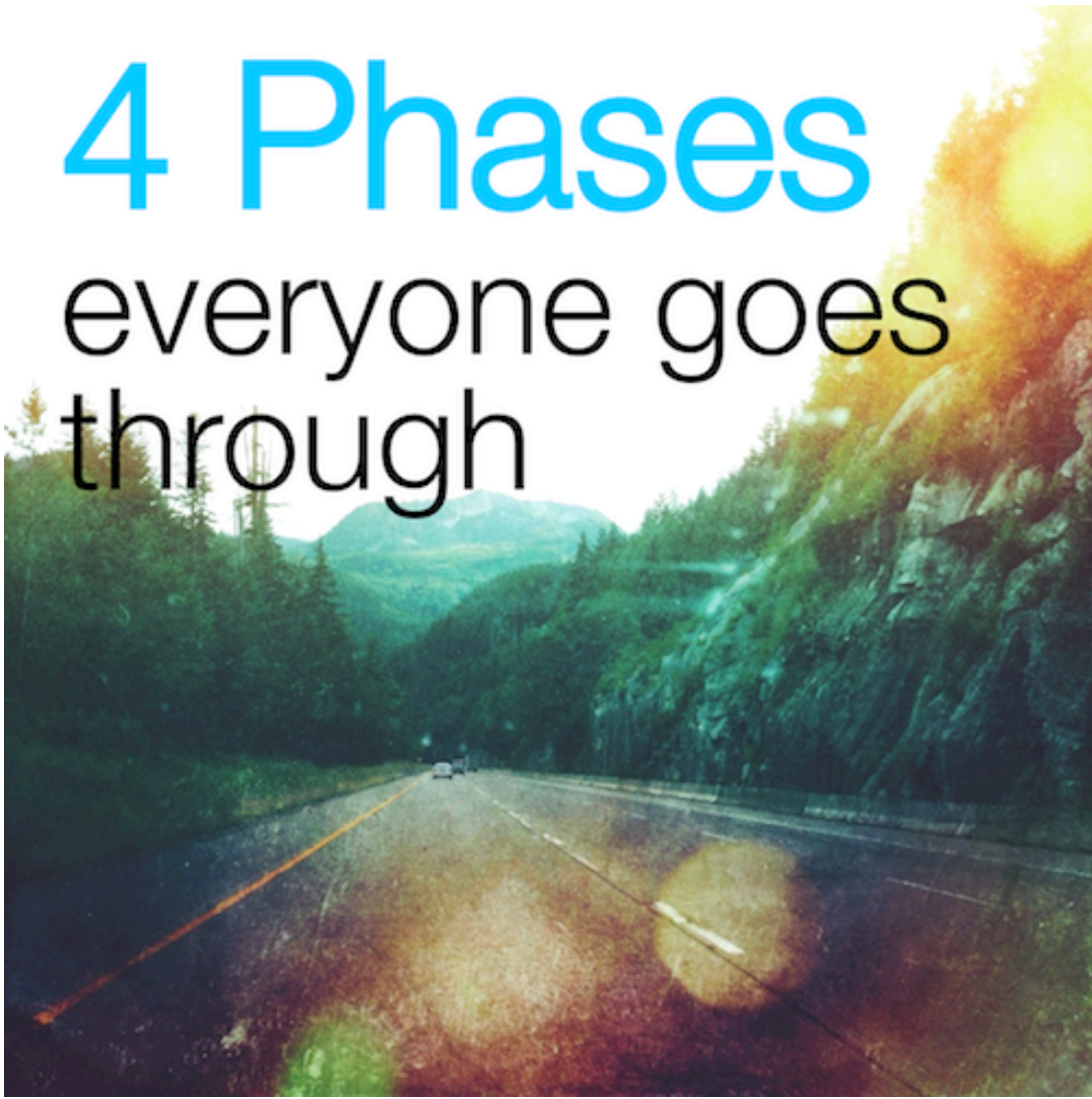


# 4 Phases

everyone goes  
through



We all say the same thing after we get home from a mission trip: **"I got more out of it than they did."** What we mean is that we were impacted by the mission trip even more than the people we set out to impact. What left the impact? No matter where you traveled, it's usually a combination of four elements: intense poverty, incredible joy, unique culture, and a powerful God.

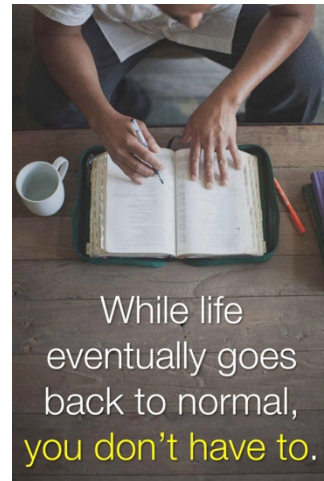
These elements create a unique, 4-phase **"re-entry"** experience after you get home from your trip. These phases are normal (and healthy); don't try to avoid them. Embrace the phases and know that they can grow your maturity and your faith.

## Phase 1: Exhaustion

Whew! You just arrived home after a two-week mission trip. You've traveled 5,000 miles, dug a well, painted a school, played with children, stayed up late, woken up early, and crossed 5 time zones.

Time for a nap.

Exhaustion is normal. In this phase it's important to give yourself a day or two to **recover from your trip** after you get home. If you can, stay home from school or work and give your mind and body a chance to catch up with all that you experienced.



While life eventually goes back to normal, you don't have to.

## Phase 2: Depression

After a day or two, exhaustion usually turns into depression. This depression usually stems from what you encountered abroad. Perhaps you encountered joy amidst poverty and peace despite difficult circumstances. No matter what you experienced, people at home "**just don't get it.**" You want to go back. The feeling that life is about to go "back to normal" is depressing.

In this phase it's important to remember that **while life eventually goes back to normal, you don't have to go back to normal.** The God that gave you those incredible feelings and experiences abroad is the **same God at home.**

## Phase 3: Cultural Frustration

Reality is setting in. People at home just aren't going to understand what you saw and experienced. It's frustrating. What's even more frustrating is that our culture doesn't seem to care. **No ones seems to care** about the orphans you visited in Nicaragua or safe drinking water for the tribe you visited in Ethiopia.

In this phase it's crucial to remember that **your trip opened your eyes, not everyone else's eyes.** You are responsible for the way that you live going forward, not everyone else. Hopefully, as you live a changed life in response to what you experienced, your friends and family **will notice and want to join** you. However, attempting to change everyone else as soon as you get home will only end in frustration and disappointment.

## Phase 4: Resolution

You are back at school or work, and things have finally settled down. In this phase you will resolve the tension you've experienced over the last couple of phases in **one of two ways**. You will either "forget" what God has revealed to you by **resuming your normal routine**, or you will **implement a change**.

It's vital to resist the urge to let yourself simply return to normal. You don't have to move to Africa or start a non-profit overnight, but you do need to do something. Remember those incredible experiences and feelings from your trip? **Don't let those go**. Let those motivate you to live differently.

## Live intentionally

**Living differently means living intentionally.** You don't have to be in a developing nation to live intentionally, either. What steps can you take to change the way you live at home, school, and work? Your mission trip was a **gift**. It would be a shame to waste it, wouldn't it? Pray constantly as you work your way through these four phases, and ask God to show you how He wants you to live intentionally going forward.

Pray constantly  
as you work your way  
through these four phases.

