



FIGT Connections

Where Research Comes to Life

Families in Global Transition

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Families in Global Transition leads the worldwide community in empowering families and those who serve them in global transition. FIGT is the premier advocate and educational resource for families, organizations and service providers.

REGISTER TODAY: FIGT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Can you believe the FIGT Annual Conference is right around the corner on March 22-23? [Secure your spot today and register!](#)

The 2013 FIGT Annual Conference will once again be held in the Washington DC Metro area at the [Silver Spring Civic Building](#) in Silver Spring, Maryland. [A block of rooms](#) have been reserved at the nearby Courtyard Marriott.

Schedule

Our conference will open on Friday, March 22 with our keynote speaker Pico Iyer, best-selling author, journalist and philosopher. The day will then be filled with our enriching concurrent sessions, sessions which have now been announced. [Click here](#) to learn more about topics, descriptions and the presenters themselves.

On Saturday, you will have the opportunity to hear from more concurrent session presenters, plenary panels, our world famous kitchen table conversations, and for the first time FIGT will be offering new and exciting Ignite Sessions (more information to come soon)!

[Click here](#) for the complete schedule.

Pre-Conference Workshops

For the first time ever, FIGT will be offering 5 pre-conference workshops that will offer specific professional development and educational opportunities for those who wish to participate in more in-depth opportunities. Pre-Conference Workshops will be offered on Wednesday, March 20 and Thursday, March 21. More details will be coming very soon, including information about our presenters, session descriptions, continuing educational credits offered, and registration

A TASTE OF WHAT'S TO COME...

Been searching for an original recipe lately? The FIGT Cookbook, Where is Home? is currently at the press and will be ready in time for an official launch at the FIGT Conference in March. All proceeds from the cookbook will go the Pollock Scholarship Fund. The Pollock Scholars are an integral part of the annual conference and help ensure the FIGT flame is carried forward to those new to expatriation and the relocation industry.

FIGT would like to thank International Professional Relationships, Inc.

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for their sponsorship of the cookbook. Their generous contribution will enable FIGT to offer more scholarships to those applying for this prestigious award.

[Click here](#) for pricing details for Where is Home?.

Here is a teaser recipe from the cookbook to try!

MELON GAZPACHO

Submitted by Dee Block

1 melon (cantaloupe)
4 tomatoes (you can also use a can of diced tomatoes)
8 leaves of basil (frozen or fresh)

Directions: Cut melon in small dice. Peel tomatoes and remove seeds. Put all the ingredients in a blender and mix to a smoothie-like consistency. Chill for one hour and serve immediately. If kept longer, the melon will hide the tomato taste and you will lose the great flavor.

BOOK REVIEW: "THE GLOBAL NOMADS GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY TRANSITION" BY TINA L. QUICK

By Nel Vandekerckhove

In general, guidebooks are not my favorite to review. While often written with the best intentions, to me these books have a tendency to overdo the how-to's and must-do's. Often after reading, little advice sticks. In view of the topic of this book, global nomads on their way to university, I was glad to make an exception. Transition of expat kids from high school to university - whether back in their 'passport country' or elsewhere once again - is a rockier path than generally presented, and therefore can use some extra attention.

The expat youngsters, or Third Culture Kids (TCKs) as they are addressed in this book, experience a double rite of passage when entering university. Not only are they moving from high school to university - leaving their family behind for a longer period of time, they do this in a country that is being referred to by their parents as 'their home country'. College years might indeed be "the best years of your life", but people tend to forget that the double shift from high school to university, and the process of repatriation/migration remains a challenge, even for Third Culture Kids who have lived in multiple countries before they reach the age of eighteen.

Tina Quick does an excellent job in addressing this matter and the possible hiccups for TCKs when they decide to repatriate or expatriate to attend university. The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition is a very lucid, well-written work that offers a detailed overview of the different stages of the 'transition cycle' of youngsters and their parents from the moment the TCKid decides to leave and settle in the 'home country'. In chapter one, the author addresses the Third Culture kid phenomenon and the issue of belonging TCKs might feel when relating to their peers who have not lived abroad. In chapters 2 to 6, each stage of the transition cycle is discussed in detail. Catchy titles such as 'Itchy feet to dragging feet' or 'Fish out of Water' grab the readers' attention and straight away make them reflect on these issues. The second part of the book (chapter 7 till chapter 10) is set up as a practical guide on how to cope with mental and physical distress related to this transition process. For instance, how can the TCKs set boundaries with regard to drugs and alcohol, take care of their health and deal with the campus life abroad? In the last chapter (chapter 11), Quick addresses the parents to help them understand the struggle of their TCK offspring and the ways they can provide help and support. Being a mother of three college-aged TCK daughters, the author knows from first hand experience that often TCK parents are only too grateful for some tips and advice on this transition process.

One of the major strengths of this book, are the frequent use of real-life examples. The testimonial of Marie, an American/British TCK who lived most of her childhood in Switzerland, helps bring the matter alive and leads you to make comparisons with your own expat experiences. In that regard, the book is not just appropriate for TCKs and their parents at the eve of making the university transition. It is also insightful for everyone who lives or is thinking about living abroad to frame their own experiences or those of their (future) TCKids. A must read for sure!

Nel Vandekerckhove is a Belgian expat, who moved to Amsterdam a few years ago. She lectures at the University of Amsterdam, Department of Political Science. At this international hot spot, she deals with Third Culture Kids on an everyday basis. A next move might turn her into a global nomad herself. In her research, she focuses on identity politics, the issue of belonging and the imagining of home amongst Asian migrants.

SOCIAL BROKERAGE AND THE EFFERVESCENCE OF A LIFE IN TRANSITION

By Mary Margaret Herman

In a recent [post](#) on the Harvard Business Review blog, Grant McCracken wrote, after all, everyone in a homogeneous social world tends to know the same things. Interacting inside these worlds confirms this knowledge. It is when we interact outside the silo, with people with whom we have 'weak ties,' that good things happen. We effervesce.

The post, and this quote in particular, bring forth thought regarding the essence of richness in the identities of transient individuals and their propensity for brokering relationships between people, cultures, and, metaphorically speaking, worlds even.

The wealth of networks and the power of social capital has always been a hot topic in the realm of business. Subsequently, the birth of social media has caused this conversation to explode. Network expansion has meant something entirely different online as we are able to engage with so many more people than we had imagined. It has also made it acceptable for a complete stranger to "follow" you, but I digress. Everyone has a network and everyone has a network that is expanding, and globally at that. (You can measure your online influence with sites like [Klout](#).) So, what makes globally transient people different?

As the cultural diplomats that we are, we translate and relate experience through the knowledge we share, the food we serve, the cultural artifacts we display, and so much more. We simulate the experience for others in the form of brokerage. We are negotiating the experience for others and acting as a cultural agent. There are many of us who have sought to do this through our work, but many of us do this for the pure pleasure of it. There is value in creating a non-siloed environment, where diverse perspectives are shared.

Now, to go back to the quote, there are moments in sharing these relics, tastes, smells, sounds, and stories, when we do not speak of the 'weak ties' that may have initially sparked our connection with these cultural symbols. However, it is the 'weak ties,' as McCracken says, that cause good things to happen. We celebrate diversity, yet we may not appreciate the adversity.

In an article called "Ecstasy Without Agony Is Baloney," William H. Blanchard wrote, "...one does not go in search of the holy grail of personal fulfillment with full immunity from the dragons along the way. If the individual is really in search of awareness, he must be prepared for an ego-shattering experience in which there is genuine danger. One does not achieve great rewards without taking great risks."

If what Blanchard and McCracken say is true, then it is the adversity that one faces in these global transitions which is truly of value. The adversity is what allows us to create, relate, and inform within our environments. The networks of socially mobile people are those born out of substantive experiences and they include individuals one would never have imagined meeting. Consequently, as social networks go, these are some of the most fascinating... the most effervescent.