

ReEntry 101 - Reflection on Community / Self
Adapted from Dr. Antonios Finitsis, Pacific Lutheran University

PURPOSE:

Studying away is perhaps the single most transformative decision of your college career. In turn, it has the potential to completely reshape one's understanding of community, self, and how the two fit together. This exercise asks you to ponder how you currently understand each of these constructs; it is most useful if completed *both* before and after one's stint abroad. Consider pairing this resource with the related "Value Cards" activity.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1) What is your community/the place where you belong? What makes you feel at home there?

Why do you think you feel at home there? (The answer "I do not know" is not acceptable)

2) Who do you consider an outsider to your community? What makes him/her an outsider?

Why do you think about that person in that way? (The answer "I do not know" is not acceptable)

3) What is one issue you consider worth fighting and dying over?

Why do you think that this issue is so important to you? (The answer "I do not know" is not acceptable)

4) In terms of personal values, what is one value that you would have difficulty compromising about?

Why do you think that this value is significant to you? (The answer "I do not know" is not acceptable)

5) Please rank in order of personal importance the following categories/issues: Gender, Religion, Mortality, Self-Sacrifice, Nationality, Race, Social-Justice.

DEBRIEF / QUESTIONS:

Sojourners are often self-aware of having changed significantly during their experience abroad, but this change is tough to put into words, especially when it is related to ideologies connected with one's community and her/his self. We hope that this exercise encourages you to better understand and communicate these changes. Additionally, one might contemplate the characteristics and feelings of being an "outsider" themselves, and accordingly, integrating into a new community during the study aboard process. Below are some additional questions to consider:

Ideally you will have complete this exercise both prior to departing and after returning from your sojourn. Is there any overlap between your answers beforehand and your answers now? Are there distinct differences, and if so, what specifically might have accounted for these differences?

If you could add one more "category/issue" to be ranked in Question 5, what would it be and why?