

Handling Work Pressures

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Expatriates working in Gulf countries face a challenge in handling work and peer pressures. Lower and middle management professionals working abroad often become victims of such pressures. However, the perception of their relatives back home is “Life is cool abroad”.

For example, in a developing country, the head of a family may have to bother about several aspects including electricity, water, income tax, house tax payments, school fees of children, health care of parents and family members, social visits to attend marriages and other functions, participating in festivals and other community gatherings. Apart from the commitment to work, travel to and fro the work place, indirect pressures include traffic jams, pollution and the crowd everywhere.

When relatives of these expatriates visit them during summer vacation or other pleasure trips they see a different picture altogether. They get a fantastic feeling as most of the bill payments happen online, not much of traffic on the roads, most of the groceries and home needs are addressed under one roof by hypermarkets, 5-days working a week, furnished apartments and probably a car for everybody.

However, often these people fail to notice that the work pressures are more or less same whether somebody is working abroad or back home. Back home the problems at work may seem lesser in proportion compared to the indirect pressures one faces due to the country's economy, population and competition.

We all would have heard a story in our childhood. How will you make a line smaller without erasing it? Draw a bigger line next to it. It is as simple as that. First line which was made to look smaller is the work pressure. The bigger line next to it is the non-work pressures a man has to face in his country.

However, in Gulf countries, there is only one line. That is the work pressure. Traffic jam, health care, children's education, bill payment issues are totally removed. Though it looks much better than the situation at home country, this often becomes a cause of worry for professionals.

Let us see the mechanisms to come out of such pressures. These mechanisms are not limited to people living in Gulf countries only. Expatriates from developing countries working in developed countries may apply these in their lives to reduce pressures.

In professional front you may practice the following:

- Be transparent with your peers and seniors.
- Commit only what you can deliver, deliver what you have committed; if there is any deviation due to external factors update your customers and seniors.
- Avoid backbiting about your colleagues or seniors or the management.
- Do not limit your friend circles to office colleagues only; this will greatly reduce discussions again about your work after office hours; meet people from other circles.
- Avoid talking bad about the efficiency of others; to err is human, if your colleague does a mistake, you may do the same tomorrow. So do not use it as an opportunity to score against your colleague.

In personal front you may practice the following:

- Do not over project about your income to your relatives and friends back home; remember it always back fires. When you are in need of help, you may not get the same because of your bragging.
- Do not restrict your friendship only to the community or nationality you belong to. Develop association with other nationalities. Include the citizens of the country where you work. This greatly improves the cultural exchange and helps you get closer to the people.
- Invite friends from other communities and nationalities; do not restrict your family get together only among your closed group.
- Invest wisely; as overseas job tenures are normally short-term, you need to balance between your life style here and the future when you return to your home country. This will tremendously reduce your financial pressures. You have choice whether to live like a king here and go back home as a pauper.
- You do not need to be transparent about your investments, savings and property purchases among your group. This often creates insecurity, jealousy and distance among your friends.
- Even during casual get-togethers avoid bad-mouthing about your company, colleagues or friends. Talk as much positive about your friends, company and people. It may or may not help you, but will never harm you for sure.
- Respect the culture, religion, beliefs and practices of the country you work in. You may have a different opinion about what is being preached and practiced. But remember, this is the country that is feeding you and your family. Please be grateful to the country that is sheltering you. As much you are contributing to this country's growth and development, this country is paying back to you as well.

Pressures are often created by us. They do not come from outside. Simplicity, honesty and transparency will keep you happy. Live, Love and Laugh, you may never need any medication to reduce your pressures.

~Mohan Krishnamurthy