

**M**aggie Jade is a policy writer and communications student from Queensland who enjoys giving impromptu tours of her new hometown to obliging friends and relatives. She shares a little of what she's learnt about transitions.

You learn a lot about yourself at your 21st birthday party. Just when all the baby pictures have been put away, the music fades and you nervously wait for your friends take centre stage ... ready to reveal a little-known fact or two about the real you. Fortunately, I got off pretty easy that night ... not too many skeletons in my ultra-organised closet. Along with jests about my supernatural spring-cleaning abilities came a welcome reminder about my fascination with places I'd never been and experiences I'd never had.

My interest in the unknown could be explained by the fact that my life up until that point had been lived in the same house, on the same pocket of farmland. As grateful as I was for the safe haven that my childhood home (literally among the gum trees) offered, I was keen to discover what was waiting for me beyond its familiar borders.

The moment I'd been waiting for came soon enough. After graduating from uni I was all packed and on my way to a city I'd never seen. What amazed me most was how smoothly the wheels were set in motion. There were no lightning bolt signs or restless nights of indecision – it was simply an open door, with no reason for me to ignore it or try to pull it shut. Invitation accepted!

**When we treat every opportunity as an invitation to stretch ourselves, we create space in our hearts for change and give ourselves room to grow into the great plans God has for us.**

Something remarkable happens when we take that first step on an unfamiliar path, something delightfully childlike and exciting – we reignite our sense of wonder at the world, and everything in it that is greater than ourselves.



**Six steps for surviving, and thriving, during transitions.**

But this doesn't mean that we should overlook the finer details along the way, or expect life to go on as normal when we arrive at the next stop on our map. Whatever the shift may be – leaving home, changing careers, starting uni – there are plenty of things we can do to engage with the process, to reorient ourselves to God and make the most of what He has placed within our reach. Here are my six steps for surviving, and thriving, in a transition:

## **1 CREATE ROOM**

To really immerse yourself in a new environment or lifestyle, you need to live lightly and freely. If your calendar is brimming with social obligations – give yourself permission to be selective about what networks you want to invest in. If your rock-climbing gear will just end up in storage for the next few years – sell it or give it away. The cost of keeping the excess may far outweigh the loss of letting it go. Think of it as an investment in your present – a commitment to create room for another adventure. You won't look back.

## **2 INVEST IN THE MOMENT**

To truly thrive in a new season and settle in quickly, you need to be freed up financially to enjoy the journey. Avoid being so budget-conscious that you can't treat yourself to the priceless experiences that will make you cherish the change (like a trip to the theatre or an art class). Factor in some quality time to recharge and get a fresh perspective, too. You'll be richer for it.

## **3 DO YOUR RESEARCH**

Navigating a major life transition is the perfect opportunity to situate yourself in a community that will inspire you to live excellently – so make the most of it and do your homework. If you are contemplating a new place to live, work or study, ask yourself: is the area in a public transport hotspot or cultural hub? Will it connect me with people of character and vision? Can I picture myself serving in a church nearby? Skip the research and the road to success can be an uphill battle.



*SOMETHING REMARKABLE HAPPENS WHEN WE TAKE THAT FIRST STEP ON AN UNFAMILIAR PATH, SOMETHING DELIGHTFULLY CHILDLIKE AND EXCITING...*

#### **4 CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE**

If your next season involves a new location, checking out all the local attractions around town may be high on your to-do list. But they won't endear you to a new place as much as the hidden gems you find on the road less travelled. Set aside the maps and create some history of your own. When you happen upon that quirky coffee shop no one else knows about, it's yours – it will be far more special to you than the well-visited landmarks. Trying new things is the best way to celebrate a new chapter in your story. They may become much-loved traditions.

#### **5 LEARN FROM THE LOCALS**

When I left home, I was conditioned to driving everywhere because nothing (not even the bus stop) was in walking distance. You can imagine my supreme elation when I realised that the locals in my new town had more active modes of transport! I'll never forget the day I stepped off my front porch to make my maiden voyage on foot – I was so happy I may have broken out into song. And then the day came when I locked eyes with a lovely vintage cruiser and found myself pedaling past little laneways like a cast member from The Sound of Music. (Again, there may have been some singing involved.) Trust me, the quickest way to feel like a local in a new place is to act like one. Following in their footsteps will save you a lot of legwork!

#### **6 GET INVOLVED**

There is no better way to manage a transition than to remind yourself that it's not about you! When our world is turned upside down, we have a tendency to forget about the needs of others. That's the perfect time to find a cause you're passionate about supporting and commit to it – because if you're not making a positive difference right where you are, you might as well click your heels three times and go home, Dorothy! You'll learn new skills, meet people with similar interests and above all, it will have you feeling right at home, wherever the road leads you.



**DID YOU KNOW**, Global Interaction team members participate in a 10 day live-in course before they leave called Transition Training? It's designed specifically for people preparing for cross-cultural mission. It gives them the heads up, arms them with skills and encourages a learning posture. How good is that?!