

December 2025

News Letter

Success Growth for Life & Career

When Home Feels Far Away: The Expat Holiday Dip at Work

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Success Coach

December does something to expats.

Even if life abroad is exciting and full of growth, this month has a way of reminding you how far you are from your people — your family, your closest friends, your traditions, your sense of home.

You start missing small things:

the sound of familiar laughter, a certain dish, the way your city looks at night, or the simple comfort of being known without explanation.

And while you think you're "handling it," it often shows up where you least expect it:
At work.

Not dramatically — just subtly:

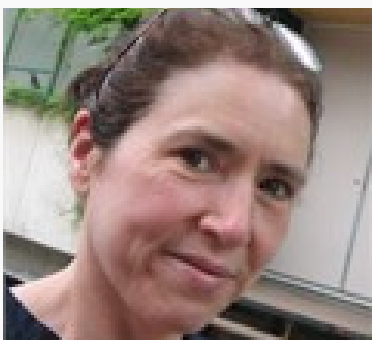
- You feel less focused, even though nothing is "wrong."
- You're more sensitive to feedback.
- You hesitate more.
- You feel emotionally tired before the day even starts.
- Everything takes just a little more effort.

This is normal.

This is human.

And this is especially common among expats in December.

But there are ways to support yourself — so the distance doesn't become discouragement, crossing into self-promotion that feels inauthentic.



Amsterdam,
The Netherlands



Why the Holidays Hit Harder When You Live Abroad

A few things collide at once:

1. Emotional bandwidth shrinks

Your mind is juggling holiday logistics, time zone differences, travel decisions, and memories.
Your brain feels full, even if your calendar doesn't look that busy.

2. You are reminded of the “double identity”

Life here and life there.

Past and present.

Who you were and who you are becoming.

December brings that duality to the surface.

3. Cultural differences feel sharper

Office celebrations, directness/non-directness, social norms — all of it can feel amplified when you're feeling tender.

4. Loneliness increases — even if you are surrounded by people

Because what you're missing isn't people...

It's your people.

How This Shows Up at Work (Without You Realizing It)

You may notice:

- Reduced motivation or creativity
- Trouble concentrating
- Increased self-doubt
- Feeling disconnected from colleagues
- Irritation or emotional sensitivity
- A deep desire to “escape” or go back home
- Wondering: Why am I even here?

This newsletter was produced by Dr. Barbara L. Ciccarelli Coaching and Consulting.
To join the transition coaching community click here:
www.drblciccarelli.com/thrivers



You're not losing your edge.
You're emotionally stretched — and your body is signaling it.

What You Can Do: Supportive Strategies for December

These are tools I use with clients — and they work.

1. Create a “Home Ritual” inside your workweek

Bring one familiar thing into your days:

music, a scent, a breakfast, a call with a friend, a small tradition.

Rituals anchor you.

2. Name exactly what you miss

Is it connection?

Belonging?

Familiarity?

Love?

Ease?

Identity?

When you name the yearning, the heaviness decreases.

3. Reduce pressure on yourself at work

You don't need to “overperform” to compensate for emotional distance.

December is a good month to focus on essentials, not perfection.

4. Stay connected — even in small ways

Short calls.

Voice notes.

Photos.

Shared meals over video.

You don't need a three-hour conversation to feel grounded.

5. Remind yourself: this feeling is seasonal

It is not a sign that your expat life is wrong.

It is a sign that you are human and connected to your roots.

6. Give yourself permission to plan something meaningful for January

A reset, a project, a personal goal, or simply something to look forward to.

The future gives the present more space to breathe.

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A Final Word of Encouragement

**You are not the only one feeling this.
Every expat I work with experiences
the December dip in some form.**

**And yet — these moments often
deepen your resilience, clarify your
identity, and remind you what truly
matters to you.**

**You're not losing your way.
You're reconnecting with it.**

 **Want more?**

**If you want to start January with
confidence, clarity, and structure,
stay tuned — my upcoming issue will**