
International Relocation & the Dual Career Dilemma



“What About My Job?”

Good Question. If you are accompanying your spouse or partner on an international assignment, it's likely that finding the answer this question will take time. But don't let that get in the way. In the meantime, be sure to ask as many questions as you can. Here are 6 ways to begin.

1 What type of visa will I have and what does it mean for my employment in my new location?

Information about visas and work permits changes frequently and is often complex and confusing. Don't depend on well-meaning friends or hearsay. Get expert legal advice. The [Permits Foundation](#) is a helpful resource.

2 Will my qualifications be recognized in my new location?

If you have the legal right to work, and intend to pursue your career, ask about what you need to do have your professional qualifications validated in your new location.

3 If I give up my job, what will I really lose?

Most accompanying partners are in paid employment before relocating, but fewer are during the assignment. No matter how much you look forward to leaving the office politics behind, employment can provide some benefits that less obvious until they are no longer there. There's the pay of course. But ask “What else?” Recognition? Opportunities to contribute? Social contact? Professional Identity? Sense of belonging? By considering the role and meaning of work in your life, you are in a better position to identify different ways to meet these needs, even when employment is not an option.

4 How do people find employment in my new location?

In different cultures the process of identifying opportunities and finding employment varies a great deal. Don't assume that the process that you are familiar with will work in your new location.

5 How will I build and maintain a social network that nurtures me?

When you combine culture shock and starting over, rebuilding your support network can be tough, especially if you are no longer going to work each day. It takes time. Don't wait until everyone else is “settled” first.

6 How will I respond to “what do you do?”

If your choice to relocate includes an interruption to your career, and you are still adjusting, , this question can trigger a lot of different emotions. Try preparing your responses for use on those “in-between” times when you are experiencing the loss of your professional identity.

Would you like to read about the work life experiences of others who accompany their partners on international assignments?

[Get a Free Report](#): **Career and Work-Life Issues for Expatriate Accompanying Spouses or Partners: A Brief Survey**

About Jennifer

Jennifer Bradley, Ph.D. is a career and work life consultant and coach. She draws on her personal and professional experience to help mid-career professionals and expatriate accompanying partners to navigate challenging work life transitions with less stress.
