

I have thought of some questions and answers with regard to our topic here today which is “**Early Returns and Other Incomplete Exchanges**“. And what can be done to overcome these difficulties.

But before we get to them, I would like to tell you briefly about my experience with early returns and incomplete exchanges.

#### Inbound Student 1 (girl dating)

- I had an inbound girl from the United States who was in love with a boy and she would do nothing else but spend time with him and when DAYS AWAY with him became NIGHTS we had no choice but to send her home. She went back to Brazil after that and they got married. It is needless to say I wasn't invited to the wedding?

#### Inbound Student 2 (boy smoking pot)

- This terrific kid from England was a pothead and before he got into deep trouble we sent him home. He was a good kid, he likes Brazil so much he had the Brazilian flag tattooed on his leg.

#### Inbound Student 3 (boy drinking)

- This other kid from Mexico wanted to drink all the beer he could get his hands on. When I confronted him, he said “I drink, but I never get drunk and I don't mind going home 4 months early because I've already seen everything and it is all too boring now.

#### Outbound student 1 (girl in love)

- I saw my outbound girl before she was leaving for the exchange and she was with her boyfriend and was jumping for joy because her departure had been delayed for one week and she was so happy to be with her boyfriend one more week. She didn't last two months in the exchange. Only her body had gone on the exchange her head and heart remained in Brazil. Our friends in the States did the right thing and sent her body back to find her head and heart.

#### Outbound student 2- (deaf boy)

- This other boy was forever plugged to his earphones and wouldn't participate in anything at all and had his father get his Mason friends in the States to step in to convince the chairman to find him another host family because they were constantly nagging. I couldn't agree more that a deaf boy by choice with a father like that should be sent home right away.

#### Outbound student 3- (stuck-up)

- This girl would tell everyone in Denmark that she thought that learning Danish was a waste of time and everyone was wrong in Denmark. Why can't they be more like the Brazilians? She often said to everyone. They showed her the way home early.

As to Incomplete Exchanges we've had the following:

**Outbound Student 1 (too good for the exchange)**

- This girl found the strength to face her father to put a fight when she was already on the exchange and managed to convince him that everything was wrong where she was. Bad school, weird friends, bad host family and her daddy told her to come home and that's what she wanted all along.

**Outbound Student 2 (smart ass)**

- This boy had it all figured out. 6 months in Australia. Rotary doesn't have 6 months, so what? I was in hot water to explain that I had no clue he was planning a 6-month exchange on his own.

What leads to early returns is the fact the student never wanted to go on the exchange in the first place, but didn't have the guts to tell his or her parents. If only we could find out before we would save so much trouble.

Even though our failure experiences with early returns and incomplete exchanges were bad enough, they were not statistically significant because we've had about 800 exchange students in and out ever since I have been chairman of my district and we have only had about 10 early returns and incomplete exchanges. Maybe I should NOT say "ONLY", because one is too many.

I think it is very important that we explain to our inbounds and outbounds WHAT we are trying to do. What the real purpose of the program is.

If they understand and agree to participate, it is going to be a lot easier on all of us.

Many students think that we are doing this because we want to be nice guys. Others think that it is our obligation to send them away for one year since we are in charge of the Youth Exchange Program for our district.

At orientation for the outbounds in my district we tell them that the exchange is an award for merits.

Even though it is an award, a lot is expected of them. We expect them to be the ambassadors of goodwill and to develop international understanding and world peace.

I've heard and said this so many times, but I guess it is our job to keep saying it.

We remind them of their responsibility of ambassadors to a foreign country, which will be their privilege to represent their country for one year.

We also stress that they will always be in the public eye and will be judged by their behavior.

While warning them of the possibility of early returns, we give them some pretty helpful hints:

The 10 commandments for a successful exchange:

- 1- Adapt or fail
- 2- Ask or be ignorant
- 3- Be lively and active
- 4- Be considerate of the hosts
- 5- Be punctual
- 6- Give 100% of themselves and expect nothing in return
- 7- Maintain a neat appearance and keep their surroundings orderly
- 8- Plan ahead
- 9- Smile every chance they get
- 10- Strive to earn the respect of others

- The questions and answers that I thought of are as follows:

Q: What does the exchange mean to my outbounds?

A: Many of them want it to be part of their education since learning a second language is very important to Brazilians.

Q: What encourages my outbounds to go on the exchange?

A: Our education system validates their year abroad and their parents really want them to participate in the exchange.

Q: Why do the inbounds go to my district?

A: While WE in Brazil have many candidates, the countries that we exchange with do not have as many students willing to stay away for a year. But they will be encouraged to go when they get to hear about the exchange from rebounds or from exchange students that they meet.

Q: What does the exchange mean to my inbounds?

A: they would like it be fun, fun, fun. But we do our best to tell them what it is all about and they feel glad about it. They learn that it is their courage and good will to participate in the program that will enable Brazilians to have a place in the exchange.

Q: When is an early return necessary?

A: As much as I hate to admit it, an Early Return can be a very useful tool for us. It will help us prevent major problems. It is a necessary tool to be used when a student becomes too big a responsibility for us volunteers to handle.

Q: Can an early return be avoided?

A: It can only be avoided by telling the students before they screw up that WE DO make use early returns to help us manage the program.

Q: How am I going to react when I get the news about an early return from my exchange partner?

A: I will support the decision of the host district 100%. No questions asked. My outbounds know that if they break the rules they will be sent home and there is nothing we can do to help because we can only listen to one side of the story, which is what the host district tells us and we will take it for granted.

Q: Is there a way around it or should there be one?

A: I don't think there should be. How can we ask our exchange partners to keep a trouble kid, one who's bound to do the worst sooner or later?

Q: How surprising is it going to be?

A: One who gets sent home has had it coming, so it is hardly a surprise.

Q: When is the early return more likely to happen? Is it right at the beginning? Is it in the middle of the exchange? Or is it one or two months before it ends?

A: A trouble kid CANNOT hide what he is right at the beginning, but unfortunately, some families will do just about anything to hide it from Rotary. When the end is approaching they are less afraid to 'blow it' because if they are sent home they will say it was about time to go back anyway. 8, 9 or 10 months were long enough AND everyone back home will believe they went back on their free will.

Q: How should we prepare the biological parents for early returns?

A: One thing we can say is that, Rotary will give it, and will take it back for your own good.

Thank you very much!



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