



CHARACTERISTICS FOR HEALTHY GOERS

A HEALTH ASSESSMENT & CHURCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

With the high stakes and limited resources for sending cross-cultural workers, it is vital that your abilities and gifts match up with the cross-cultural opportunity put before you. When people want to go overseas, whether in vocational ministry or in the workforce, there are 5 areas of health that we are looking to see in the lives of Goers:

1. **Spiritual & Moral Health** - A relationship with God that is flourishing and on an upward trajectory. Character, Life with God, Purity, Humility, Fruit of the Spirit, Repentant Trajectory, Flexibility, Grit, Self-Drive, Ability to Suffer, Faithfulness.
2. **Emotional Health** - The self-awareness to name your feelings, process them with your personal history in mind, and to make decisions with the right motivations that flow from logic AND rightly processed emotions. Examining Heart Motivations, Processing Past, Responses to Stress, Criticism & Suffering, Security in Christ, Self-awareness, Living in Limits.
3. **Relational Health** - Relational warmth that makes you a great teammate and ambassador of the Gospel. Health of relationships with Friends, Family, Neighbors, and Co-workers, Relational Warmth.
4. **Ministry Health** - The clarity of calling from within and the affirmation from others that moving overseas is a good stewardship of your life and the resources to get you there. Clarity of Calling, Sowing Broadly, Intentionality in Discipleship, Cross-cultural Fluency, Discernment of Personal Spiritual Gifts, Faithfulness.
5. **Personal Health** - Habits of moderation in regard to your physical body. Ability to prioritize and execute tasks. Personal financial stability. Getting enough Sleep, Exercise, Eating healthy, Financial Stability, Basic Organizational Skills.

We want to see at minimum a trajectory towards these areas of health. Potential Sent-Ones do not need to be perfect in all these areas, but they do need to be on the path. The converse qualities, however, must be worked through prior to going overseas in the context of the church to make sure they are on a great trajectory.

Yellow or Red Lights

1. **Spiritual & Moral Un-Health** - Lack of Character, Lack of Life with God, Unrepentant Trajectory, Inflexible, Needs Hand-holding, Unable to Suffer, Flakey.
2. **Emotional Un-Health** - Lack of Self-awareness, Insecurity, Defensiveness, Lack of Teachability, Extreme Anxiety and Depression, Living Beyond Limits.
3. **Relational Un-Health** - Awkwardness beyond Quirkiness, Bitterness, Codependent Relationships, Lack of Close Friends, Relationally Cold.
4. **Ministry Un-Health** - Unclear Internal & External Calling, Lack of Evangelistic Fervor, Inability to Cross Cultural Barriers, Unaware of Spiritual Gifts.
5. **Personal Un-Health** - Unhealthy Eating Habits, Sleep Habits, and Exercise Habits. Overspending, High College or Consumer Debt, Unable to Execute Organization.

The following self-assessment guide is to be used by the potential Sent-One and their church leadership to determine areas of development and whether it makes sense to move forward with the process of going overseas now, wait, or stop all together. Do the self-assessment personally, and share it with a key leader at your church or mentor that will walk through it and make some recommendations for you in light of it.

From this assessment we will start a personal development plan for you. For a list of some great resources for Personal Development Plans for each of these areas go to: Resources for [Personal Development Plans](#).

****For Church Leaders** - A new copy of this Google doc will be put in the folder for each potential goer. So just reference their folder as we continue to move forward. As you meet with them, put their information in

SPIRITUAL & MORAL HEALTH

Spiritual health is defined by a growing relationship with God that is on a repentant trajectory. If there is any area of your life that is not on that trajectory, any “skeletons in your closet,” anything that you are not actively dealing with, please don’t go overseas! While there are standards of behavior that are foundational for the privilege to go overseas, we are not looking for perfect. We are looking for people who have no area of life that is off limits, everything is confessed, and all of life is on an upward trajectory of repentance.

Being a self-feeding Christian, one who can read God’s word, pray, and be changed by those disciplines, is vital for flourishing overseas. The external spiritual input you will receive and the number of Christian relationships overseas will be much lower, so learning to self-feed becomes all the more important. One who struggles with not just consistency of self-feeding, but actually developing their relationship with God through it, will struggle overseas.

Beyond the repentant trajectory and being a self-feeder, there are the simple areas of character that are foundational to joy in the Lord and being an ambassador for Christ that is above reproach. These are needed in every Christians life and include things like: Sexual purity, honesty, the fruit of the Spirit, humility, etc. The list could go on and on, Beyond this, there are a few character qualities that are particularly important to exhibit for someone wanting to go overseas:

- Repentant Trajectory - Are you living in such a way that your life is transparent and consistent? Or are you living a fractured life where there are significant gaps between what you claim and what you actually do? Overseas ministry will accelerate your strengths and weaknesses. We are looking for people who are humbly and honestly pursuing integrity in all parts of life.
- Flexibility - Life overseas will throw many curveballs. Crippling inflexibility will leave one unable to cope with the changes of life that will come quicker than ever overseas. Getting to the root of crippling inflexibility is important. Having flexibility is a positive character trait for a life lived overseas. Are you inflexible and is that a personality trait you can train or an area of sin to repent of?
- Grit and Self-Starting - Without an office space or church services to run, you are often at your own devices to figure out what to do with your time. Self-starters and the persevering will thrive overseas. Being easily discouraged and needing a lot of handholding for tasks would be an area of reflection and need for growth in going overseas. Will you be able to self-start when no clear path is before you or continue when you run into a proverbial wall?
- Ability to Suffer - Life overseas will bring suffering. Most Westerners have a poor view of suffering. We try to avoid it at all costs. Inevitably this will happen overseas. Either through persecution, through heat, through unmet expectations. We have to have a theology of suffering and the emotional strength to get through suffering. Have you gone through a significant period of suffering? How did you react?

Spiritual Health Questions

What are your typical rhythms of time with God? Are you enjoying time with God? What percentage of your time is duty instead of delight? What's one thing you could do to make your life with God more of a delight?

Repentant Trajectory - What areas of your character are stagnant, even unrepentant? What areas of your life need to make significant progress before going overseas?

Flexibility - How do you typically respond when things don't go according to your plans or the plans that have been given to you? How do you typically respond when there isn't a crystal clear plan?

Ability to Suffer - Share an example of personal suffering and how you responded. What did you believe about God during your suffering? After? What are your coping mechanisms/tendencies when you are suffering? (What do you turn to for comfort?)

Grit & Self-Starting - Would you consider yourself to be a self-starter, an initiator, or do you need to wait for clear instructions and directions from someone before you feel comfortable and confident to move? Are you easily knocked down, discouraged, frustrated? Or do you tend to be able to get up, process and deal with whatever happens, and move on? Share some examples from your life to answer these questions.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

God is a feeling God. Therefore as image-bearers we also feel. But because of the fall, our feelings need to be redeemed. Hurtful or traumatic memories from our past and sin patterns of our own have sown in us feelings of distrust, insecurity, depression, anxiety, and so much more. These feelings keep us from trusting people, make us defensive, make us avoid conflict, cause us to give in to anger and rage, lead us to sinful comforts like over-eating, control, binge-watching, pornography, and co-dependent relationships. They make us ineffective relationally. They make us one person in public and another person at home. They give us the inability to handle change and stress.

The spiritual disciplines will go a long way towards changing our behavior and our minds. But it is the category of emotional health that connects the renewing of our minds to the renewing of our hearts. It examines the reasons behind our actions—righteous or unrighteous—and brings about heart change that makes us persevere in the midst of stress, motivated by the glory of God and the joy of all peoples instead of control. It frees us to forgive and keep on forgiving; helps us to be who God has made us to be rather than being what everyone else wants us to be; helps us to do ministry with confidence, and humility, void of pride and self-seeking.

Overcoming emotional unhealth begins with recognizing symptoms of emotional unhealth and tracing the root of the emotionally unhealthy behaviors. Discovering where those emotions come from and allowing Jesus to speak into those moments to bring healing. They may be hurts from family, in elementary school, in the workplace, from a bad breakup, in the church, on a mission trip. Wherever they are from they need healing through surgery, not band-aids. This takes work, but is vital for thriving emotionally.

Emotional health also has its roots in idolatry. Whether it's trying to control situations in life, trying to find security in people or material possessions, people pleasing, or the pursuit of comfort, emotional unhealth is combated by worship of the one true God. Whatever form that would take: singing, journaling, creating a sense of gratitude for everything in life, getting professional counseling to walk through issues and see Jesus for who he truly is in them; worship takes what our minds are being renewed in, and brings it from our head to our heart. Worship brings emotional health: the right heart motivations, the peaceful responses to stress, the receiving of criticism, perseverance through suffering, security in Christ, joyful self-awareness, and living within limits.

Our goal in emotional health is to have all things in our lives flow from love for God and love for people. We will never have perfect motivations in all circumstances, but it is clear that God desires a pure heart over religious activities. Do you read the Bible to love God and people or to check a box? Do you treat unbelievers as a project or as a friend? Do you serve in the church to please people or to put others' needs before your own in humility? Do you learn theology in order to win arguments or to build up the body of Christ? Do you create systems to exert control on your world or others, or to make life easier for others? Do you only do what you're good at because you're afraid of failure? You'll never be perfect in your motivations, but are there any of these areas that are righteous on the outside, but prominently motivated by love for yourself rather than love for God and people? If so, look for the root of emotional unhealth that motivates you and work alongside the Holy Spirit to see these sanctified.

Emotional Health Questions

Which symptoms of emotional unhealth and stress do you exhibit: lack of self-awareness, unrighteous anger, rage, defensiveness, escapism, distrust, insecurity, anxiety, depression, stress, bitterness, living beyond limits?

Think about a few of these symptoms of emotional unhealth and stress. Is there hurt or trauma that is a root of emotional unhealth that is causing these symptoms? What hurts have you not yet processed? What do you need to yet process? How will you take steps to process these?

What root idolatry tends to be at the center of your emotionally unhealthy symptoms: Control, Security, Approval, or Comfort? Explain this.

What righteous acts do you tend to do with an unrighteous heart motivation?

Take the [Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Assessment](#) by EHS. Are you an Emotional Infant, Child, Adolescent, or Adult?

RELATIONAL HEALTH

For someone going overseas it is important to have relational health. Relational Health is displayed by a joyful disposition, eye contact, and a kind tone. It is personified by asking good questions, active listening, and making the person feel like they are the most important person in that moment. Relational health draws unbelievers to you. It also makes you a great teammate. We all have varying degrees of capacity in relational warmth, but we can all be enjoyable to be around regardless of our personality. As we grow in spiritual and emotional health our relationship warmth will follow.

But many can struggle with this. Whether it's displayed through gossip; lack of close friends; blame-shifting; being inauthentic; domineering; needy; passive aggressive or just plain aggressive; bad timing or tone; a fighter in conflict or a conflict avoider; and worst of all bitterness. Any one of these areas can make you ineffectual relationally to those around you. A multitude of these sins can cause you to derail your ministry and the team around you. Nothing brings people back from the missions field more than the effects of relational unhealth.

Relational unhealth can have many roots. It can simply be skills that weren't developed in tone, tact, and timing. It can be insecurity that makes us sinfully introverted, conflict avoidant, or unconfident. On the other hand arrogant pride can make us domineering, over-confident, or a fighter in conflict. And at its very worst, relational unhealth has its root in bitterness and unforgiveness. Bitterness causes us to miss God's grace. It chains us to our past. It creates a disconnect between the individuals we haven't forgotten and consequently all other relationships.

It is of utmost importance that we have peace with all men if we are to thrive overseas as a great teammate and great ambassador of the Gospel.

Relational Health Questions

Of the areas of relational health mentioned above, what strengths do you exhibit?

Of the areas of relational unhealth mentioned above, which do you tend to struggle with? Are their roots of bitterness, insecurity, or arrogant pride in these areas of relational unhealth? Which ones?

Are you at peace with all men, or is there someone in your life that you need to forgive or ask for forgiveness of? Who is it and why?

Are you a conflict avoider or a fighter? What is healthy and unhealthy about your skills in conflict?

In a group setting, what presence do you tend to bring? (Extrovert, Introvert, Values Keeper, Wise Sage, Peacekeeper, Encourage, Life of the Party, Critical Thinker, Problem Solver, Visionary, etc.) What are the strengths & weaknesses of what you bring to a team?

MINISTRY SKILLS

Most ministry skills can be developed over time: understanding missiological principles; evangelism tactics; multiplicative discipleship principles; knowing your spiritual gifts; and much more can be taught overseas. There are, however, skills that need to be developed prior to going overseas.

J.D. Greear says “there is no transformation via airplane in global missions.” Just because you jump on a plane and go overseas, doesn’t mean you’re instantly going to be ready to be a cross-cultural worker. You need to start practicing the ministry skills you will execute overseas, here in America. If you don’t start here, don’t expect to be ready for the work just because you flew overseas. The change in location won’t change who you are or magically make you ready for the ministry. Are you involved in the lives of internationals here in America? If not, make an international friend, or join the international ministry at your church to begin cultivating the skills of cross-cultural evangelism.

All Christians are called to evangelism and discipleship. Some will have more of an affinity for evangelism and others for discipleship. For those looking to go overseas, having a strong affinity or willingness to do evangelism is important. While discipleship will be a key part of the ministry, the main task of the American worker is to broadly sow the Gospel. And thus Overseas Goers have to have a strong affinity for evangelism.

An important “Ministry Skill” is to have a strong sense of calling. Not only internally in our hearts, but also affirmed externally by those close to you and your church leadership. The ability to faithfully do ministry when it’s hard. The flexibility and adaptability to have relationships with those of a different culture. The ability to cross a cultural barrier and to bring an international a step closer to knowing Jesus. We want to see this in your life.

One important ministry character quality is: Faithfulness - Notice this does not say fruitfulness. Faithfulness to doing the work God has put before you, even when it’s hard or seems pointless is important in overseas living. Reflect on times in ministry that have been hard. Have you been faithful to what God called you to even when you weren’t fruitful?

Ministry Skills Questions

Why do you think you are “called” overseas? Think a) theologically b) your passions, giftings, and opportunities, and 3) what others have affirmed in you.

What are your rhythms of evangelism? Do you have any experience or rhythm of personal evangelism (not just inviting them to an event) that includes regularly meeting new people in order to share the Gospel? What’s your experience with reaching out to internationals in the US?

Give an example of where you have been faithful to ministry in a difficult situation? Give an example of when it has been difficult to be faithful to ministry?

Why do you think you should or should not do full-time ministry? See, [Job-Taking or Vocational Ministry in Global Missions](#). If you desire to do full-time ministry, why should donors give their personal resources so that you can do ministry full-time? (Don't take this question too negatively. Make a case for your work ethic and your gifting)

After taking the [APEST](#) test, what two areas did you score the highest in? Re-read your results. How do you see those two areas positively impacting your team and cross-cultural ministry?

PERSONAL HEALTH

We are not only spiritual, but physical beings. This aspect of life is often overlooked. But the Bible is clear that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Paul said there is value to physical training. What we do with our bodies affects our mind, our mind affects our soul, and our soul affects our body. They are all interconnected. Getting enough sleep, Sabbathng, eating in moderation, and exercise in moderation are important parts of keeping our minds sharp and our souls rested. You don't have to do the Keto diet and Crossfit to go overseas, but you do need to have healthy habits that will help you endure the stress of overseas life well.

In thinking about going overseas full-time, you're not doing it for the money! While every missions organization has salary structures that provide for your daily bread, save some for the future, and free you to do ministry comfortably, they aren't going to provide enough for you to pay off consumer credit card debt or mountains of school debt. If you don't know how much school debt you have, find out. If your school debt is over \$30,000, talk with someone about ways to pay some of that off prior to going overseas.

And finally you have to have some organizational skills. You don't have to be Type A or be nicknamed "Spreadsheet," but in order to live overseas you need to be able to manage and prioritize your tasks, and know how to take an idea, follow through and execute it. If you need constant hand-holding, you will drain an overseas team leader of their time and energy.

Personal Health Questions

How are you doing at living a life of healthy rhythms & moderation? (Eating, exercise, sleep, spending habits, intentionality with time) Where could you grow?

How are you doing at being a responsible person? (Complete tasks that are assigned by an authority; Go above and beyond what's being asked; Respond to emails; Keep appointments; Save money) Where could you grow?

Do you have good rhythms of reflection, remembrance, and rest? (Sabbath, healthy rest). What is healthy rest for you? What are your go-tos instead of healthy rest?

What are your escaping or numbing behaviors? In other words, what do you do to waste time, avoid

responsibilities, or avoid your own thoughts?

Do you have any consumer debt or college debt? If so, how much for each? How are you working towards eliminating this debt?