



Setting the Expectations for a Super Reintegration

One of the keys to having a smooth reintegration is to set realistic expectations and to learn specifics about your service member's.

This way, you can both meet each other's specific needs and create an environment that is peaceful.

Questions You May Want to Ask Your Service Member While He or She is Still Deployed:

1. What are your expectations during reintegration?
2. What would you like to do the day you come home? (Be specific – from the time we pick you up until the time we go to sleep. Do you want to have absolutely no schedule and no plans? Etc.)
3. What do you want to eat when you come home? Can you send me your top three requests?
4. What is the most important aspect of homecoming for you?
5. What would you like me to prioritize now to prepare for your homecoming? What would you like done before you come home?
6. What would you most love to see me wear to the homecoming? Do you have a preference?
7. Do you mind if I have people take pictures of our homecoming? Would you prefer I didn't? Would you prefer only a friend take pictures? Would you prefer no pictures at all?
8. Would you like the children to attend the homecoming? Would you prefer to surprise them? Would you like me to make arrangements for them or include them in the homecoming itself?
9. What kind of routine would you like to establish when you come home? Is there anything you would like to restart or start doing as part of our family's routine? How can I help make sure that happens for our family?
10. What responsibilities that you took care of before would you like to resume immediately? What responsibilities would you like to gradually resume? Are there any responsibilities you would like me to handle temporarily or permanently?
11. Is there anything special you would like to do your first week home?
12. How do you envision our first week together?
13. Do you want or need some alone time once you get back?
14. How do you feel about driving? Would you like to drive home from the homecoming or would you like me to? What about that first week?

15. How would you like me to handle parenting? Would you like me to be the primary disciplinarian until the kids have readjusted to you? Would you prefer to jump back in immediately? Would you prefer a gradual transition? Would you like to wait and see how the kids respond to your homecoming?
16. How would you like to handle visitors? Would you like to see friends and family your first week home? Would you like me to help protect that time just for you and our immediate family?
17. How can I be your advocate when you come home and are adjusting to a time and culture change?
18. How can I best show you I love you when you come home?
19. Would you like me to leave a date on the calendar for you to spend alone or out with friends? (Ask this question NOW so that you can mentally and physically plan for this – so if he or she does need a night out with other service members to process the happenings of this deployment, you can plan a night with your friends or the kids so that he or she can have a night GUILT-FREE and you can emotionally prepare BEFORE he or she asks for time away so sooner after coming home.)
20. Would you like to come up with a code word that lets me know if you need a little break from me, people, noise or the current environment – guilt-free, without condemnation?
21. How would you like us to handle the finances once you come home? Could we sit down together and come up with a new budget without the deployment benefit pays?
22. Is there anything you would like to talk about before you return?
23. May I share with you my vision of homecoming week?
24. May I share with you something that is really important to me that we do our first week or day together?
25. May I share with you my concerns about redeployment and reintegration?
26. May I share with you my needs during redeployment and reintegration?
27. May I share with you the routines/schedules I've changed in your absence and how I'd like to continue them moving forward?

A great way to get specifics out of a service member who says, "I don't know, whatever you want," is to play the "Would You Rather?" game. Give two options to each question, and the service member tells you which one he or she would rather do.

Would you rather:

- A. The house be clean and organized when you come home, or
- B. Your favorite food is in the pantry, or
- C. Both?

Would you rather:

- A. I spend money getting your car detailed before you come home, or
- B. I spend money on childcare so we can spend one night the first week all alone?

By asking "Would You Rather" questions, you can ascertain what is important to your service member, and you can prioritize your list, especially if your service member's flight gets changed last minute or you simply don't have enough time or money to complete everything you'd like. This helps you tackle the tasks that are important to your service member and to YOU. It also helps remove the "I-must-do-all-things" burden.