



Week 2 Celebration

ExpatsatHome Essential Guide

Week 2: Pause, Reflect, Celebrate

Welcome to the Halfway Point!

Can you believe it? You've successfully completed two full weeks of the Survive and Thrive program. You're officially at the halfway mark! The past fourteen days have been a whirlwind of navigating bureaucracy, setting up your new home, and finding your rhythm in a new city. It's a period filled with to-do lists and challenges, and it's easy to get so focused on the next task that you forget to look back and see how far you've come.

This guide is your dedicated space to do just that. Today, we're not adding another item to your to-do list. Instead, we are taking a deliberate, necessary pause. We will celebrate your progress, acknowledge your wins (both big and small), and set a gentle, powerful intention for the exciting phase ahead. Let's honour the journey you've been on.

The Power of the Pause

In the marathon of moving to a new country, a strategic pause isn't a sign of stopping; it's a vital part of the process. It allows you to:

- **Consolidate your learning:** Let the new information and experiences sink in.
- **Prevent burnout:** Constantly pushing forward without rest is unsustainable.
- **Boost your confidence:** Actively recognizing your achievements builds resilience.
- **Reconnect with your 'why':** Remember the reasons you embarked on this incredible adventure.

Why Celebration Matters: The Psychology of Small Wins

Moving abroad is a monumental undertaking. If you only wait to celebrate "big" milestones—like landing a dream job or becoming fluent in a new language—you might be waiting a long time, and the journey can feel discouraging. The secret to staying motivated and building a happy life here lies in celebrating the small wins.

What is a "small win"? It's any step forward, no matter how minor it seems.

- Successfully ordering bread in French at the *boulangerie*.
- Navigating the STIB metro system without checking the map every two minutes.
- Figuring out the correct recycling bag for the right day.
- Having a brief, friendly exchange with a neighbour.

Why do they matter? These moments are the building blocks of your new life. Psychologically, acknowledging small wins releases dopamine in your brain, creating a positive feedback loop. It proves to your subconscious mind that you **are** capable, you **are** making progress, and you **do** belong here. These aren't small things; they are huge steps that build momentum and confidence.

Your Private Reflection Space: The “week2_reflection” Exercise

This is the core of our celebration today. The following prompts are for you and you alone. It's not a test, but a private space to be honest with yourself and acknowledge your own progress. Grab a cup of coffee or tea, find a comfortable spot, and take 10-15 minutes to think through these questions. You can print this guide or simply write your answers in a notebook.

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Acknowledge Your Progress

- What is one thing you can do now, or know now, that you couldn't do two weeks ago when you first arrived?
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- Describe your biggest “win” of the past two weeks. It doesn't have to be a huge achievement. What was the moment you felt most proud or capable?
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- Think about a challenge you faced. How did you handle it? What did you learn from it, even if it was difficult at the time?
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Connect with Your New Home

- As highlighted in the photo challenge, what is one beautiful or interesting detail you've discovered in your neighbourhood that made you smile? (e.g., a unique front door, a lovely park bench, a street art mural).
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- What has been your favourite discovery so far? (This could be a food, a park, a shop, a new walking route, etc.)
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Look Forward with Intention

- The theme for next week is “**Connect**”. What is one word that describes how you'd like to **feel** as you approach building connections? (e.g., open, curious, courageous, calm).
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- Based on that feeling, what is your intention for the week ahead? (An intention is a gentle guide, not a strict goal. For example: “I will be open to new conversations” or “I will be curious about the people I meet.”)
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A Step-by-Step Guide to Meaningful Reflection & Intention Setting

Feeling a bit stuck on how to use the reflection exercise? Here's a simple process to guide you.


Part 1: Acknowledging Your Journey So Far

1. **Create a Calm Environment:** Find 15 minutes where you won't be interrupted. Put your phone on silent. Make yourself a favourite drink. This small ritual signals to your brain that this time is important.
2. **Review the Past 14 Days:** Close your eyes and mentally walk through the past two weeks. Think about your first day, the errands you ran, the places you explored, the people you interacted with. Don't judge, just observe.
3. **Complete the “week2_reflection” Prompts:** Use the section above to write down your thoughts. Seeing your progress written down makes it more real and impactful. Be specific! Instead of “I learned the metro,” write “I successfully took the metro from Schuman to De Brouckère during rush hour.”
4. **Feel the Pride:** Read over your answers. Allow yourself to feel a genuine sense of accomplishment. You've done a lot. Acknowledge the effort, the courage, and the resilience it took to get here.
5. **Plan a Reward:** Decide on a small, tangible way to celebrate your progress. This reinforces the positive experience. It could be buying a pastry from that bakery you've been eyeing, taking an hour to read in the park, or visiting a museum.

Part 2: Setting Your Intention for the Week Ahead

An intention is different from a goal. A goal is a target (“I will attend two meetups”). An intention is the mindset or quality you bring to your actions (“I will be curious and open-minded”). Intentions are often more powerful because they focus on your inner state, which you can control, rather than external outcomes.

1. **Reflect on Your Needs:** Look at your reflection answers. What do you need more of right now when it comes to social connection? Is it courage to start a conversation? Curiosity to learn about others? Patience with yourself?
2. **Phrase Your Intention:** Start with “I will...” or “I intend to be...”. Keep it positive and focused on you.
 - **Example 1:** Instead of “I won't be shy,” try “I will be brave in social situations.”
 - **Example 2:** Instead of “I hope I meet people,” try “I will be open to conversations wherever I go.”
3. **Write It Down:** Jot down your intention on a sticky note and place it somewhere you'll see it every day—on your bathroom mirror, your laptop, or the inside of your front door.
4. **Let It Guide You:** Throughout the week, when you're about to enter a social situation (even just going to the grocery store), take a second to recall your intention. Let it guide your energy and your actions.

 **Tip:** Share your intention (not your whole reflection!) in the community forum. Declaring it to others can make it feel more real and creates a wonderful sense of shared purpose and mutual support within our group.

Your Celebration Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you get the most out of this celebration and reflection exercise.

- ❑ Find 15-20 minutes of quiet, uninterrupted time for yourself.
- ❑ Complete all the prompts in the week2_reflection section.
- ❑ Identify at least three specific “wins” you’re proud of.
- ❑ Plan a small, enjoyable reward for yourself to celebrate your progress.
- ❑ Craft a clear, positive intention for our “Connect” week.
- ❑ Write your intention down and place it somewhere visible.
- ❑ (Optional but recommended) Share your intention for Week 3 in the community forum.

Brussels Vocabulary: From Frites to Français

One of the biggest wins is often communicative. Here are a few key phrases in French and Dutch that can help you in your daily interactions, building on those small conversational victories.

English	French	Dutch
Hello (formal)	Bonjour	Goedendag
Hello (informal)	Salut	Hallo
Thank you very much	Merci beaucoup	Dank u wel
You’re welcome	De rien / Je vous en prie	Graag gedaan
Excuse me / Sorry	Pardon / Excusez-moi	Pardon / Excuseer mij
I would like...	Je voudrais...	Ik zou graag...
A coffee, please	Un café, s’il vous plaît	Een koffie, alstublieft
The bill, please	L’addition, s’il vous plaît	De rekening, alstublieft
Have a nice day	Bonne journée	Fijne dag
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais?	Spreekt u Engels?

Insider Tips for Thriving

- **Reframe “Failures” as Data:** Did you get on the wrong tram? You didn’t fail; you just gathered data on which tram not to take next time! Every mistake is a lesson that gets you closer to mastery. Adopting this mindset is crucial for long-term resilience.
- **Reward Yourself Locally:** Plan your celebration reward around exploring more of Brussels.
 - **For a sweet treat:** Visit Maison Dandoy for a classic waffle or Pierre Marcolini for exquisite chocolate.
 - **For a moment of peace:** Take your book to the Parc de Bruxelles or the tranquil Jardin du Petit Sablon.
 - **For a cultural boost:** Many museums in Brussels are free on the first Sunday of the month. Plan ahead!
- **Look Ahead to Connect:** The script mentioned some fantastic upcoming events. Keep these on your radar as concrete opportunities to put your “Connect” intention into practice:
 - **Simpl Annual Community Event:** January 29, 2026. Theme: “Connect and grow together.” A perfect, welcoming environment to meet people.
 - **World of Coffee festival:** June 2026. A great way to connect with people over a shared interest. Check local listings for similar events related to your hobbies.

⚠ **Important:** Beware of the “Comparison Trap.” It’s easy to see other expats on social media who seem to be settling in faster or having a more glamorous time. Remember that your journey is unique. Focus on your own progress, as documented in your reflection worksheet. This is your path, and you are doing a fantastic job navigating it.

You have accomplished so much in just fourteen days. Be proud of the foundation you are so carefully building. You are doing great. Now go and celebrate!

ExpatsatHome.be | Your guide to feeling at home in Brussels