

1. When did you move to Canada and what was your motivation/interest in coming here?

I moved to Toronto on September 17th 2017. It was a pretty last minute decision as my friend Ian had decided he was coming here, so really, I "jumped on the bandwagon" to be fair. I did some research on Toronto but I would be lying if I said it was somewhere I thought about moving while I was younger.

I had always said I would love to move to Dubai, Spain and New York were always top of mind (although I probably thought New York was going to include living like Harvey Spector from Suits). After starting the process to move, my sister, Michelle gave me one of the biggest suitcases I had ever seen and I applied for the Visa, booked my flight and started to wind down my current job in Ireland as a Sales Representative. The idea of hot summers and cold winters settled well with me, although I did get a big shock when I found out what negative 40 degrees Celsius was.

2. Many immigrants go through a 'Honeymoon' period shortly after arriving in Canada. After this period, many of us experience challenges adapting to their new country. It also isn't uncommon for many to feel lonely; did you ever have this problem?

Oh Yes, the honeymoon period. Everything so new and exciting. The CN tower as a landmark, trying to figure out what street is what, many nights out trying to find new pubs, bars restaurants. It was busy! Even when I think of job seeking, getting a house (highly recommend everyone does this asap so you can settle a little more quickly), joining the football team, gym membership and finding out the nearest grocery store. Although they do not seem like things that are 'fun', it kept things busy and the sun was shining with an amazing end to the summer/autumn.

But then the winter started to creep in and I had started work with a software company. Don't get me wrong, I was set up to external eyes, heck a good job (in a warm office), living in a nice townhouse and friends amongst a community of Irish people, not to mention the friends I made along the way in work and other outings. But the reality is, the novelty wears off. You realize you are now in a new place physically but life has to continue the same as at home in the sense of working, being an adult and generally the challenges that come with winter where you must adjust your life to more indoor activities.

3. Can you tell us what helped you through this?

Honestly, I would say being part of the GAA community, St. Pats was a huge plus. Playing indoor soccer on Weston Road was the first time I started to meet the community of St. Pats and this was to become a real foundation for my mental health, especially to give that home feeling and alleviate the loneliness. This along with going to the gym with my friend, Ian, kept a great routine over that winter.

4. Looking back, have you any advice for others who are newly arrived that would have helped you settle into your new surroundings?

My advice to help settle quickly is honestly have some idea of where you would like to work and be realistic (talk to current permanent residents and people who have been here). We have all been through what you are going through or are about to go through. There are a ton of resources and people to help. As part of the St Pats community, we have an amazing committee, who are recruiters, have previously been recruiter, manager, sales reps and lots of IT and software engineers. We are here to help.

5. What am I doing now?

Well coming up to my 3 year "Canniversary", I have gotten engaged to a Canadian lady. I decided after gaining my permanent residency last October, that Canada was where I wanted to stay. I have an 11 year old step son with lots of energy to keep me on my toes, a dog with even more energy and I am settled in a job with Tesla.

St Pats GAA has set up a golf society for the summer during Covid, so that keeps me entertained but, I now move on to a new chapter in life where family is my priority. Katelyn and Landyn support me in everything I do and we ensure to do as much as we can to keep on top of our mental health, exercise, stay involved in the community as much as I can. I live outside Toronto in Richmond Hill and my days consist of working, running and keeping our family healthy and well. Feel free to reach out if you want to connect through social media or anything I can help with especially those new to Canada.

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