

NEW!



Must Love *Canada!*



**Tips on How to Be
a Good Canadian:**



A PRACTICAL GUIDE

FOR NEW CANADIANS, NEW IMMIGRANTS
AND NEWCOMERS



— OVVIAN CASTRILLO HILL —

MUST LOVE CANADA!

Tips on how to be a GOOD CANADIAN:
A Practical Guide for New Canadians, New
Immigrants & Newcomers

BY OVVIAN CASTRILLO HILL

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This book is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

Dedication:

Dedicated to every newcomer who has left behind familiarity, comfort, and certainty in pursuit of opportunity, safety, and a better future.

Canada grows stronger because of your courage.

This is also dedicated to ALL Canadians. This book hopes to inspire newcomers to love our country CANADA, as much as those who have loved it from birth.

Let it be, that the common goal for everyone is to be a part of a CANADA better than how we have found it---whether from when we have come from the womb, or from an airport.

Finally, I dedicate this book to my family---my husband Bryan, son Brendan and our boss beagle---Ollie Doggie.

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Foreword

In order to be a GOOD CANADIAN- you MUST LOVE CANADA!!! I was reading a post on Facebook, about an individual who had recently passed their Citizenship Examination. The person was encouraging others, suggesting that the examination was easy. The person was hoping to inspire.

Among the comments was, I am guessing, a Canadian born individual who, while congratulating the original poster, was suggesting that there is more to being Canadian than just passing the exam. To that, another person replied: "The Canadian Citizenship is enough."

I reflected on those words, digging into my own experience as a 3-year old Canadian.

Let me rephrase that. I am a 50+ year old person, who has been a Canadian Resident for 12 years before becoming a Citizen (3 years ago).

Why did it take me so long, you might ask? Well, citizenship is not just a piece of paper to me. It is a commitment not just to live in Canada, but to protect it, grow it, nurture it and have it's best interests in sight. It is---borrowing from JFK---asking myself WHAT CAN I DO FOR CANADA?

Finally, 3 years ago, I felt comfortable enough, worthy enough to be Canadian.

I'd have to say that the mind shift is distinct. Suddenly, I felt a sense of ownership and responsibility.

I agree with the first commentor: THERE IS MORE TO BEING CANADIAN THAN PASSING AN EXAM. The Canadian Citizenship is NOT enough.

If I were to make an analogy---a temporary resident such a tourist and a foreign worker is a house guest. This a person expected to be in the space for a limited or finite time. Like our house guests, the expectations are the same: they are welcome, while the hosts allow. They are expected to respect the spaces, not intrude and know their limits. They are expected to be respectful of their hosts, not over-step and know when to leave.

A permanent resident is a renter. This is a person who has been given the keys to the house. They can stay there, following the agreement of space use. If the arrangement fails to be satisfactory, or cause irreparable damage to the place, they may be asked to leave. They are expected to maintain cordial relations with the owner of the house, who is allowing them to rent it.

Citizens own the home. With this ownership, they are responsible for the whole place---good and bad. They are expected to clean it up, renovate it, fix it. They have both the freedom to decide on how they want it to look, how they want it to address their needs. They are responsible for it---making it into a cottage or a mansion. Most importantly, they have a sense of ownership, having both the comfort and responsibilities of knowing that. Owners are expected to love and care for their own property.

I invite you---whatever status you may have while on your Canadian journey, to fully see Canada for what it is, and appreciate everything it comes with: The spectacular nature, a country of order, a culture of kindness and fairness, an abundance of resources and a vast land of potential.

Don't just live in Canada, LOVE CANADA! When you genuinely do, Canada will love you back.

Canada is More Than a Country

For millions of people around the world, Canada represents hope, opportunity, dignity, and a chance to begin again.

Every year, newcomers arrive with dreams for a better future. Some arrive as immigrants seeking opportunity. Others come as international students, temporary workers, refugees, or family members reuniting with loved ones.

But before one becomes a CANADIAN CITIZEN, one starts out as a newcomer. No matter how someone arrives, one truth remains the same: Starting over in a new country is never easy.

There are new systems to understand, new expectations to learn, unfamiliar social customs, financial pressures, language barriers, and emotional challenges that many people never fully anticipate before arriving.

This ebook was created to support newcomers through that transition.

This book aims to provide practical guidance that is realistic, welcoming, and encouraging. Inside, you will learn about:

- Canadian culture and values
- Rights and responsibilities
- Workplace expectations
- Housing and finances
- Communication styles
- Parenting and schools
- Mental health and culture shock
- Building friendships and networks
- Community participation
- Long-term success in Canada

This guide is written in clear, accessible language so that it can help readers from many backgrounds. Whether you are reading this during your first week in Canada or years after arriving, the lessons in this book are intended to help you build confidence, stability, and belonging.

Canada is built by people.

People who show kindness. People who support neighbors. People who contribute positively. People who continue learning. People who choose respect over division.

Your journey matters.

Welcome to Canada.

How to Use This Ebook

This ebook is designed to be practical.

Each chapter contains:

- Real-world explanations
- Practical examples
- Reflection exercises
- Self-assessment questions
- Everyday Canadian scenarios
- Action steps

Readers are encouraged to:

- Take notes while reading
- Discuss lessons with family members
- Apply one lesson at a time
- Revisit chapters regularly

Integration into a new country happens gradually. You do not need to learn everything immediately. Progress matters more than perfection.

Introduction

Moving to Canada is both exciting and challenging. For many newcomers, Canada represents hope, safety, opportunity, education, stability, and a better future for children and families. Yet settling into a new country can also bring confusion, loneliness, uncertainty, culture shock, and unexpected challenges.

This book was written to help make that transition easier. Being “a good Canadian” does not mean giving up your culture, language, traditions, or identity. Canada is a multicultural country built by people from many backgrounds. However, it also means being respectful of the cultures in Canada when you found it.

CANADA IS A GREAT COUNTRY!

That is why most newcomers have chosen to come here in the first place. People in Canada love it how it is. Bring your culture to enrich Canada...BUT, don't try to change CANADA to the point that it is no longer recognizable to the people who have long lived and built this country.

The people currently living in Canada have their own distinct culture they would like to preserve. This culture is brought on by the long history of First Nations and first builders, whose generations have created the developed country we see today.

Becoming part of Canadian society means learning how to live respectfully alongside others while contributing positively to your community.

This book offers practical guidance on:

- Canadian values
- Social expectations
- Workplace culture
- Laws and responsibilities
- Communication styles
- Community participation
- Financial responsibility
- Family life
- Emotional well-being
- Long-term success

Whether you are a new citizen, or permanent resident, this guide will help you better understand daily life in Canada.

You do not need to become perfect.

You only need to remain open, respectful, willing to learn, and willing to grow.

You only **MUST LOVE CANADA!**

Welcome!

CHAPTER 1 – WELCOME TO CANADA

Canada is one of the most multicultural countries in the world. Millions of people from every continent have chosen Canada as their new home—joining the First Peoples in inhabiting what is now our great nation.

Depending on when people arrived and called Canada their home, the challenges were different. The first settlers, for instance, who have built Canada to mirror their European origins centuries ago had to fall forests and convert vast land into fields. They brought with them engineering practices that allowed for early road building and creation of townships and forts---amidst cold winters when modern heating systems had yet to be invented. Newer immigrants have come in droves in the last century, with Citizenship tested during World Wars 1 and 2. These immigrant Canadians have invested their lives in protecting Canada and representing our nation with courage and dignity.

The immigrants of today do not face the same challenges. It is not to say that there aren't any; only that they are different. The sacrifices of nation building is no longer at the forefront. Neither is the need to strongly identify citizenship and alliance, with the exception of the Olympics or the Stanley Cup or the World Cup.

Ovvian's Note: To be a GOOD CANADIAN---we need to have both: the desire to build this nation with what we can give to it, and the strong identity with ownership of Canada and what it stands for. It's not enough to wear a Canada T-Shirt on Canada Day.

People come to Canada for many reasons:

- Better education
- Employment opportunities
- Safety and peace
- Family reunification
- Healthcare
- Political stability
- Freedom and human rights

Canada values diversity. In many Canadian cities, you will hear dozens of languages spoken daily.

You may notice that Canada is different from your country in many ways:

- Social interactions may seem more reserved.
- Rules are often followed strictly
- Time and punctuality are taken seriously
- Equality between genders is strongly emphasized
- Personal privacy is respected
- Public systems are organized around fairness and order

At first, these differences may feel uncomfortable. That is normal. Integration takes time.

The Stages of Adjustment

Most newcomers go through several emotional stages:

1. Excitement-Everything feels new and full of possibility.
 2. Culture Shock- You begin noticing differences that feel stressful or confusing.
 3. Frustration- You may feel isolated, homesick, or discouraged.
 4. Adaptation- You slowly learn systems, routines, and expectations.
 5. Belonging- You begin feeling comfortable and connected.
- These stages are natural.

What Makes Canada Unique?

Canada is known internationally for:

- Peacefulness
- Public healthcare
- Human rights
- Multiculturalism
- Public safety
- Strong institutions
- Education
- Respect for law

Canadians generally value:

- Fairness
- Kindness
- Humility
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Community cooperation

Success in Canada

Success in Canada is not only about money.

Success also means:

- Being dependable
- Respecting others
- Following laws
- Contributing positively
- Supporting your family
- Participating in your community
- Building healthy relationships

The most successful newcomers usually share common habits:

- They continue learning
- They improve their language skills
- They adapt while keeping their identity
- They remain patient during difficult times
- They seek help when needed

Reflection Questions

- Why did you choose Canada?
- What sacrifices did you make to come here?
- What are your goals for the next five years?
- What strengths do you already bring to Canadian society?
- What worries you most about adjusting to life in Canada?

Newcomer Success Story

Maria arrived in Canada from the Philippines with two young children and limited savings. During her first year, she struggled with homesickness, transportation, and finding employment that matched her previous experience.

Instead of giving up, she attended free newcomer workshops, improved her English communication skills, volunteered at a community center, and slowly built professional connections. Three years later, Maria became a supervisor at a healthcare facility and purchased her first home.

Her story reflects an important lesson:

Success in Canada often happens gradually through consistency, patience, and community support.

Chapter Summary

Canada offers opportunity, but adjustment takes time. Understanding Canadian systems, values, and expectations can help newcomers build confidence and long-term success.

- What are your goals for the next five years?
- What strengths do you already bring to Canadian society?

CHAPTER 2 – UNDERSTANDING CANADIAN VALUES

Respect for Others

Respect is one of the most important values in Canada.

Respect means:

- Listening when others speak
- Treating everyone fairly
- Respecting boundaries
- Accepting differences
- Avoiding discrimination

Canadians expect respectful behavior regardless of:

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Occupation
- Sexual orientation
- Income level

Equality

Canada strongly promotes equality.

This means:

- Women and men are treated equally under the law
- Employers cannot discriminate unfairly
- Children have rights
- People with disabilities are protected
- Racism and harassment are unacceptable

Even if cultural traditions differ, Canadian laws and social expectations prioritize equality.

Freedom and Responsibility

Canada protects freedoms such as:

- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of association

However, freedom comes with responsibility.
Freedom does not allow:

- Threatening others
- Hate speech
- Violence
- Harassment
- Dangerous behavior

Diversity and Multiculturalism

Canada encourages people to maintain cultural traditions while participating in Canadian society.

This includes:

- Food
- Clothing
- Celebrations
- Language
- Religion
- Arts and customs

At the same time, everyone is expected to respect Canadian laws and shared public values. Try not to impose your beliefs on others. Understand, and even expect differences in such a diverse society. Exercise patience and magnanimity when possible.

The Rule of Law

In Canada, nobody is above the law.
This includes:

- Citizens
- Politicians
- Businesses
- Police
- Government officials

Ovavian's Note: IN CANADA, politicians are not looked upon like celebrities unlike in some other countries. They are public servants and are expected to conduct themselves as such. In many small towns and cities, politicians do not have bodyguards or expect special treatment. This is testament to Canada's strong middle class, sense of fairness and professionalism. Accountability is strong and necessary.

Laws are taken seriously. Newcomers should learn:

- Traffic laws
- Employment laws
- Tenant rights
- Tax responsibilities
- Family laws

Giving Value to Shared History

Canadians give value to their shared history in nation building.

One perfect example is the celebration of **REMEMBRANCE DAY** (November 11)

The wearing the poppy flower pins, a shared tradition with the other commonwealth nations, remembers the sacrifices of Canadians in World War 1. While this tradition is shared with other nations, it is a defining moment in the country's nationhood. New Canadians are urged to recognize and respect this important day.

Kindness and Politeness

Canadians are often known for politeness. Common expressions include:

- Please
- Thank you
- Excuse me
- Sorry

In Canada, saying “sorry” often expresses politeness rather than admitting guilt.

Practical Example:

If someone accidentally bumps into you in a grocery store, both people may apologize. This reflects politeness and social harmony.

Ovavian's Note: It is very Canadian to hold the door for the next person.

Reflection Activity

Write down three Canadian values that are similar to your home culture and three that are different.

Then answer the following:

- Which Canadian values do you admire most?
- Which values may be difficult for you to adjust to?
- How can you respect Canadian values while preserving your own cultural identity?
-

Everyday Example

Imagine you are working in a Canadian office. During a meeting, a junior employee politely disagrees with a manager's idea. In some cultures, this may seem disrespectful.

In Canada, respectful disagreement is often encouraged because workplaces value collaboration and problem-solving.

Understanding these cultural differences helps prevent misunderstandings.

Key Lesson

You do not need to abandon your identity to integrate into Canada.

Successful integration means:

- Respecting Canadian laws
- Understanding social expectations
- Participating positively in society
- Maintaining dignity and cultural pride

Both adaptation and identity can exist together.

CHAPTER 3 — RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Your Rights in Canada

Canada protects individual rights through laws and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Basic rights include:

- Equality before the law
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech
- Democratic rights
- Legal protections
- Mobility rights

These rights apply regardless of race, religion, gender, or background.

Responsibilities of Residents

Living in Canada also comes with responsibilities.

These include:

- Obeying laws
- Paying taxes
- Respecting others
- Serving on a jury if called
- Helping maintain safe communities
- Following public regulations

Taxes and Public Services

Taxes support:

- Healthcare
- Roads
- Schools
- Emergency services
- Public transit
- Community programs

Many newcomers are surprised by how important tax compliance is in Canada.

Filing taxes every year is extremely important, even if your income is low.

Respecting Public Systems

Canada functions because people generally cooperate with systems.

Examples include:

- Waiting in line
- Following traffic rules
- Paying transit fares
- Respecting quiet hours
- Recycling correctly

Understanding Consent

Consent is a very important concept in Canada.

Consent means permission that is freely and clearly given.
This applies to:

- Relationships
- Physical contact
- Photography
- Workplace interactions
- Personal boundaries

Silence does not mean consent.

Pressure does not equal consent.

Reflection Questions

- Which responsibilities are new to you?
- What rights make you feel safer in Canada?

CHAPTER 4 – RESPECT AND EVERYDAY ETIQUETTE

Personal Space

Canadians generally value personal space.

Standing too close to strangers may make people uncomfortable.

In public spaces:

- Keep respectful distance
- Avoid touching strangers unnecessarily
- Respect privacy

Lineups and Waiting Your Turn

Canadians strongly value fairness in public settings.

Cutting in line is considered rude.

Whether at:

- Banks
- Grocery stores
- Bus stops
- Government offices
- Coffee shops

People are expected to wait their turn patiently.

Noise Awareness

Many Canadians live closely together in apartments or townhouses.

Respectful behavior includes:

- Lowering noise at night
- Avoiding loud music late evening
- Respecting quiet hours
- Informing neighbors about parties

Punctuality

Being on time is important in Canada.

This applies to:

- Work
- School
- Appointments
- Social gatherings

Arriving late without notice may appear disrespectful.

Public Cleanliness

Littering is discouraged.

People are expected to:

- Throw garbage properly
- Recycle correctly
- Clean shared spaces
- Pick up after pets

Ovavian's Note: What may be normal practice in other countries--- such as say, bathing in a river with soap and shampoo---might be not only frowned upon, but be altogether illegal. Please be observant and look around you. If no one else is doing it, they are probably NOT doing it for a reason! Better yet---with today's technology, look it up and educate yourself!

There was a viral video in Calgary in a public park that showed how revelers were 'comfortable' having litter all over the grounds. The level of rubbish scattered all over, and the ambivalence of the people in the scene was very 'unCanadian'. It was a scene not welcomed by Canadians---and as an immigrant Canadian, that kind of disorder was not something I found acceptable. If you LOVE Canada, you would not allow that kind of disorder. You would take it upon yourself to be a part of the solution---not part of the problem.

Practical Scenario

You are invited to someone's home for dinner.

Good etiquette may include:

- Arriving on time
- Bringing a small gift
- Removing shoes at the door
- Saying thank you afterward

Reflection Activity

Observe public behavior in your community for one week. What social rules do you notice most often?

CHAPTER 5 – COMMUNICATION IN CANADIAN SOCIETY

Communication Styles

Canadian communication is often polite, indirect, and calm.

People may avoid confrontation and prefer respectful discussion.

Examples:

Instead of saying:
“Your idea is bad.”

A Canadian may say:
“I’m not sure this approach will work.”

Small Talk

Small talk is common in Canada.

Topics often include:

- Weather
- Sports
- Work
- Weekend activities
- Traffic
- Hobbies

Topics usually avoided with strangers include:

- Income
- Religion
- Personal criticism
- Politics

Active Listening

Good communication involves listening respectfully.
This includes:

- Not interrupting
- Making eye contact
- Responding politely
- Asking questions

Email and Text Etiquette

Professional communication often includes:

- Greetings
- Clear language
- Respectful tone
- Proper grammar
- Appreciation

Example: “Hello Sarah,
Thank you for your help today. I appreciate your time.
Best regards, Michael”

Conflict Resolution

Disagreements happen everywhere.
In Canada, healthy conflict resolution usually involves:

- Calm discussion
- Listening
- Respectful compromise
- Avoiding shouting
- Avoiding public humiliation

Reflection Questions

- Which communication habits are different from your home culture?
- What communication strengths do you already have?

CHAPTER 6 – DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Canada's Multicultural Identity

Canada officially recognizes multiculturalism.

People from different cultures are encouraged to:

- Participate in society
- Maintain cultural traditions
- Respect diversity

Understanding Inclusion

Inclusion means ensuring everyone feels welcome and respected.

This includes people of:

- Different races
- Different religions
- Different abilities
- Different gender identities
- Different economic backgrounds

Avoiding Stereotypes

Stereotypes are unfair assumptions about groups of people.

Examples include assumptions about:

- Intelligence
- Gender roles
- Work ethic
- Religion
- Nationality

Good Canadians avoid judging individuals based on stereotypes.

Religious Diversity

Canada protects freedom of religion.

You may encounter:

- Churches
- Mosques
- Temples
- Synagogues
- Indigenous spiritual practices
- Non-religious individuals

Respecting differences is expected.

Gender Equality

Gender equality is strongly emphasized in Canadian society.

Women and men (and all other gender identities) are expected to have equal rights and opportunities.

Harassment, intimidation, and discrimination are taken seriously.

Ovavian's Note: Not all countries in the world have names for the myriad of gender identities accepted in Canada (2SLGBTQIA+). Please look them up for more detailed information.

2SLGBTQIA+ is an inclusive acronym that represents a variety of sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.
2S = Two-Spirit

A term used by some Indigenous peoples in North America to describe a person who embodies both masculine and feminine spirits or fulfills specific cultural, spiritual, and social roles within their community.

L = Lesbian

A woman who is attracted to other women.

G = Gay

A person who is attracted to people of the same gender.

B = Bisexual

A person who is attracted to more than one gender.

T = Transgender

A person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Q = Queer or Questioning

Queer is a broad term used by some people whose sexual orientation or gender identity falls outside traditional categories.

Questioning refers to someone exploring their identity.

I = Intersex

A person born with sex characteristics that do not fit typical definitions of male or female.

A = Asexual, Aromantic, or Agender

Asexual: Experiences little or no sexual attraction.

Aromantic: Experiences little or no romantic attraction.

Agender: Identifies as having no gender.

+ = Includes additional identities and orientations, such as:

Non-binary

Genderfluid

Pansexual

Demisexual

Omnisexual

Genderqueer

And many others

In Canada, 2SLGBTQIA+ is commonly used by governments and organizations because it recognizes Two-Spirit identities and aims to be broadly inclusive of diverse communities.

Reflection Activity

Think about a time when someone treated you respectfully despite cultural differences. How did it affect you?

CHAPTER 7 – UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND RECONCILIATION

Indigenous Peoples in Canada

Before European settlers arrived, Indigenous peoples lived across the land now known as Canada.

There are three primary Indigenous groups:

- First Nations
- Inuit
- Métis

Indigenous communities have rich histories, languages, traditions, and cultures.

Historical Harm

Indigenous peoples experienced:

- Colonization
- Land displacement
- Cultural suppression
- Residential schools
- Discrimination

Residential schools caused lasting trauma for many Indigenous families.

Ovvian's Note: Many newcomers come from countries that were former colonies. In this way, many of us are able to relate to the experiences of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. While not exactly the same history or experiences, we might be able to glean on when is common among our stories and understand the experiences of the Indigenous Peoples in a better way.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation means working toward healing, understanding, and respectful relationships.

Newcomers can support reconciliation by:

- Learning Indigenous history
- Respecting Indigenous cultures
- Listening respectfully
- Challenging stereotypes

Land Acknowledgements

In many events or institutions, people recognize the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples.

This practice encourages awareness and respect.

Reflection Questions

- What Indigenous history did you learn before arriving in Canada?
- Why is reconciliation important?

CHAPTER 8 – CANADIAN WORKPLACE CULTURE

Why Workplace Culture Matters

Many newcomers arrive with strong education, experience, and professional skills.

However, some still struggle to find long-term success because Canadian workplace culture may differ from what they previously experienced.

Understanding workplace expectations is often just as important as technical skill.

Canadian employers commonly value:

- Reliability
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Professionalism
- Adaptability
- Respectful behavior

Employees who understand these expectations often advance more quickly.

Understanding Hierarchies

Canadian workplaces are often less hierarchical than workplaces in some countries.

Managers may encourage employees to:

- Share opinions
- Ask questions
- Offer ideas
- Participate in discussions

This does not mean disrespect.

It reflects collaborative workplace culture.

Communication in the Workplace

Professional communication should remain:

- Calm
- Respectful
- Clear
- Solution-focused

Avoid:

- Yelling
- Public confrontation
- Gossip
- Personal insults
- Aggressive behavior

Attendance and Reliability

Being dependable is extremely important.

Good employees:

- Arrive on time
- Notify supervisors if absent
- Complete tasks responsibly
- Meet deadlines
- Follow instructions carefully

Frequent lateness damages trust.

Workplace Diversity

Canadian workplaces often include people from many backgrounds.

Employees are expected to treat everyone respectfully regardless of:

- Religion
- Gender
- Race
- Nationality
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Discrimination and harassment can result in termination.

Professional Boundaries

Friendly workplaces still require professional boundaries.

Examples include:

- Respecting personal space
- Avoiding offensive jokes
- Avoiding inappropriate comments
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Respecting consent

Taking Initiative

Many employers appreciate workers who identify problems and suggest solutions.

For example: Instead of waiting passively for instructions, employees may:

- Ask how they can help
- Recommend improvements
- Volunteer for projects
- Seek additional training

Learning from Feedback

In Canada, feedback is usually intended to improve performance, not insult workers.

Receiving constructive criticism calmly demonstrates professionalism.

Career Growth

Long-term career success often depends on:

- Networking
- Communication skills
- Continued learning
- Certifications
- Adaptability

Workplace Scenario

Ahmed recently started work at a warehouse. He notices coworkers frequently asking supervisors questions. At first, he worries this appears disrespectful.

Later, he realizes Canadian workplaces often encourage communication to prevent mistakes and improve safety.

After becoming more comfortable asking questions himself, Ahmed performs better and gains confidence.

Ovvian's Note: There are many newcomers who succumb to the temptation of taking on cash jobs illegally. If you are a temporary resident, do not put your status at risk. Many have been deported and blacklisted because of such activities. Act professionally. Also---know your rights. Familiarize yourself with the employment standards in your area.

Chapter Reflection Questions

- What workplace habits from your previous experience may help you in Canada?
- What workplace habits may need adjustment?
- How can you improve communication in professional settings?

Action Steps

1. Practice introducing yourself professionally.
2. Improve resume and interview skills.
3. Learn workplace vocabulary in English or French.
4. Observe communication styles at work.
5. Continue learning industry-specific skills.

CHAPTER 9 – BUILDING EMPLOYMENT STABILITY

Professionalism

Canadian workplaces value professionalism.

This includes:

- Punctuality
- Reliability
- Respectful communication
- Teamwork
- Honesty

Workplace Equality

Employers must follow human rights and labor laws.

Discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or disability is illegal.

Teamwork

Canadian workplaces often emphasize collaboration.

Employees are encouraged to:

- Share ideas
- Ask questions
- Participate in meetings
- Support coworkers

Taking Initiative

Many employers value employees who:

- Solve problems
- Suggest improvements
- Show responsibility
- Learn independently

Workplace Boundaries

Professional boundaries are important.

Examples include:

- Respecting personal space
- Avoiding inappropriate comments
- Maintaining professionalism
- Respecting workplace policies

Workplace Safety

Workers have the right to safe working conditions.

Always:

- Use safety equipment
- Report hazards
- Follow procedures
- Ask for training if unsure

Practical Workplace Advice

If you do not understand instructions:

- Ask politely for clarification
- Take notes
- Repeat instructions back

This shows responsibility, not weakness.

Reflection Activity

Describe the biggest difference between workplaces in Canada and your previous experience.

CHAPTER 10 — BUILDING FINANCIAL STABILITY

Understanding Banking

Most Canadians use:

- Bank accounts
- Debit cards
- Credit cards
- Online banking

Learning financial systems is important.

Credit Scores

A credit score measures financial reliability.

Good credit helps with:

- Renting apartments
- Getting loans
- Buying vehicles
- Mortgages

Pay bills on time.

Avoid excessive debt.

Budgeting

Canada can be expensive. Common expenses include:

- Rent
- Groceries
- Transportation
- Phone bills
- Utilities
- Insurance

Creating a monthly budget helps prevent stress.

Avoiding Scams

Newcomers are often targeted by scams.

Be careful if someone:

- Requests money urgently
- Threatens arrest
- Requests gift cards
- Pretends to be government officials
- Requests personal information

Renting Responsibly

Before signing a lease:

- Read carefully
- Understand terms
- Keep copies
- Know tenant rights

Ovvian's Note: Many immigrants achieve financial stability by planning wisely. Many undertake multiple jobs and live frugally. However, there are many too who fall prey to the excitement of being able to buy with credit---to the point that they are no longer able to save. As a newcomer, protect your credit score, cultivate it. It will be a useful ally in being able to be strategic in planning your finances.

Reflection Questions

- What financial habits do you want to improve?
- What financial goals do you have in Canada?

CHAPTER 11 — HOUSING AND NEIGHBOR RELATIONS

Types of Housing

Common Canadian housing includes:

- Apartments
- Condominiums
- Townhouses
- Detached homes
- Basement suites

Respecting Shared Spaces

Good neighbors:

- Keep common areas clean
- Control noise
- Respect parking rules
- Dispose of garbage correctly

Recycling and Waste

Many municipalities require sorting:

- Recycling
- Compost
- Garbage

Following these systems helps communities function efficiently.

Winter Responsibilities

In some cities, homeowners and tenants must clear snow from sidewalks.

Failure to do so may result in fines.

Conflict with Neighbors

If problems occur:

- Stay calm
- Speak respectfully
- Avoid escalation
- Seek mediation if needed

Ovvian's note: Be conscious of By-Laws in your area. They might be seasonal announcements as well, such as fire or burning restrictions during dry forest fire conditions. Also, I often see complaints in the neighborhood about car alarms or early morning use of heavy equipment such as mowers. Be considerate of your neighbours.

Reflection Activity

List five ways to become a respectful neighbor.

CHAPTER 12 — HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Public Healthcare

Canada's healthcare system is publicly funded. Healthcare coverage varies by province. Many services are covered, though some services may not be.

Family Doctors and Clinics

Healthcare options include:

- Family doctors
- Walk-in clinics
- Emergency rooms
- Telehealth services

Emergency Services

Call 911 for emergencies involving:

- Police
- Fire
- Medical emergencies

Only use emergency services for serious situations.

Libraries and Community Services

Public libraries offer:

- Free books
- Internet access
- Language learning
- Community programs
- Job search support

Public Transit

Transit systems help people travel affordably.

Good transit etiquette includes:

- Offering seats to seniors
- Waiting for passengers to exit first
- Respecting quiet spaces

Ovvian's Note: Please DO NOT put your devices on speaker when in public spaces, such as public transportation. Do not let your child watch cartoons without headphones in public spaces. Canadians value their spaces---including the auditory spaces.

Reflection Questions

- Which public services have helped you most?
- What services would you like to learn more about?

CHAPTER 13 — PARENTING AND EDUCATION IN CANADA

School Systems

Children in Canada attend:

- Elementary school
- Middle school
- Secondary school

Education is highly valued.

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to:

- Attend meetings
- Support homework
- Communicate with teachers
- Participate in school events

Encouraging Independence

Canadian parenting often encourages:

- Independence
- Decision-making
- Confidence
- Critical thinking

Child Safety Laws

Canada has strong child protection laws.

Physical punishment, neglect, or unsafe conditions may lead to legal consequences.

Bullying and Mental Health

Schools take bullying seriously.

Parents should encourage open communication with children.

Ovavian's Note: Mental health is a serious topic that, while encouraged to be open about in Canada, may be a sensitive subject to many immigrant cultures. Know that there are resources in most Canadian communities that aid to help youth and families.

Reflection Activity

How can your family balance cultural traditions with Canadian educational expectations?

CHAPTER 14 — DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND ONLINE SAFETY

Social Media Responsibility

Online behavior has real consequences.

Avoid:

- Harassment
- Hate speech
- Threats
- Sharing misinformation
- Posting private information without permission

Protecting Privacy

Use strong passwords.

Avoid sharing:

- Banking information
- Identification numbers
- Passwords
- Private family information

Ovvian's Note: Do not liberally share your birthday to the general public, as it is often used as identifying information. Giving this away liberally makes it easy for scammers to pose as you.

Identifying Misinformation

Not everything online is true.

Before sharing information:

- Verify the source
- Read beyond headlines
- Check dates
- Compare multiple sources

Online Reputation

Employers sometimes review social media profiles.

Your digital behavior affects opportunities.

Ovvian's Note: Be mindful of what you share online. People in Canada can NOT get hired, or GET FIRED if they say things that can compromise their employers, or their image. The freedom to express is not only a right---with it also comes responsibilities.

Reflection Questions

- What online habits could improve your safety?
- How can you help stop misinformation?

CHAPTER 15 – MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Culture Shock and Loneliness

Many newcomers experience:

- Homesickness
- Isolation
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Depression

These feelings are common.

Seeking Support

Asking for help is a sign of strength.

Support may come from:

- Family
- Friends
- Counselors
- Community groups
- Faith communities
- Settlement organizations (there are many all over CANADA)

Ovvian's Note: A lot of these services might not be present in our countries of origin. This might bring some trepidation---but know that these groups are here to help. Some of which, like Settlement Organizations, have a lot of FREE government funded programs precisely for this purpose or assisting newcomers.

Building Healthy Routines

Good mental health habits include:

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Healthy eating
- Social connection
- Hobbies
- Time outdoors

Work-Life Balance

Constant work without rest can damage physical and mental health.

Balance is important.

Ovvian's Note: One's overall well-being is important. Give your life balance importance, and routinely check your values for the things that matter most in your life. An attitude of gratitude helps!

Reflection Activity

Write down three things that help you feel calm, connected, or hopeful.

CHAPTER 16 — BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS AND COMMUNITY

Making Friends in Canada

Friendships in Canada may develop slowly. People often connect through:

- Work
- School
- Sports
- Volunteering
- Community events
- Religious organizations

Joining Community Activities

Participation helps reduce isolation. Examples include:

- Fitness classes
- Cultural associations
- Parent groups
- Language exchanges
- Arts programs

Networking

Networking means building professional and social relationships. Strong networks often create opportunities.

Ovvia's Note: When I was new in Canada, I made friends by going to my church. It was there that I met other Filipino-Canadians who had lived in my city for decades. Through them, I learned about their challenges as newcomers and how they overcame them.

Reflection Questions

- What communities do you want to become part of?
- How can you contribute to your neighborhood?

CHAPTER 17— VOLUNTEERING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Why Volunteering Matters

Volunteering benefits both communities and individuals.

Benefits include:

- Building experience
- Improving language skills
- Meeting people
- Learning Canadian systems
- Supporting causes

Civic Participation

Civic engagement means participating in society.

This may include:

- Voting
- Attending community meetings
- Supporting local initiatives
- Respecting public spaces

Environmental Responsibility

Canada values environmental stewardship.

Good practices include:

- Recycling
- Conserving energy
- Reducing waste
- Respecting parks and nature

Ovvian's Note: Volunteerism is very important in Canada. It is looked upon favourably in the hiring process, as well as when applying for scholarships. Most of all, you get a great feeling when you help others in the community!

I participate in many cultural and civic groups that reflect things that are important to me. I am with a cultural Filipino-Canadian group. This helps with homesickness. I can be around people who speak my language and cook my food. Also, I am able to meet others who have had similar experiences as mine. These connections create bonds that strengthen friendships. The parallel experiences give me a feeling that, "If they can weather these newcomer challenges, so can I!"

I am also involved in arts groups and Arts Councils. Through these involvements, I am able to grow my interests with like-minded people.

Also, remember that you can be proactive! If no such group of your interest exists yet, create one!

Reflection Activity

Choose one community activity you would like to participate in within the next six months.

CHAPTER 18 – SAFETY, LAWS, AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Personal Safety

Canada is generally safe, but awareness remains important.

Practice:

- Locking doors
- Staying alert at night
- Avoiding dangerous situations
- Reporting suspicious activity

Understanding Laws

Ignorance of the law is not accepted as an excuse.

Learn laws related to:

- Driving
- Employment
- Family matters
- Substance use
- Public behavior

Ovvian's Note: International Students (in British Columbia) who have valid driver's licenses are not required to have a Class 5 License. EVEN THEN--- It would be wise to get the driving examination workbook to review, since many laws, signs and rules from the home countries are different from those in Canada. It is for everyone's safety that newcomers KNOW DRIVING IN CANADA. Having a car is not enough. More importantly, one needs to know how to drive in Canada. This includes driving in winter and knowing the requirements of changing tires with the change of the seasons.

Emergency Preparedness

Prepare for emergencies by keeping:

- Flashlights
- Water
- Food
- Medication
- Emergency contacts

Natural Conditions

Different regions experience:

- Snowstorms
- Wildfires
- Floods
- Extreme cold

Learning preparedness increases safety.

Ovvian's Note: Where I live, there have been forest fires in our vicinity. In the past years, we have had to evacuate due to this. It would be a good idea to have GO BAG ready, with your essentials (to include pertinent documents and medications). As a newcomer, know of such risks present where you live. It could be earthquakes, hurricane, forest fires, tsunamis etc. With Canada's varied locations and inherent conditions, these vary. Educate yourself about your own location.

Reflection Questions

- What emergency preparations does your household need?
- What laws do you still need to learn about?

CHAPTER 19 – WINTER, WEATHER, AND DAILY PREPAREDNESS

Understanding Canadian Winters

Many newcomers are unfamiliar with severe winter weather. Cold temperatures can be dangerous.

Winter Clothing

Essential winter clothing includes:

- Insulated jackets
- Gloves
- Boots
- Hats
- Thermal layers

Winter Transportation

Winter driving requires caution.

Drivers should:

- Use winter tires
- Drive slowly
- Clear snow from vehicles
- Prepare emergency kits

Emotional Effects of Winter

Long winters may affect mood and energy.

Helpful strategies include:

- Staying active
- Socializing
- Spending time outdoors safely
- Maintaining routines

Ovvian's Note: Canada has all 4 Seasons and is known as the Great White North for a reason. Perhaps, when moving to Canada, take into consideration the 'types or winter' that differ all over the country. For instance, in coastal Canada, the humidity may be such that the cold is more penetrating than inland.

There are places like Lower Mainland British Columbia, that there are years when no snow fall are recorded at all. In contrast, some parts of Canada may have 6 months of winter with very short spring and fall. Do your research, talk to locals and find out what suits you---or what you think you can adapt to.

Most communities put out numerous winter activites. Check out what your city has planned for your community.

Reflection Activity

Create a winter preparedness checklist for yourself or your family.

CHAPTER 20 — CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP AND LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Building a Future

Long-term success often requires:

- Education
- Skill development
- Financial planning
- Community involvement
- Patience

Permanent Residency and Citizenship

Many newcomers eventually pursue Canadian citizenship.

Citizenship involves:

- Residency requirements
- Language ability
- Knowledge testing
- Civic understanding

Lifelong Learning

Canada rewards continued learning.

Opportunities include:

- College programs
- Trade certifications
- Online learning
- Workshops
- Language classes

Maintaining Your Identity

Integration does not require losing your culture.

Healthy integration means:

- Preserving traditions
- Respecting diversity
- Participating in society
- Building shared understanding

Ovvian's Note: I think we need to ask ourselves, not only what kind of life you hope to build in Canada but also---WHAT KIND OF CANADA DO I WANT TO LIVE IN in the future? We need to ask ourselves, WHAT CAN I DO TO BUILD THE CANADA OF MY DREAMS?

Reflection Questions

- What kind of life do you hope to build in Canada?
- What steps will help you reach that future?

YOUR CANADIAN JOURNEY

Your Story Matters

Every newcomer journey is unique. Some journeys are smooth. Others involve hardship, sacrifice, uncertainty, and resilience. No matter your path, your experiences matter.

Growth Takes Time

You may sometimes feel:

- Frustrated
- Misunderstood
- Lonely
- Overwhelmed

Remember:

Adjustment takes time. Progress is often gradual.

What Makes a Good Canadian?

A good Canadian is not defined by birthplace.

A good Canadian:

- Respects others, especially those whose home country we have recently joined.
- Contributes positively
- Follows laws
- Supports community
- Values fairness
- Continues learning
- Shows kindness

Ovvian's Note: Being CANADIAN is a privilege. Many have to work hard to get it. Often, there are personal sacrifices involved in its acquisition. It is usually a mutually beneficial arrangement--or at the very least, we need to strive for it to be that way. If we aspired to be Canadian; let us appreciate Canada (the land and the people), and give back to it the goodness it has given us.

Final Encouragement

Canada becomes stronger when people from different backgrounds work together with respect, understanding, and compassion.

You bring:

- Skills
- Culture
- Perspective
- Creativity
- Strength
- Resilience

Your contributions matter.

Welcome to your new chapter.

Welcome to Canada.

Remember, being a “Canadian Citizen” is NOT enough.

You must aspire to be a good citizen.

In order to be that, you MUST LOVE CANADA!

APPENDIX A – PRACTICAL NEWCOMER CHECKLIST

First Month

- Obtain identification documents
- Apply for healthcare coverage
- Open a bank account
- Get a phone number
- Learn local transit
- Register children in school

First Six Months

- Build professional connections
- Improve English or French skills
- Learn tenant rights
- Understand taxes
- Join community groups

First Year

- Create financial goals
- Build credit history
- Explore career development
- Volunteer in the community
- Strengthen social support systems

APPENDIX B – COMMON CANADIAN EXPRESSIONS

- “How’s it going?”
- “Take care.”
- “No worries.”
- “Sorry about that.”
- “Excuse me.”
- “Could you please...”

APPENDIX C – REFLECTION JOURNAL PAGES

- My Goals in Canada
- Skills I Want to Improve
- People Who Support Me
- Ways I Can Help My Community
- My Five-Year Vision

Frequently Asked Questions for Newcomers

How long does adjustment usually take?

Every person's experience is different. Some people feel comfortable within months. Others may require several years before feeling fully settled.

Adjustment is influenced by:

- Language ability
- Employment stability
- Social support
- Financial pressure
- Family circumstances
- Previous migration experiences

Is it normal to feel lonely?

Yes.

Loneliness is extremely common among newcomers. Building friendships and support networks takes time. Joining community groups, volunteering, and participating in local activities can help reduce isolation.

What if my professional credentials are not recognized?

Many newcomers face challenges transferring foreign education or experience.

Possible solutions include:

- Additional certifications
- Bridging programs
- Professional licensing
- Networking
- Volunteering
- Mentorship programs

Career rebuilding can take time, but persistence matters.

What if my English is not strong?

Language improvement happens gradually.

Practice daily through:

- Reading
- Listening
- Community conversations
- Classes
- Watching Canadian media
- Workplace communication

Ovvian's Note: Making mistakes is part of learning, BUT do your best to learn English (or French) in order for you to be able to fully enjoy and contribute to the Canadian experience. Learning the Canadian languages is beyond practical. It shows one's love for Canada and the desire to contribute fully.

Final Reflection Exercise

Take time to answer the following questions honestly.

1. What kind of future do you want in Canada?
2. What strengths helped you survive difficult times?
3. What values do you want your family to carry forward?
4. What community contributions would make you proud?
5. What habits will help you succeed long term?

Write your answers in a notebook and revisit them every year.
Growth becomes easier when goals are clear.

FINAL MESSAGE

This book is not only about adapting to Canada.
It is also about understanding how to thrive while
preserving dignity, identity, and hope.
A strong society is built when people support one
another.

May your journey in Canada be filled with growth,
opportunity, friendship, and purpose.
The future you build here matters.

I hope that you become not just a legal resident of
Canada, or a Citizen of Canada.

I HOPE YOU **LOVE CANADA**, and work to make Canada
better, with the same passion as those who have built this
country before us.

Ovvian Castrillo-Hill
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ABOUT OVVIAN CASTRILLO-HILL:

Ovvian Castrillo Hill is an Artist, Sculptor, Emerging Filmmaker, Podcast Host and Author. She is a proud Canadian of Filipino descent and is a community advocate who expresses views in celebration of art, culture and strengthening the weave of Canada's people through respect, appreciation of the cultures that have inhabited and built Canada; and people who continue to contribute to making Canada the best version of itself.

www.ovviancastrillohill.com