

Will Your Long Distance Relationship Work?



Acing Life

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Introduction



People enter into long-distance relationships (LDR) for a myriad of reasons. Some make the conscious choice to date someone who lives far away and some are forced to make a choice whether to stay together due to circumstances.

Regardless of the reasons long distance relationships create challenges that couples who are in close proximity do not face.

There are basically two types of LDR:

There are those who have met in person but one person had to move away due to college, career or family obligations and there are those who have connected online and have not physically met in person.

This book is geared more towards those who have met in person, but can be used in both instances.

Have You Met In Person?



If you haven't met in person I would ask that you seriously consider the reality of your relationship. Although an online love can seem fulfilling and emotionally close and reliable I'm here to tell you that the chances of things working out in the long run, in my opinion are quite slim.

As I mentioned earlier the problem with knowing someone online rather than in real life is that we tend to idealize them. We aren't faced with their quirks and irritations. We aren't subjected to them during their worst behaviors or sicknesses. We don't see that they are perpetually late or get frustrated about everything, that they're rude to wait staff or that they can't keep the kitchen clean.

For those who are in an online relationship but have never met before let me ask you this:

What are your reasons for having an LDR? Do you struggle with intimacy so you find it easier to keep someone at arm's length? Is it easier to create an ideal person that you can have around whenever it's convenient? Do you feel like no one understands you, but this person is the only one who does? Do you find it easier to share yourself with someone who is not physically present?

Start off by asking yourself some of these questions before you dive into something you aren't ready for.

Trust me, I speak from experience. I've had three long distance relationships, including one with a man I had never met and none of them worked.

My first real long distance relationship was with my ex-husband who was living in Switzerland when I met him. We had an LDR over the next five years going back and forth between Europe and California. I lived with him for about 5 months in both Switzerland and Greece and one year we saw each other for a total of 10 days while he finished his required Greek army service.

He eventually moved to the U.S. and within fourteen months we were separated. Why? The first reason is that we were never a good match in the first place, but the main reason is that we never spent enough time with each other in a regular living situation in order to figure this out.

Once we had to deal with real life situations that include finances, jobs, household chores and communication it all fell apart. It became obvious that we had different views on life and what we wanted and needed from a partner.

Because we had spent the prior five or six years living in a fantasy world of travel and short-term connection and longing we never faced the truth of our relationship.

Three years later I met a man when I was living in Texas. I decided to move back to California after three months but we continued to date long distance for the next two years.

After my divorce, I was so happy to have someone that wanted to talk to me, travel with me, laugh with me and enjoy dinners or movies that I settled.

Although I was in Texas once a month and he came to California numerous times and although we traveled the world and spent major holidays together we never developed any true intimacy. He never really let me in and I accepted the crumbs he was handing out.

Looking back on that time I realize that I wasn't ready for intimacy or vulnerability so I chose someone that I knew I wouldn't have to face it with. I chose long distance because it kept me safe.

My third and final LDR was with a man I never met in person. We started talking on a dating site. He lived in another state and I wasn't really interested because of this, but he was so handsome and he pursued me for months so I eventually relented.

We talked for hours and hours. I thought we had something. After six months he broke up with me. A month or so later I found out that he had another girlfriend AND a wife and child. I realized what a fool I had been. I was believing in a fantasy. I believed what he portrayed himself to be and it wasn't at all true.

People can be whatever they want to be when they're online and if you haven't met them how can you be sure they are who they say they are?

There must have still been something I was struggling with that was keeping me from finding and wanting a real and true relationship.

I vowed that would never happen again.

So, as you can see....I speak from experience.

“If fear is the great enemy of intimacy, love is its true friend.

— Henri Nouwen

What Are Your Chances?



Before we go into what it takes to make an LDR work, what are the actual statistics involving these relationships? Frankly, there are not a lot of scientific studies out there to make a claim one way or another.

According to statisticbrain.com only 3% of all marriages and 32.5% of all college relationships are LDR. But the most telling statistic is that forty percent (40%) of all LDR's break up.

[Some LDR Statistics](#)

A 2007 study by Katheryn Maguire found that couples are happier if they understand that distance will be temporary. However, this study did not test whether the couples were more likely to break up.

A 2013 study conducted out of Cornell University and the University of Hong Kong found that distance can enhance intimacy. The problem with this study is that it also found that these couples tended to idealize each other, which doesn't bode well for a truly intimate, long lasting relationship.

[Cornell Study Abstract](#)

Many of these studies were conducted prior to the domination of the internet so the jury is still out as to whether long distance relationships can really work.

Your chances of success depend on so many different factors including length of time together prior to distance, age, distance, length of time the distance will last and amount of time you can spend together during the separation.

The real question is how badly you want it to work, to what extent you are committed to making it work, whether you can sustain the effort and can you continue to appreciate your partner and not take each other for granted.

Why How Far Away You Are Matters



How far you are and how often you can see each other will impact the relationship. If you are only a few hours away and can arrange weekend meetings on a regular basis you have a better chance of keeping your emotional ties to one another.

The United States is huge and if you are on different coasts traveling can take up a lot of time and money and if you are from different countries then you'll have to deal with massive amounts of travel, time differences and expenses.

Relationships fail because people take each other for granted. They assume that once you are together you put things on auto pilot and it all works out, but this is a mistake and if you are in an LDR you must work even harder to keep your connection.

Try to determine how feasible it will be to visit each other in person and how often you can do it. Will you see each other only on holidays? Can you squeeze in vacations together or can you take turns going back and forth? Can you afford it?

Can you meet each other in the middle? How much time off do you have or can you get from work or school? Is one person always doing the traveling and sacrificing? If so, for how long?

I spent a ton of money going back and forth to Europe. I paid for my husband to go to school in Greece which wasn't the greatest plan looking back on it.

Going to Europe all the time was a wonderful experience but was it the right choice? Did I do the best thing for myself or did I do whatever I thought I should to make the relationship work?

I have made a number of foolish financial decisions in order to keep my long distance relationships going. I thought if I didn't do the work they would all fall apart and to be honest, it's probably true. But, do you really want to be in that kind of relationship?

The say falling in love is not a choice, but I disagree. When I met my husband he was from another country, spoke very little English and was twelve years my junior. I ignored all the problems because I thought I was "in love".

I also spent a lot of money visiting Texas all the time and although I don't necessarily regret it I'm also not sure it was a great idea. I was spending my money. But, when he came to California it was for work. He never sacrificed for me and I paid financially and emotionally in the end.

Think about these things.

Don't sacrifice more than you can afford to give.

What Are Your Expectations?



The two main questions you need to ask yourself before you venture into an LDR (or any relationship for that matter) are as follows:

1. What do I want from a relationship?
2. What are my core needs?

What Do I Want From A Relationship?

If you don't know what you want or expect from a relationship how can you make an informed decision about entering or staying in an LDR? We all need to know what our non-negotiables are and its important to have them in place and have strong boundaries before you agree to an LDR.

Some things you need to ask yourself?

- Is a relationship a priority for me and/or my partner?
- Do I want a wife or husband?
- Do we share the same vision of the future for the relationship?
- Am I okay with being alone and if so, how much and how often?
- Do I need constant reassurance and attention? If not, how much attention do I need?
- Do I want a monogamous relationship or would I be okay with something more open?
- Are we on the same page when it comes to the amount of contact we both need?
- Am I okay with not getting my needs met all of the time?

What Are My Core Needs?

If you haven't heard of the Five Love Languages, then you should check out the site or get the book. Gary Chapman believes there are five love languages and knowing your love language and that of your partner can be extremely helpful.

[5 Love Languages](#)

The five love languages are Physical Touch, Quality Time, Words of Affirmation, Receiving Gifts and Acts of Service.

My love language is primarily quality time, so you can imagine how hard it can be to have a truly intimate fulfilling relationship with someone when I can't spend quality time with them. If your love language is physical touch you are going to struggle with feeling happy when you are in a long-distance relationship.

Being in a long-distance relationship can take a lot of sacrifice and you need to be willing to make this sacrifice if you want things to work. Think about whether you can go without having your needs met for short and/or long periods of time.

Some things to ask yourself:

- Do I need physical contact to be content?
- Do I want someone to share the financial burden with me?
- Can I go without sex, physical contact or kissing for long periods?
- Can I support my partner in what they are doing, even if it means I'm unhappy sometimes?
- How much communication do I need and what type?
- Do I know my partner's love language as well as my own?
- Can I communicate my needs in a healthy manner?
- What is the bare minimum of emotional support that I need to get through this period?

When you consider what your expectations are you also need to consider communication, both style and volume. On average women use approximately 20,000 words while men only use 7,000. Because our brains are hardwired differently our language skills are also different.

If you are a woman you are going to connect emotionally through language (i.e. sharing) but this is not the same for men. Understanding that your man is not going to want to talk as much as you or share as much will keep some of your frustration at bay.

Although you may want to talk or text 10x a day he may be perfectly fine with one or two. Don't take his lack of communication as lack of interest because he is only doing what's natural.

Come up with a plan that works for the both of you and try to stick with it without being rigid. If you need to hear "good morning" and "good night" from your guy every day then tell him that. If you're okay with once every few days or whenever you both have time then that's what you need to discuss and agree upon.

Lack of communication can lead to lack of connection, especially for women. We need to share ourselves, our day, our feelings and our emotions or we get out all of whack.

Women need to feel heard, accepted and understood in order to feel cared for and if a man consistently ignores us because he is “busy” or doesn’t think giving us his time or attention is important we will slowly close of and begin to shut down.

So, women need to be careful not to expect too much communication and men need to be careful to talk, or at least listen even if they don’t feel like it sometimes.

“Real intimacy is only possible to the degree that we can be honest about what we are doing and feeling.”

— Dr. Joyce Brothers

What About Sex?



With the advent of instant messaging and face-time/skype it is much easier to keep your sex life going even if you aren't with your loved one.

This is another area where people can have different needs and expectations. Sex is also another way to keep your connection going so the importance of this aspect of your relationship cannot be overlooked.

Not everyone is comfortable with phone sex or having sex on a webcam. If you aren't, I suggest you try to get comfortable with it even if it's only now and again and if you can't be, that's okay you can try something you are comfortable with.

By keeping your sex life alive and you'll be better off when you do see each other you'll maintain a closer connection.

Sex is one way that men connect. It isn't the only way you should be connecting and you should never use sex to keep a man or keep your relationship going because eventually everything will fall apart. A relationship must be based on spiritual, mental and emotional chemistry as well as physical.

Sex is also a way that a couple creates intimacy. Learn about what turns your partner on and vice versa. Maybe you're totally kinky and he's very vanilla. Is there a middle ground? How much sex does your partner expect? How much are you comfortable with?

Consider opening a joint Tumblr account where you can each share your fantasies. Tumblr is a fun way to show your partner what your sexual desires are without having to tell them. Post pictures of things that you like or want to try and have them comment on the pictures or upload their own.

Try a fun little strip-tease or putting on cute lingerie when you talk. What about some sexy boudoir pictures? Men are very visual. They can't help it.

Dressing up for him doesn't mean you should do something you aren't comfortable with, but what is sexy to a man is your confidence.

Be secure about your looks and your body and if you aren't, just pretend that you are for those few minutes with him. I can guarantee he won't be noticing those little problems areas that you think you have with your body.

For the guys-women are turned on through their ears and not through their eyes. If you can do sweet things for her and tell her she's sexy or hot or that she turns you on then she will feel more receptive and more willing to meet you halfway.

If you can try and schedule weekly date night webcam calls where you talk only about fun things, about what you'll do when you're together next or your sexual fantasies.

When you are physically apart from someone for long periods stress can start to set in and there will be times it will overwhelm you if you let it. Do your best to keep things fun and playful.

In The Long Run



Relationships either work or they don't. If you are meant to be together you will weather this storm of distance and become stronger for it. If you aren't meant for each other it will likely tear you apart.

Distance and separation can be a good thing. Sometimes we need a little time on our own to sort through some personal issues without the daily demands of a partner or relationship.

The more important thing to remember is to remember to take active steps to keep the relationship going and to keep a connection between you. The second more important thing to remember is that men and women connect differently so don't give your guy what you want and expect him to give back in return and vice versa.

Men want to be appreciated and women want to be adored.

Women need to be receptive to him when he does call or text even if it isn't as much as you like it to be and show appreciation for the little things that he does. Complaining that he's ignoring you or not calling enough won't make him want to call you more.

Make every moment that you are together count. Make every conversation as happy as possible. It doesn't mean you can't share when you're having a tough time, but it won't help the relationship if you're continually bitching or unhappy. A man wants to know that he can please you and if you're miserable all the time he'll feel like a failure and may start to distance himself.

Men need to understand that they can't be lazy and stop giving her attention. No matter how busy you are there is always 30 seconds in a day for a "I miss you" or "Have a great day sweetheart" text. If you fail to do these little things she will start to question how much you really care. Even if you think it's not important, she does.

In the long run you want your long-distance relationship to work in summary-you need to do the following:

1. Communicate your needs
2. Understand your expectations
3. Try to keep things positive
4. Always support each other
5. Don't forget about sex!
6. Make plans to see each other as much as possible
7. Remember why you got together in the first place

"Absence is to love as wind is to fire; it extinguishes the small and kindles the great."

- Roger de Bussy-Rabutin

One Last Note

Relationships can be a struggle, trust me, I know! But, with the right skills and tools you can turn things around quickly.

As a certified Mars-Venus coach I'm here to help you on your journey and transform your life and relationships into what you've always wanted.



Feel free to check out my blog AcingLife.com for additional resources.

If you are interested in coaching please [contact me](#). You don't have to face this alone.

If you are interested in email coaching feel free to [contact me](#). You don't have to face this alone.

