

Making Long Distance Relationships Work

1. Avoid excessive communication.

It is unwise to be overly “sticky” and possessive. You two don’t really have to communicate 12 hours a day to keep the relationship going. Many couples think that they need to compensate for the distance by doing more. This is not true. And it might only make things worse. Soon you would get tired of “loving.” Remember: Less is more. It is not about spamming — you are only going to exhaust yourselves. It’s really about teasing at the right moments and tugging at the right spots.

2. See it as an opportunity.

If you want to live together, you first need to learn how to live apart.” – Anonymous

View it as a learning journey for the both of you. See it as a test of your love for each other. As the Chinese saying goes, “Real gold is not afraid of the test of fire.” Instead of thinking that this long distance relationship is pulling you two apart, you should believe that through this experience, the both of you will be bound together even stronger. As Emma says it to Will in season four of Glee,

“I would rather be here, far from you, but feeling really close, rather than close to you but feeling really far away.” – Emma, Glee Season 4

3. Set some ground rules to manage your expectations.

Both of you need to be clear with what you expect of each other during this long distance relationship. Set some ground rules so that none of you will do things that will take the other party by surprise. For instance, are you two exclusive? Is it alright for the other person to go on dates? What is your commitment level? It’s better to be open with each other about all these things.

4. Try to communicate regularly, and creatively.

Greet each other “good morning” and “good night” every day — this is a must. On top of that, try to update your partner on your life and its happenings, however mundane some of the things may seem. To up the game, send each other pictures, audio clips and short videos from time to time. By putting in this kind of effort, you make the other person feel loved and attended to.

5. Talk dirty with each other.

Sexual tension is undoubtedly one of the most important things between couples. Sexual desire is like a glue that keeps both parties from drifting apart. Not only is sex a biological need, it is an emotional one as well.

Keep the flames burning by sending each other teasing texts filled with sexual innuendos and provocative descriptions. Sexy puns work pretty well too.

6. Avoid “dangerous” situations.

If you already know that going to the club or going drinking with your group of friends late at night will displease your partner, then you should either 1. Not do it or 2. Tell your partner beforehand so as to reassure him/her.

Don't be careless about this sort of matter because your partner is only going to be extra worried or extra suspicious, and of course, very upset, because you are putting him/her in a position where he/she feels powerless or lacking in control. Also, It could be easy for you to fall into the trap which you, unconsciously or not, set up for yourself by "hanging out" with your office eye-candy after work, or going out with a girl or guy from your past who has been flirting with you. You need to recognize the dangers before entering into the situation. Don't just listen to your heart. Listen to your mind too.

7. Do things together.

Play an online game together. Watch a documentary on YouTube or Vimeo at the same time. Sing to each other on Skype while one of you plays the guitar. "Take a walk together" outside while video-calling each other. Go online-shopping together — and buy each other gifts (See #13). You really have to be creative and spontaneous about it.

8. Do similar things.

Recommend books, TV shows, movies, music, news and etc. to each other. When you read, watch and listen to the same things, you get to have more topics in common to talk about. This is a good to create some shared experiences even though you are living apart.

9. Make visits to each other.

Visits are the highlight of every long distance relationship. After all the waiting and yearning and abstinence, you finally get to meet each other to fulfill all the little things like kissing, holding hands, etc. which are all common to other couples but so very special and extra intimate for people in long distance relationships. It will be like fireworks, glitter bombs, confetti, rainbows and butterflies everywhere.

10. Have a goal in mind.

"What do we want to achieve at the end of the day?" "How long are we going to be apart?" "What about the future?" These are the questions you two need to ask yourselves. The truth is, no couple can be in a long distance relationship for forever. Eventually we all need to settle down. So make a plan with each other. Do up a timeline, marking down the estimated times apart and times together, and draw an end goal. It is important that you two are on the same page and have the same goals. So that even if you are not living in the same space and the same timezone, both of you are still motivated to work together in the same direction towards a future that includes one another. That's right, you need motivation to make a relationship lasts too.

11. Enjoy your alone time and your time with your friends and family.

You are alone but you are not lonely, unless you choose to feel like it. You don't have to let your world revolve around your partner — you still have you, your friends and your family. Take this time apart to do more with your friends and family. Go to the gym more often. Get a new hobby. Binge-watch shows. There are plenty of things for you to do that doesn't involve your partner.

12. Stay honest with each other.

Talk about your feelings of fear, insecurity, jealousy, apathy, whatsoever. If you try to hide anything from your partner, that secret will sooner or later swallow you up from inside out. Don't try to deal with things all by yourself. Be open and honest with each other.

Let your partner help you and give you the support you need. It's better to look at the problem during its initial stage than to only disclose it when it's all too late.

13. Know each other's schedules.

It's helpful to know when the other person is busy and when he/she is free, so that you can drop a text or make a call at the right time. You wouldn't want to disturb your partner when he/she is in the middle of class or halfway through a business meeting. Know the small and big events that are taking place or will take place in each other's life e.g. college mid-terms and exams, important business trips and meetings, job interviews and etc. This is especially essential when the both of you are living in different time zones.

14. Keep track of each other's social media activities.

Like each other's photos on Facebook and Instagram. Tweet each other. Tag each other. Share things on each other's walls. Show that you care. Be cool about stalking each other.

15. Gift a personal object for the other person to hold on to.

There is power in a memento. Be it a small pendant, a ring, a keychain, a collection of songs and videos, or a bottle of fragrance. We often attach meanings to the little things and items found in our everyday life, whether knowingly or not. This is what we all do — we try to store memories in physical things, in the hope that when our mind fails us, we can look or hold on to something that will help us remember. This is why something so simple can mean so much to a person, when others may see little or no value in it.

16. Get a good messaging app.

This is extremely important because texting is the most frequent and common way of communication the two of you have. You need a good messaging app on your phones that allow interactions beyond just words and emoticons. Personally, I use this messaging app called LINE. I find it highly effective because it has a huge reserve of playful and very funny "stickers" that are free for its users to use. You can also go to the app's "Sticker Shop" to download (or gift!) extra stickers of different themes (e.g. Hello Kitty, Pokemon, Snoopy, MARVEL and etc.) at a low price. From time to time, the app also gives out free sticker sets for different promotions. This messaging app is cute and easy to learn to use.

17. Snail-mail your gift.

Mail each other postcards and hand-written love letters. Send each other gifts across the globe from time to time. Flower deliveries on birthdays, anniversaries and Valentine's Day. Shop online and surprise each other with cool T-shirts, sexy underwear and such.

18. Stay positive.

You need to be constantly injecting positive energy into the long distance relationship to keep it alive. Yes, the waiting can be painful and you can sometimes feel lonely but you need to remind yourself that the fruits at the end will be sweet as heaven.

One good trick to staying positive is to be grateful all the time. Be thankful that you have someone to love — someone who also loves you back. Be thankful for the little things, like the hand-made letter that arrived safely in your mailbox the other day. Be thankful for each other's health and safety.

19. Keep each other updated on each other's friends and family.

Because gossips and scandals are always the best things to go on and on about. It also fosters that feeling that you "know" the other people in your lives.

20. Video-call whenever possible.

Because looking into each other's eyes and hearing each other's voices can make everything feel alright again.

21. Give each other pet names.

Because it's cute. It keeps the lovey-dovey going. It is something personal and special between the two of you!