How To: Long Distance

 I am a nineteen year old college student living in Seattle. My boyfriend lives an hour away in my hometown and I am only able to see him every two weeks. Even before I applied to colleges, we agreed that we would keep dating despite where I ended up. We knew we wanted to at least try to make it through. It’s been hard, going two weeks without seeing the one person I want to see most, but it’s definitely manageable. With more communication and trust, we have been able to stay together, which makes me think that if we can do it, anyone can. Everyone in a long distance relationship knows that rough times are inevitable and that it will never be easy living miles apart. There will never be a fast or easy way to solve the problems of distrust and communication that come up in a long distance relationship, but there are ways that can help keep the major issues to a minimum.

 A long distance relationship can be successful if both people work to make the relationship stronger. The problem with long distance relationships is that the couple is far away from each other and there is little contact. In our highly mobilized and globalized world, where people often travel and move for work and study, long distance relationships are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Because more people are faced with LDRs, it is important to know how to communicate and act in order to end up reunited. Most people who are in long distance relationships report to have stronger bonds with their partner when both of them are actively improving their relationship. One of these ways is to keep up strong communication by WHAT. Still, many people question the strength of a relationship when it is spread miles apart, they ask, how could that ever work? Research has shown that most long distance relationships end in marriage. But, all relationships require work and that is how people end up getting married. It’s not easier for people who live near each other because all relationships have problems. People in long distance relationships need ways to improve their communication and trust so they can make it through the time they have to live apart. There is no quick fix to a long distance relationship, but there are a few things couples can do in order to make it work; two major pieces are communication and trust. By making an effort to improve these two aspects of the relationship, they are strengthening the relationship and making it more likely to last. This article will give advice on how to better communicate and improve trust while in an LDR, including a success story and a study done on people in long distance relationships. It is important to know how to handle the difficulties and issues that come with an LDR to avoid major problems or a break-up.

 Long distance can mean just a car ride away or a day-long flight to the other side of the planet. However, no matter the mileage, the same problems always seem to arise: WHAT. Trust is an essential part of every relationship, but especially long distance relationships, because there is no way to make sure the other person is not lying. Sometimes, trust is something that you just have to do. But if you and your partner are having trust issues, here are a couple of tips from Joel Block, Ph.D., a certified couple’s therapist, that can help strengthen trust between you two. First, confide in each other. “If you’re open and self-revealing, your partner is more likely to be more open with you” says Block. Second, always tell the truth. Small lies will begin to evolve into bigger and bigger lies which destroy relationships. Just don’t lie to each other, it’s as simple as that. Finally, keep your promises. If you promise to come see him a certain week, make sure you can get those days off. If you promise to call after dinner, don’t watch another *Gossip Girl* episode before calling. These aren’t the only ways to improve trust, but they will definitely help. Trust is essential to any relationship but especially to LDRs because there is no way to truly know if the other person is telling the truth. These simple things are key to fixing the common problems that occur in a long distance relationship. When problems begin to arise, first make sure there is a strong feeling of trust between the two of you.

 Now, in order to fix the recurring problems of jealousy and sadness, you have to talk. Talk on the phone, Skype, email, text, however you do it, just communicate with each other. A recent study done by University of Utah psychologist, Karen Blair, showed that “‘being further apart from your partner changes how you interact with them … and forces you to work on some of the areas of relationship maintenance that geographically close couples may take for granted, and often overlook.’” They found that the long distance couples had better communication than those living near each other. Simply telling each other about your day can help lift feelings of sadness and loneliness. Talk like you are sitting together at home after work. Keeping it casual is also essential. Too many serious or argumentative conversations will begin to tear away at your relationship. A routine of when conversations will happen is a great way to make the relationship feel normal, talking every day after dinner will help to keep loneliness at bay.

At times, Skype and the phone won’t be enough and sadness will take over for bits of time. Although it can be hard to only see them on the screen and not in person, it is a good way to have conversations because you can see their facial expressions. Over the phone and especially over text it is difficult to know what they mean because you do not know how they feel as they are saying the things they are saying to you. Grunebaum explains this pain in her own relationship, “I went through periods of deep sadness during which all I wished for was to see his face in real life rather than through a pixelated computer screen”. But she also says that “The more reassurance you provide each other, the more confident and happy you'll feel”. All kinds of feelings will come and go but as long as there is good communication the relationship will be able to flourish and strengthen with all the problems that may come up.

Long distance relationships are not widely accepted, people fear them and do not want to put in the effort and endure the struggles the relationship entails. An argument is that the communication needed for LDRs is hard because as Tom Scheve says in his article X, “it was once easy to chat in person, now those normal, daily interactions are severely curtailed. It requires real effort to keep in touch and feel connected.” The effort to communicate is just too much for people to handle and it becomes very impersonal as time goes on. Even people who are in LDRs began thinking they would never do that to themselves, like Hayley Grunebaum. In her personal essay she begins by saying, “I used to be one of those people who scoffed at long distance relationships. I found them overly complicated and impractical”. The thing with relationships is, they are all hard and require effort no matter how far apart you and your partner are. The problems that plague all relationships are usually what cause issues in a long distance relationship such as lack of trust and poor communication. But, if the couple is willing to put in the work to keep up good communication, it is worth it in the end because most people in long distance relationships end up getting married or living geographically close to each other.

 If you are faced by a long distance relationship, do not run and hide. They take work and are never easy, but they are definitely something that can be beneficial to relationships. The need for improved communication and trust will translate over to the relationship when the couple is able to live near or with each other. The tips in this article not only will help with long distance relationships but also geographically close relationships as well because they are ways to improve communication and trust between two people. You probably won’t Skype or FaceTime your partner every day if you live close to each other, but skills such as confiding in each other and having casual conversations about your days will help in any relationship. Long distance can be a scary idea, but if you or your partner gets a job offer or study abroad trip and you can’t join, don’t fret. It can work out if you have a positive attitude and faith in the relationship. I’m rooting for you.

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|  | Outstanding | Strong | Good | Acceptable | Inadequate |
| Chosen audience and genre are clear; Uses rhetorical devices, genre conventions, word choice, tone appropriate for the audience and context |  | X—Your tone is appropriate for something in the vein of an advice column that would appear in a woman’s magazine. However, the tone sometimes shifts from its conversational nature to a sort of English class essay tone. The biggest issue right now is making it all more specific, better integrating your sources, and being less repetitive.  |  |  |  |
| Summarizes, paraphrases, and quotes from sources effectively. Synthesizes and integrates research into own argument well |  |  | X—the way they are placed in the context of your paper doesn’t make a lot of sense and sometimes your sources seem to confuse the issue or contradict the point you are making, especially when you point out how well people in LDRs apparently communicate. I just think you need to use and organize your sources more strategically. |  |  |
| Makes a complex claim backed by evidence that is well organized. |  |  |  | X—It is clear that the conflict you wish to resolve is being in an LDR, but what is not clear is how LDRs are different from non-LDRs and how a couple can specifically fix the issues faced in an LDR. You do make some specific suggestions later on in your paper, but I think these specific pieces of advice could be better organized. Right now, the concept of improving communication and trust is vague and it’s not at all clear how these issues are unique to LDRs.  |  |
| Precise writing that flows well with no (or few) mechanical&grammatical errors. |  |  |  | X—Right now, the paper largely struggles from a lack of specificity and there are a lot of repetitive statements and run on sentences.  |  |