Long Distance Relationships: Doomed From the Start?

Can a long distance relationship ever work? This question is becoming more prominent as people travel the globe for work and school. For weeks or months, a couple can be separated by cities, states, or countries. Many people say that LDRs are bound for failure, but others beg to differ. Distance can put a strain on a relationship, it depends on how the couple handles the issues and emotions that come with an LDR. In both Hayley Grunebaum and Michael Parker’s personal essays about their experiences with long distance relationships they describe the difficulties of being away from their partner.

After long believing long distance relationships could never work, Hayley Grunebaum got herself into one. In her personal essay, *How to Survive a Long Distance Relationship*, Grunebaum writes about her experience in a relationship with someone from across the globe. Despite her previous misgivings about LDRs, Grunebaum admits to having a very successful LDR and gives tips on how to make one last. Her essay examines some of the most common problems with LDRs and the best ways to handle them. Grunebaum has an advising and light-hearted tone that gives the reader confidence that they, too, can survive their long distance relationship. She reassures her audience that “days in Australia slowly turned into weeks and weeks turned into months, and finally, it was time to come home.” Grunebaum presents her story in a way that is relatable. She gives tips to get through hard times, and says that she has struggled at times with her LDR as well. “How to Survive a Long Distance Relationship”is a comforting and supportive piece that gives hope to the weary participants of LDRs.

Michael Parker tells the story of his long distance love in *Navigating in a Long Distance Affair*. He and his lover were marching along in their quest for success in their LDR, and it seemed to be fine. Skype was nice and they sometimes were able to visit each other and take some time off work. Parker shared a time in which he went to visit his girlfriend (whose name is never mentioned) and they take a float down the river. They come to a place where they become separated, and Parker begins to fear he will not be able to reunite with her. In the end, they come together and Parker compares this instance to their relationship except that in the end of their love story, the river takes them to separate oceans. After months they decided the “distance between [them] was just too great.” Parker’s tone is melancholy. He incites fear in those struggling with an LDR. He finally writes, “later, at home, when we compared our bruises, we found we were chafed in the very same place: the so-called sit bones, so sensitive to sitting around while waiting to come or go.” With his final sentence, Parker reveals to the reader that the pain of being in a long distance relationship may not be worthwhile. He establishes a dispirited tone and an argument that opposes Grunebaum.

The two pieces oppose each other, in argument and tone. Parker’s essay is much more sentimental and personal. He describes his feelings and fears in his river story. He also is arguing that a long distance relationship may not be worth the pain and anxiety it causes. Grunebaum is much more straightforward, she gives her story and advice that helped her along the way instead of making it an emotional piece. She argues that long distance relationships are manageable and worth the struggles that are inevitable. Both essays depict different ways people handle long-distance relationships and use different styles of writing to explain if an LDR is possible.

Grunebaum’s piece is much more effective at arguing her point because it is uplifting, reassuring, and applicable. Parker, on the other hand, puts fear and nervousness into the minds of his audience with his tone and ultimate failure with an LDR. Being in a long distance relationship myself, Grunebaum’s essay gives me hope and confidence that it will work out, while Parker’s piece makes me fear that all the work it takes might not be worth it. Grunebaum effectively argues that LDRs are not doomed from the beginning and that with a few easy steps, yours can work out just as hers did.

Your writing is, overall, quite strong. It’s concise and clear, and your introduction is particularly strong in setting up the stakes and issue at hand. The biggest issue with your essay is that it doesn’t include much concrete rhetorical analysis. It’s mostly summary of the arguments and content. You do reference things like tone, but you never provide concrete evidence of how this tone is developed. You do talk a bit about what it does to the audience, but this is all quite vague. Also: in the paragraph before your conclusion, you mostly just rehash what you already said in the previous summaries of each article. It would have been smart to think of one particular rhetorical choice that both writers make and then compare/contrast how they each employ that device to different/similar ends.