

making your

long distance  
relationship

**WORK!**

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# Making Your **LONG DISTANCE** **RELATIONSHIP** WORK

Frank and I have given lots of advice to other people that are in long distance relationships. We have found that some people are in desperate need of learning the basics of keeping their long distance relationship going. Too many times we have seen people making the same mistakes over and over again. I have written this free e-book to teach people what to do and what not to do in their long distance relationship if they want to keep the love flowing.

# Here is some of my advice that has helped my own long distance relationship:

**1. Respect your partner.** From responding to people's questions, we've realized that many people aren't showing their partner as much respect as they should be. A lot of times all we hear is, "me, me, me, me..." when it comes to people describing how they feel when their relationship is suffering. Often times, the feelings of their partner are overlooked, and they only are thinking about themselves.

They expect their partner to fulfill their every need and feel that it is their right. Now listen, your partner is only human they can only do so much and it would be impossible for them to meet your every expectation. They have lives outside of your relationship, just as you do, or should. Keep an open mind and try to see things from your partner's point of view once in a while. How would you feel if you were on the other side of the issue? I can almost bet, you'd be reacting the same as them, or at least be able to understand why they react they way they do.

Let me give an example of a common issue, just to put this into context. Many times people will feel that their boyfriend or girlfriend does not care about them as much as they used to. This could be for various reasons, but usually they will begin to feel this way if their boyfriend/girlfriend stops doing nice things for them, or even when their phone conversations become limited or short and their boyfriend/girlfriend doesn't talk to them as much anymore, or even doesn't want to.

So immediately people will feel that their boyfriend/girlfriend is the culprit. They are the ones that do not want to talk; they are the ones that stopped doing special things. Now try to see things from their perspective. Maybe they have become bogged down by something going on in their lives, and they don't have the time they used to.

Maybe they feel there is not much to talk about and when they do get on the phone with you, you yourself don't have much to say. Maybe they stopped doing special things, because you don't return the favor.

The point is these things can't be overlooked. You need to respect their situation, their feelings before you attack them with words such as, "You don't care about me anymore." That can really hurt. So think about them next time and respect their feelings, by recognizing them and trying to do something about it, instead of expecting them to. I think you'll start to see them reciprocating the respect once you respect them more.

That said...

**2. Do things to make your partner feel special.** Try to think of something you can do everyday to show your partner that you care. This can be as little as saying "I love you." Or, "I love talking to you." Or even, "You make me happy." Those little things will make them feel good. Other things you can do... send a handwritten letter, email a picture of yourself to them, send a small gift, take an interest in their interests.

For example, maybe you saw an article online that you think they would enjoy reading. Send it to them! Having constant reassurance that you care about them and think about them all the time will mean a lot. Not only they will benefit, but you will too, and your relationship will benefit from it tremendously.



**3. Keep learning about each other.** People often come to us saying they just don't know what to talk about anymore. It strains their phone calls which then causes arguments and a lot of bad feelings about their relationship in general. Keeping that spark can be hard to do once a relationship has become long term. Since you're long distance, you've talked so much on the phone or have written hundreds of emails. What more can there possibly be to talk about? I can assure you, that there are things you don't know about your partner, you just haven't realized it yet. Frank and I were once in a situation where we didn't have anything to talk about. Phone calls were dreaded because we didn't know what to say, except for the usual things going on in our lives. We went from having interesting, intellectual conversations and debates, to having mind-numbing, boring talk. A desperate move, I bought an e-book, called **1000 Questions for Couples**, in the hopes it would get us out of this conversation slump we were in. Much to my surprise, it helped tremendously. Frank loved being on the phone with me again, and vice versa. I bought it about a year ago, and I still open it up every once in a while when we're bored on the phone. It never disappoints! One question might give us 20 minutes of conversation. It wasn't free, but it was definitely a good investment.

**4. Trust each other.** Okay, another issue we see a lot is the lack of trust in people's long distance relationships. Rule of thumb? Don't distrust someone, unless they have given you a reason to not trust them. Have they cheated on you before? If not, then trust them. Don't accuse someone of cheating unless you absolutely know for certain they are cheating. So many people have come to the conclusion their partner is cheating on them when their partner doesn't do everything they want them to do. It really distracts from the real problem, which is some other underlying relationship issue that is causing a strain on the relationship.

Okay, okay, so you still want to know that they are not cheating. So how can you figure this out the correct way? Well first of all, don't be a snoop and hack into their email or anything else. That is an obvious no-no. People have come to us having seen emails or saw a text message on their partner's phone that seems suspicious. That is snooping and we don't condone it. It shows a lack of respect for your partner.

First of all, if you are in a committed relationship with someone, you should be able to talk about anything and everything. Nothing is off limits. So don't be afraid to ask tough questions. But how do you ask without sounding accusatory? I would simply ask a hypothetical question, for example, "If you ever cheated on me, would you tell me?" Listen to their response. If they say yes, then I think your okay. If they come back with a response like, "Why would you ask me that?" Then they are showing a little defense. Not a good sign, but don't accuse them yet. Just say you're just curious. If they continue to be on the defense, and are trying to avoid talking about it, then you might ask them if they have ever cheated.



**5. Plan for a future.** Don't enter a long distance relationship if you aren't willing to have your life change drastically. A relationship cannot remain long distance forever. At least one person is eventually going to have to move for the other, if not both. You both have to be willing to move for the other person. If you really love each other, this shouldn't be a problem. You shouldn't be in a long distance relationship if you don't love them anyway. Long distance relationships, are not casual relationships, they can't be. Long distance dating isn't like same city dating, where in same city dating, a relationship may start off as casual. They take commitment from the get-go.

**6. Visit as often as possible.** Set a date. Planning for a visit gives you both something to look forward to. Visits can be such a wonderful boost for a long distance relationship. Frank and I know how much an expense visiting a long distance boyfriend/girlfriend can be. Plan for the expense. Save up money. Split the costs. Whatever it takes, know that it is always worth making the trip to see the one you love. But be reasonable and make sure you can afford a trip before you spend all your savings.



**7. Communicate at a regular, but reasonable frequency.** Some couples will talk for several hours per day. That isn't right for everyone, in fact, that is quite extreme. But communicating once every couple of weeks is also extreme. If you can help it, try to communicate on a daily basis, and then figure out a reasonable amount of time you can each spend on the phone. Some people's lives may be busier than others, so the amount of communication in relationship can vary. There is not set magical amount of time that everyone should spend. For Frank and I we spend up to 2 hours a day either on the phone, online, usually a combination of the two. Some days only 20 minutes or sometimes even just a call to say "goodnight." Other days (usually special days we can't

spend together like our anniversary), we might actually spend several hours, but we obviously plan ahead for that. Consider not just your own schedule, but also your partner's. Respect that they may be very busy on day that you might have completely free. At least call each day to say "goodnight." I believe that is something most people should be able to do without too much difficulty if they have a phone.

If you're worried about phone bills, I think it's time to purchase cell phones with providers that allow free calling within the network, even if it means having to switch phone companies. If you live in different countries, or you can't afford to switch cell phone providers right away, try free internet calls through services such as Google Hangouts, Skype, and Ekko.

**8. Use webcams/FaceTime/video chat.** This is an obvious one! But couples who meet online and have never met in person yet have a difficult time getting comfortable enough with someone before they video chat. Most long distance couples will say this is the best way to communicate when they are apart. After the initial face-to-face video chat, you'll see it's less scary than you thought. Use video chatting, not just for conversation, but to do things together as well! Many couples cook, have online dates, play games, watch movies, even sleep together with their webcams on.

**9. Don't be afraid to show you're afraid.** Don't be afraid to share insecurities or ask the questions you want to ask. Communication should be open. And who better, but your boyfriend/girlfriend to answer your questions or give you reassurance about any insecurity you may have about your relationship. People come to us all the time asking us if we think that their partner is cheating, or asking us what we think their partner is thinking. We can only make guesses, or give you a couple possibilities, but only they can give you the real answers.

**10. Don't forget you have a life.** For some personalities, it can be easy to become consumed by your relationship, so much to a point that you forget about your friends and family around you. Long distance relationships can consume a good amount of your time, but don't lose your connections with other people in the process. Make sure your long distance love life is balanced with your everyday life at home. It's okay to tell friends no every once in a while when they ask you to go out with them if you are planning to spend time with your long distance boyfriend/girlfriend, but don't say no every time. At the same time, don't treat your boyfriend/girlfriend as if they are a lower priority than your friends are and always choose your friends over him/her.

**11. Do have date nights.** Set aside time for a date night every week. Watch a movie together, eat the same meal, find things to do to interact online, or just chat it up for a longer amount of time on the phone than usual. Just because you're far away doesn't mean you can't have a date. For a ton of LDR ideas and activities that you can do from a distance, check out our [Things for LDR Couples to Do](#) page.

**12. Arguing long distance.** It's going to happen eventually if you haven't had an argument already. Having an argument long distance is not easy. There are certain things you should and should not do in an argument.

- **Don't hang up the phone.** As tempting as it might be, this is the worst thing you could possibly do. It is disrespectful and in my opinion no one deserves it. Try to stick it out. Make a promise to each other that you will not hang up the phone.
- **Don't interrupt.** Take turns explaining your points, and hear the other person out.
- **Actually listen to what they are saying** and don't think about why they are wrong or prepare how you are going to argue what they are saying, just listen. Don't dismiss their points even if you think they are downright wrong. Show them some respect, if you want respect in return.

- **Tell them how you feel not what they did.** Say how they made you feel. For example, “I feel like I’m low priority in your busy life.” Instead of, “You make hanging out with me a lower priority than hanging out with your friends.” The difference? Using the second sentence is going to make them feel defensive and they are only going to argue with you. Telling them how it makes you feel will be a lot more effective.
- **Try to find a compromise.** Agree on something you’re both comfortable with even if it means not getting exactly what either of you want. It’s better than not getting what you want at all.
- **Don’t use the cold shoulder technique.** This is just as bad as hanging up. Giving someone the cold shoulder (aka. not speaking to them) is only going to make things worse. You’re not going to get any happier, and they aren’t either. And it’s not going to make them come crawling to you for forgiveness and give you what you want (the usual motive, whether the person doing the ignoring will admit to that or not). Just don’t do it.
- **Don’t put off conflict.** Handle the issue ASAP. Get it over and done with. The longer it lingers, the longer it will be affecting your relationship in a negative way.
- **Don’t create an argument.** Sometimes people will get frustrated with the distance and make a big deal about something small that probably wouldn’t usually bother them. Avoid creating an argument in the first place and you’ll save yourself a lot trouble. If you are frustrated with the distance, talk about it with your boyfriend/girlfriend. Venting about what you’re really upset with is better than getting into a heated argument about something unrelated.
- **Avoid having an argument online or via text message.** If you start to argue, it is better to talk it out, instead of instant messaging or texting. The last thing you need is to be misinterpreted.

# Definite Don'ts for any Long Distance Relationship

*I've already mentioned some "Don'ts" in the previous section, but here are some other things you should avoid doing.*

**1. Don't rush things.** Some people who come to us for advice are in this scenario: they have only been together with their long distance boyfriend for a week or a month, and they think their boyfriend/girlfriend should be okay with their high expectations they have for the relationship early on. Either they want to move to be with them a week after starting their relationship, or are so demanding in other ways that they end up pushing them away early in the relationship. In their minds, they think they are married at the start! And they don't get why their boyfriend/girlfriend broke up with them... please...

**2. Don't expect them to always be able to answer their phone or reply to texts.** Another problem people come to us with... Just because they don't answer their phone or text back right away, doesn't mean it is a giveaway that they are cheating or are intentionally ignoring you. Don't get yourself riled up. They are more likely than not too busy to answer their phone or their phone is in different room and they don't hear it. Don't have high expectations like this, period.

**3. Don't put yourself in certain situations.** Although people in long distance relationships, don't cheat any more than people in same city relationships, cheating continues to be a big concern in LDRs. To avoid being accused of cheating, avoid putting yourself in situations where cheating might actually be tempting. Don't hang around others that you know are into you. Don't hang out alone with someone that might be a sexual interest. Don't put yourself in any situation that might be suspicious if your girlfriend/boyfriend found out about it. You will save yourself a lot of headache.

**4. Don't lie.** Obvious, but don't lie to avoid your girlfriend/boyfriend. For example, if your boyfriend/girlfriend calls and you don't want to talk to them, don't tell them you're busy writing a paper, or grocery shopping, or whatever to get out of a conversation with them. Just tell them you don't want to talk to them and you need a day to do whatever you want. Long distance relationships can be draining of course and we all need some space, even in a LDR. It's okay to ask for it, but don't overdo it.

**5. Don't let them control your life, and don't control theirs.** We've seen some ridiculous stuff that we can't believe others have let happen in their relationships, or why people would even stay in these relationships. They are in a long distance situation, and their boyfriend/girlfriend tries to control them. This can be somewhat innocent such as people asking us how they can make their boyfriend/girlfriend go to a certain school that is close to them, how to get their EX boyfriend/girlfriend to go back to them after many months, or how to make their boyfriend/girlfriend do nice things for them: as long as the other person is interested and wants to do those things, then great. It can also be extreme.

For example, people have had so much control over their boyfriend/girlfriend that they got them to send them money on a regular basis, control who their friends are, demand calls at regular intervals when they are out with friends, or even what they wear. That certainly isn't a healthy relationship (and if you're in that situation, get out of it!). For the more innocent things, such as wanting your boyfriend/girlfriend to do nice things for you, do nice things for them first. Don't make them do them. Make them WANT to do them.

**6. Do not have a "break."** I personally don't think having a break helps any relationship. Nothing gets "fixed" and you return to the relationship with the same issues because you didn't work on them TOGETHER, all you did was avoid them. Problems have to be sorted out together, not apart. Being able to successfully work out problems is a test for every relationship, and something you need to be able to do as a couple. As for taking a breather for the night or a day after an

argument then that is okay, as long as you can be ready to work on the problem with your partner when you are done cooling off.

### **Lastly...**

Remember the reason you are in this relationship. You love each other! And if you have love, then you can't let distance destroy that. It is an obstacle, that most people do not have to face, and if you can overcome this, and make it to a point where you can finally live in the same home, then you will be able to overcome many other challenges you may face in the future. So for now, in this chapter of your relationship, make the most of it! And enjoy the small but great benefits long distance can offer to your relationship including but notto sweet reunions

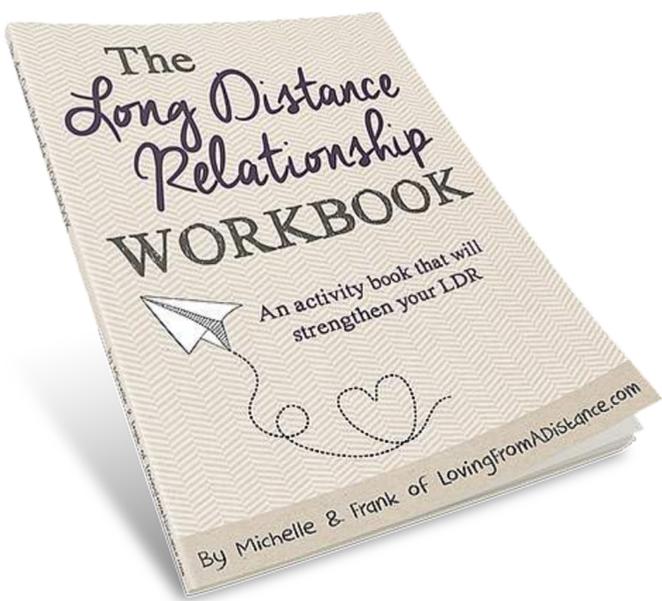
I have been in a long distance relationship since April 2006, and know it is possible to make your LDR work (especially if you are with the right person!) Believe it or not, Frank and I have had many ups and downs in our own relationship and understand firsthand how difficult this type of relationship is. I hope you benefit in some way from the advice I have given here. If you have any questions visit me at [www.lovingfromadistance.com](http://www.lovingfromadistance.com)

I wish you the best success in your long distance relationship!

- Michelle

**Update January 2016:** It's been 5 years since I wrote this ebook! Frank and I closed the distance in 2011 after 5 years long distance. We got married in 2013 and had a beautiful baby boy in 2015. We are so happy and can tell you that all the lonely nights we spent apart were worth it and we'd do it all over again to be together.

# THE LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WORKBOOK



Frank and I wrote this e-book to help couples cope with separation and find the motivation to persevere in a long distance relationship. It contains 12 fun, "school-like" workbook assignments that you can complete with your partner as or do individually. In addition to the assignments, you will find loads of long distance relationship advice.

[Click here to learn more about  
The Long Distance Relationship Workbook](#)

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