

Closing the gap of long distance relationships | Campus Times

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Courtesy of www.soc.ucsb.edu

Relationships are not all about sex. I know that's a strange start to an article for Sex & the CT, but before the riots break out, let me explain.

As of this week, I've been in a committed relationship for a year and a half — which doesn't sound too out-of-the-ordinary, except that on most days my boyfriend lives roughly 400 miles away. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it's a case of the infamous long distance relationship.

The long distance aspect, for some, is a deal breaker. Maintaining fidelity, intimacy and interest in a relationship can be hard for those couples that live on the other end of the hall from each other, let alone in separate states.

However, there is a small percentage of couples who try to stay together despite being so far apart, especially at this point in the school year, when freshmen are still clinging to their high school sweethearts. For those and other couples trying out a long distance relationship, I offer my initial point: Sex isn't everything.

Now, I'm not here to condemn sex in relationships. I actually think proximity is an incredibly important feature for any couple.

A quick kiss or hug can show your partner that you care and are thinking about him or her, whereas in a long distance relationship, the physical realm is entirely cut from the equation. That means no holding hands while walking to class, no cuddling and, for those who may fight with their significant other, no make-up sex.

At this point, I may be re-affirming your suspicions that long distance relationships are irrational. While there might be a certain level of craziness involved in a long distance pairing, maintaining one without physical contact has taught me a lot about relationships in general — communication will keep the connection alive.

While being close to the person that you're dating will certainly make your relationship easier, the couples that will truly go the distance are those in which each partner makes an effort to communicate with the other.

When you live in the vicinity of your boyfriend or girlfriend, communication should be incredibly easy. You don't use Skype to bridge 400 miles, and there isn't a need to constantly rely on emails or phone calls to know how the other person's day went.

However, after being in relationships that are on campus and very far off it, I can tell you that keeping up conversation is not that simple, and in every relationship failure to communicate is the beginning of the end.

Therefore, if you're truly dedicated to your partner, then making time in your day to talk to them honestly and openly is crucial. Phone calls and video chats are your go-to tools for relationships of

the long distance variety.

You may notice that I didn't include texting or Facebook on that list. While a text is probably the fastest and easiest way to connect on a basic level, a relationship will not last if it's built solely on typed out communication. Meaning and inflection get lost through texts and Facebook messages, no matter how many "winky" emoticons and "less-than-three" signs you put at the end of them.

So for those out there who are daring enough to try a long distance relationship, make sure you're willing to put in the effort to keep it up.

For all couples, communication is necessary, but those long distance ones call for a little extra creativity and effort to make sure both parties stay interested. Whether you send your boyfriend or girlfriend unexpected snail mail or find new ways to use Skype, the avenue of communication isn't important — just reaching out will help make up for lost time.

Olfano is a member of the class of 2012.