



## “Long Distance Relationships”

*Relationships can be tough. Keeping your relationship strong while you are apart takes dedication, patience, trust, and commitment. There are some keys to maintaining the romance, but both parties must be willing and determined to overcome any obstacle that arises, because the relationship matters. The following tips can help you and your partner work towards building and strengthening your relationship while apart.*

### **1. HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

Deployments often mean limited contact, different time zones, and months apart. It can be difficult to transition to living life as a couple to facing life alone. Remember, deployment is a temporary situation. Don't make permanent decision based on temporary circumstances. Discuss expectations, be honest, and remind your partner of your commitment to them.

### **2. STAY CONNECTED**

Surround yourself with positive people, and encourage your spouse to do the same. Spend time with others who are coping with deployments/time apart in a healthy way. Participate in activities: fitness, movie nights, bingo, sports, chapel services, booster clubs, etc. Make sure that the individuals you are spending time around help you maintain your commitments and are not harmful.

### **3. COMMUNICATE**

Even in the age of technology where communication is at our finger tips, don't expect to be able to connect 24/7. Be ready when you do connect – write down events so you're ready to talk about them, send written mail or email. Keep the info positive, this helps reassure your partner and limit anxieties. Talk about memories made together (first date, favorite activities, and so on). This helps couples stay connected. Consider mixing it up: use services like video-chat, phone calls, written mailing, care packages. Share with your spouse the qualities you admire. This helps with trust and security in relationships.

### **4. DEVELOP VISION AND WORK TOWARDS YOU GOALS**

Read relationship strengthening books while apart. Discuss what you're reading with your partner. Use your separation to focus on your advancement (education, career, hobbies, and fitness). An improved *you* will only be more attractive. Volunteer, get involved, forge friendships where you can contribute and help others.

### **5. SUPPORT EACH OTHER**

Even though you are not together doesn't mean you can't help out. Listen for ways to support your spouse and utilize resources to make it happen (have the neighbor mow the yard, have a friend take the care for an oil change, arrange babysitting or call a friend who can take your partner out, purchase things online and have them sent to your spouse). Take the opportunity to explore your partner's daily struggles, offer encouragement and be positive. Don't forget about your home station helping agencies (mental health, HAWC, A&FRC, Chapel). Make sure your partner has information and contact numbers about supports and services available.

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→ **Return Strong** →

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