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# A MODERN TWIST ON LONG-DISTANCE LOVE

Technology keeps couples close when miles between them keep them apart

By Rachel Tannenbaum  
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This is not your father's (or mother's) long-distance relationship.

Gone are the days of getting letters in the mail or crying over a long-distance phone bill. With advances in technology, couples in such relationships can talk frequently enough that the relationship may seem like there is no distance at all, experts say.

Julie Spira, author of "The Perils of Cyber Dating," says many people look at technology to enhance relationships. Whether you use Skype, iChat or text, technology makes it virtually impossible to be disconnected from the world.

Spira said people must still invest in the relationship, and that relationships held together over distance are big commitments.

Reyna Ecker, 21, began dating a combat engineer for the Army shortly before he was deployed to Korea. The couple has been together for four months, but he has been deployed for two of those.

Ecker said although technology keeps them in touch, the time difference keeps them apart.

**ONLINE** continues on **E-2**

*"I am a firm believer in online dating because technology is amazing when it comes to partnership and relationships."*

**Renee Garcia Wyden**  
Therapist

## RELATIONSHIP FACTORS ACROSS THE DISTANCE

Julie Spira, author of "The Perils of Cyber Dating," said there are many positives to incorporating tools such as Skype into your long-distance relationship. She said there is more than one form of communication that will help during those lonely times.

"It allows you to see their faces, and it creates rituals between visits, which creates a form of intimacy."

No matter how many forms of communication you choose to use in your long-distance relationship, Spira said that to make the relationship work, you need trust. "No technology will create trust," Spira said. "You need to be trustful when they aren't around." Spira recommends when having video dates to act like you would on a regular date.

Therapist Renee Garcia Wyden said whether you are in a local or long-distance relationship, trust is the basis. "You either have trust or you don't," she said. "Distance has nothing to do with it."

Spira said there are some negatives in dating and using technology as your main form of communication because it is two-dimensional. "Since long-distance relationships are two-dimensional, it can be hard to distinguish flirting and having fun and sarcasm," Spira said.

Long-distance relationships can also mean different schedules. "You can get frustrated because you are on different schedules and there is no time to talk," Spira said. "You may jump to the conclusion that the other person isn't into it and ask yourself, 'Why am I in this relationship if I can't see him?'"

Spira said when it comes to long-distance relationships, try to avoid over-analyzing, or "digital categorizing." "Just because he hasn't returned a text, you think he is over the relationship or he has another date," Spira said, "but sometimes we are busy, and we don't have time to text back."

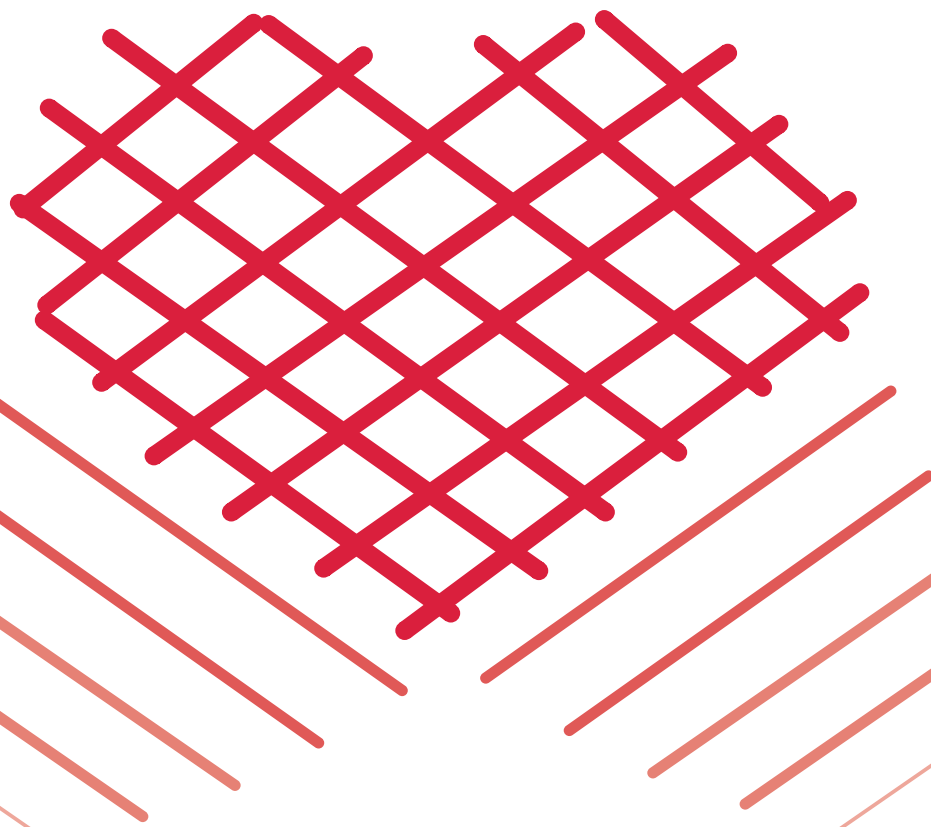


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