

“ Long Dream Found Missing Kept Forever True “ (Hug over a Distance)

A common topic in popular culture, the Long Distance Relationship is most often ignored in theoretical contexts. Surprisingly enough, because in one way or another many are involved in these types of relationship situations. Furthermore, it is exactly the Long Distance Relationship that can be perceived to challenge existing cultural conceptions regarding maintenance of value and generation of meaning in (romantic) relationships.

It is the notion of ‘relationship’ that introduces us to what can be understood as certain culturally defined implications according to which we orientate ourselves. The idea ‘relationship’ thus exists as a model that comes with a set of presumptions and expectations, examples of this could be the emphasis placed on shared meanings and communicable topics within a relationship, or the idea that frequent face-to-face communication is necessary for close relational connections to exist or, importantly, that geographic proximity is the essence to emotional closeness. Such expectations contribute to the image of what a relationship should be like and influences behaviours and understanding of behaviour towards the generation and maintenance of relationships.

Long Distance Relationships are in danger of failing to meet society’s typical relational expectations. Distance = distress.

It thus becomes clear that even though the existence of relationships is based on communication, relationships also go beyond communication as their existence continues in our minds. Thereby it can be stated that our reality of the relationship is created by the mental image we have of it. Assuming the fragmented state of such mental images, relationships are thus completed in our minds through a continuous altering and re-orientation of these images based on the model we adhere to.

Relationships are defined as Long Distance when the individuals involved regard communication to be restricted by geographic parameters, and when the individuals expect a close connection to continue.

How here, in the case of the Long Distance Relationship, is contact maintained? In Love communication is exceptionally personalised, this to differentiate and underline uniqueness from other individuals. The ubiquitously increasing presence of various media, tools and computer technology, offers and stimulates prospects of facilitating personal contact maintenance through video chat, phone, letters, IM, text messaging, email, facebook messaging, facebook status, twitter, skype etc. Thus it is technology that offers the promise of completion and of a bridging of the geographical gap. Mediated means thus all become related to the idea of relational success and by playing into our culturally defined implications on an emotional level brands and corporations suggest that completeness exists out there for everyone if only we find ways to maintain presence in absence on an uninterrupted level, generating closeness non-stop all the time round-the-clock and everywhere in order for personalised Love communication to exist as a continuity.

Connect to everything you love

Brands are built in the hearts and minds of customers

Online, Offline, individuals have the same need for attachment, connection

Long Distance Relationships and geographical distance, Long Distance Relationships and the distance being bridged by ‘technology’

What constitutes a relationship (23 mobile text messages a day)

What are the consequences tied to relationships -Frequent Flyer, airline loyalty programme

Talking daily indicates healthy continuation of a relationship -It’s good to talk, British Telecom

Lack of communication adds to inaccurate images and to an increased idealisation

Relationships are bound by interaction -Reach out and touch someone, AT&T