

Coping with College Series

Long Distance Love

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It's hard to leave relationships behind when you go to college. It can be even more difficult when these relationships are romantic ones. For many students this is one of the most challenging and distressing parts of going away to college. How can you make the best of the situation while maintaining a strong relationship? Here are some ideas that might help keep that love alive.

One of the questions that might be on your mind as you think of your partner being far away is "will she/he be faithful?" It's important to discuss whether you and your partner will date each other exclusively, or whether you'll date others while you are apart. Clarifying this issue will help you avoid misunderstandings and hurt feelings. If you decide to date only each other, then it is important to trust your partner. Many relationships are destroyed by one partner's lack of trust in the other's faithfulness.

A source of sadness at this time is that you and your partner will not see or talk to each other as often. Missing each other is natural. Because you don't want to run up a big phone bill, you might consider other ways of keeping in touch. Sending cards and letters can be a good alternative to telephoning. Have friends take pictures of you and then surprise your partner with a photo occasionally. This will keep your handsome face in front of him/her at all times. Depending on the distance, you might consider discussing how often you will be able to visit. Be realistic about this, keeping in mind that school will keep you busy.

In college you will have many responsibilities. You will be trying to balance things such as studying, working, extra-curricular activities, and a social life. You may no longer be able to devote as much time to your relationship as you did before school began. Your partner is probably in a similar situation with demands on her/his time. You or your partner may start to feel jealous of those things and/or people that take time away from the relationship. Do not allow these feelings to fester--talk about them. Your partner does not have to be the only important person in your life, but that does not mean you care less about her/him.

Don't be surprised if you start to see changes in yourself and your partner. During your college years you will further define yourself and who you are. Your values or opinions might change because of what you experience in school. These things can make you seem like a different person to friends, family, or partners. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing for your relationship. It is healthy and natural for you to grow and change during this time of your life. As long as you and your partner can communicate about these changes, you can grow together instead of apart.