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Life Coaching, Dating
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How Far Would You Go for True Love?

by: Amy Schoen

Ned was at a singles weekend in Virginia Beach when he met Francie. There was an easy rapport between them and they hung out most of the weekend. There was one glitch, Ned lived in Washington, DC and Francie lived on Boston. Ned was determined to pursue Francie and it turned out the feeling was mutual. Less than a year later, they were married.

Mitch was searching on an online dating site where he stumbled upon Laura. She seemed to be everything he was looking for - although she was working abroad in the Republic of Georgia. After talking on the ph.one for about 3 months and establishing terrific rapport, they met in Greece for a wonderful week together. After another six months, Mitch took a sabbatical from work and went to the Republic of Georgia to see if this relationship really had legs. In the end, Laura came to Washington, DC, where they lived together for a month or two and then decided to split up.

So how far are you willing to go for true love? What risks will you allow yourself to take? If you are considering widening your search to stretch national borders and beyond, this is what you need to consider before investing your time, resources and energy in a long distance relationship.

1. The challenges of a long distance relationship are...

- To stay connected to each other despite the distance.
- To make travel plans: where, when and how often.
- To stay true to the relationship and not love the one you're with!
- To deal with the hard issues of the relationship when you are together and not treat it like a vacation.
- To not feel lonely and to have a good support system of friends and family.
- To have sufficient time together to really get to know one another.

2. The pitfalls of a long distance relationship are ...

- You miss out on stuff because you can't be there. (i.e., such as a birthday party of your boyfriend's friend.)

- You can't be there if there is an emergency or problem. Penny's husband's brother, Ken, was in the army with Desert Storm. Penny couldn't be there to comfort him.
- You don't have enough physical time together to establish a physical connection. Also, you can't see their facial expressions. You may miss the cues in the conversation.
- You probably won't see the bad side of the person because he or she can hide it more and be on his/her best behavior. Mary said, "when you are spending a weekend together, you are not seeing the full context- It's just not reality".
- You are not used to being together physically- you may need time to readjust. When you do finally get in sync, it's time to leave again.
- You may be deceived by a person who is really married or hides important information from you concerning either children, or his or her financial situation.
- You may take things the wrong way. It's harder to clear up misunderstandings when you don't see the person face to face.
- You can have a lot of stress very soon in the relationship in terms of making decisions about if you are going to move and the changes you have to make in your life for this person. The relationship can be very intense.

3. The benefits or gifts of a long distance relationship are...

- With constant communication you really get to know someone well. (Ned and Francie IMing each other every day)
- There is not as much sexual pressure in the relationship – the distance allows for you to get to know the person for who they are first. The situation encourages communication.
- You are forced to pace the relationship- you can't see the person everyday and you need to plan for time together.
- Both parties have to put in effort for the relationship for it to work. It takes teamwork. You can't coast here!

4. What needs to be in place for a long distance relationship to work.....

- There has to be an end in sight for the long distance relationship. Both see a goal of a permanent commitment.
- There needs to be exclusivity and commitment to the relationship. Trust too!

- There needs to be regular plans to see one another.
- There needs to be frequent communication – at least a couple times during the week (IM, email, phone).
- You need to be prepared to spend the money on travel and phone costs.
- You need to be flexible- to be able to change your schedule, take time off from work, and put in time to focus on the relationship, away from other personal endeavors.

5. The decisions that have to be made for the relationship to work are....

- Do I like this person enough to make the effort of time and money?
- Shall I take this risk?
- How often shall we see each other? What would be the length of stay? Where shall I stay?
- Who will move? Whose job is transferable? (i.e., a lawyer may need to retake the bar in the new state). When shall I move?
- When shall we get engaged? Do I need to be engaged to move?

6. Possible roadblocks to a long distance relationship are...

- One party only communicates via emails and shows no desire to get to the next level such as phone and in person contact.
- One party is not willing to engage in a long distance relationship for too long.
- Someone has a demanding job with travel that doesn't allow for much time to visit the other one.
- There is a major language barrier which makes communication difficult.
- One person or both have children so they are not able to relocate.
- There are immigration issues due to an international romance.
- Neither party wants to leave their family or friends.

"Clearly, it is easier if you have met the person first, established a relationship before having to deal with a long distance relationship", says a friend of mine who had a long distance relationship with her husband for over a year before they married. This sentiment was echoed by many that I interviewed for this article.

"Don't be short-sighted and keep your focus on the long-term gains", said Ned, "The payoff can be big as was in my case!" So you see, expanding your horizons beyond your local area can bring you your true love. Are you willing to risk the adventure?

About the Author:

Amy Schoen, principal of Heartmind Connection (<http://www.heartmindconnection.com>) has been transforming people to be their best for over 20 years. Amy has the gift of visualization and uses it to help her clients visualize the kind of life they truly desire. Contact Amy at CoachAmy@heartmindconnection.com or 240-498-7803 for a complimentary phone coaching session and learn how to make the best decisions for you using both the heart and your mind.

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