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A FAR AWAY VALENTINE: MILLIONS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS AWAIT VALENTINE'S DAY WITH MIXED EMOTIONS

While most couples will be holding hands, exchanging kisses, and sharing a romantic evening with their loved one on Valentine's day, nearly 1 in 4 college couples will find themselves alone. Heather and Jim, for example, have a Valentine's Day tradition that they haven't broken during their four-year romance. Each February these two college students have spent their evening together, tucked under a warm blanket, watching *Sleepless in Seattle*. But not this year. Last summer, Jim transferred from UCLA to the University of Michigan, 2200 miles away. With this move Heather and Jim join the roughly 2½ million college students in long distance relationships.

"We knew Jim's move would be tough, but we've been making it work so far," said 22-year-old Heather. "But I'm worried about Valentine's day – I haven't had to be apart from Jim before." Valentine's day can be particularly difficult for long distance couples, says California psychologist Dr. Gregory Guldner, Director of *The Center for the Study of Long Distance Relationships* and author of *Long Distance Relationships: The Complete Guide*. "Valentine's day is the one day that lovers are supposed to be together. For couples that can't be, Valentine's day emphasizes the fact that they're apart. It's like grabbing Cupid's arrow and twisting it back and forth – it can cause a lot of heartache," says Dr. Guldner.

For many long distance couples, Valentine's day triggers doubts about their relationship. But they shouldn't worry, according to Dr. Guldner. Surprisingly, research has found that long distance relationships work as well as any other relationship. "Several studies have shown that long distance couples don't break up any more frequently than couples that live closer together. The myth that long distance relationships or 'LDRs' don't work comes from the tendency to blame the distance whenever an LDR does end. People don't realize that geographically close couples break-up just as often, but no one says it's because they lived too close together," explained Dr. Guldner.

SEPARATED STUDENTS

- There are 9,493,000 college students in the United States
- Estimates suggest that 2,696,000 are currently in a long distance relationship (28.4%)
- An additional 3,987,000 are in geographically close relationships (42%)
- Of those not currently in a long distance relationship, 4,999,000 will be at some point during college (53%)

Source: US Bureau of Census & Dr. Guldner

According to research done by Dr. Guldner and colleagues at Purdue University, the key to surviving Valentine's day for long distance couples is optimism. "We found that those couples who stayed optimistic about their relationship had less stress about the separation and more intimacy with their partner," says Dr. Guldner. Fortunately, being optimistic doesn't mean fooling oneself. "Couples in long distance relationships have every chance of making it work. These couples need to challenge the misleading myths out there about long distance relationships."

"We have never talked about breaking up," says Jim, 21, "it didn't even come up. I'm ready for Valentine's day – there will be plenty more of them in our future."

A RESOURCE FOR SEPARATED COUPLES

Dr. Guldner discusses the myths of long distance relationships and provides guidance for separated couples in his book *Long Distance Relationships: The Complete Guide*.

Millions of college couples are struggling with an LDR as they face the unique difficulties these relationships bring. Until now, they have had few reliable resources. *Long Distance Relationships* is the first work to comprehensively review, cite, and synthesize five decades of research on separated relationships. The 22 chapters in this paperback will guide readers through all aspects of LDRs including:

- The advantages of LDRs over traditional relationships
- The emotional stages of separation
- The ten steps to staying emotionally healthy while apart
- Secrets to long distance intimacy
- Making the most of your time on the telephone
- Long distance sexuality
- Preparing for reunion: What to expect
- Dealing with conflicts at a distance

Long Distance Relationships also contains a questionnaire couples can take to help pinpoint areas of their relationship that are vulnerable to separation. An annotated bibliography discusses over 80 books, studies, articles and websites that separated couples can use as an up to date resource. Finally, a comprehensive reference section shows the more than 170 studies discussed in the book. *Long Distance Relationships* is a unique and indispensable reference that will become the "gold standard" of resources for separated couples.

The Center for the Study of Long Distance Relationships

Online at www.longdistancerelationships.net.

Find additional news releases, statistics, and story ideas.

About the Author

The author, Gregory Guldner, MD, MS, is a graduate of Stanford Medical School and Purdue University's Clinical Psychology Program. He is the leading authority on long distance relationships, the director for *The Center for the Study of Long Distance Relationships*, and the author of the most comprehensive study of long distance relationships ever completed. He has published numerous articles on relationships and sexuality and serves as a peer reviewer for multiple professional journals. He is also an officer in the Army Reserve with knowledge about military related separations. He combines his scientific expertise, interviews with hundreds of

couples in long distance relationships and his own personal experience into his comprehensive book.

Ordering Information

Long Distance Relationships: The Complete Guide (ISBN: 0972114807) is available at Atlasbooks.com, Amazon.com, and better bookstores everywhere. It is available to the trade through Biblio Distributions (a Division of NBN) at 1-800-462-6420, 1-800-338-4550 (fax), or custserv@nbnbooks.com. It is also available from the publisher at www.JFMilne.com or send \$19.99 per copy to:

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