

## Long Distance Sex

A long distance relationship is hard; a long distance relationship of 5000 miles is harder. After ten months of living *la vida española*, I returned home with a solid Spanish repertoire and vivid memories of a short lived love affair with Miguel. As time passed, the separation between us took its toll. By January, our relationship was reduced to just a few emails and phone calls a month. How could I maintain our relationship across the Atlantic?

I first decreased the response cost for communicating by replacing conventional phone service with Skype. Next, I implemented contingencies to reinforce desired behavior. I assumed that sexual stimulation would be a powerful and appropriate reinforcer, and devised creative ways to deliver it without physical contact. The discriminative stimulus was my voice (the only one, hopefully) who delivered the reinforcer (verbal sexual stimulation) contingent on the desired response (communication).

Days passed as we worked to activate our Skype accounts; during this time we did not communicate. The wait, may have made communication more reinforcing.

I waited for Miguel's call. When he did call, I reminisced about our first sexual encounter. A few hours later, Miguel called again. I again provided sexual reinforcers as I described our luscious sexual encounters while vacationing in Portugal. I continued to present myself, or at least my voice, as the discriminative stimulus with communication with me reinforced with verbal sexual stimulation.

By March, Miguel contacted me five times a week. After two months of a continuous schedule of reinforcement, I thinned the schedule. Every two or three times Miguel contacted me, I responded with vivid, verbal, sensual sexual reinforcement.

These contingencies have increased communication between Miguel and me, but can they maintain frequent communication? They are the best I can do, but in three months we will be reunited, and perhaps our affair will be ablaze with close distance sex!