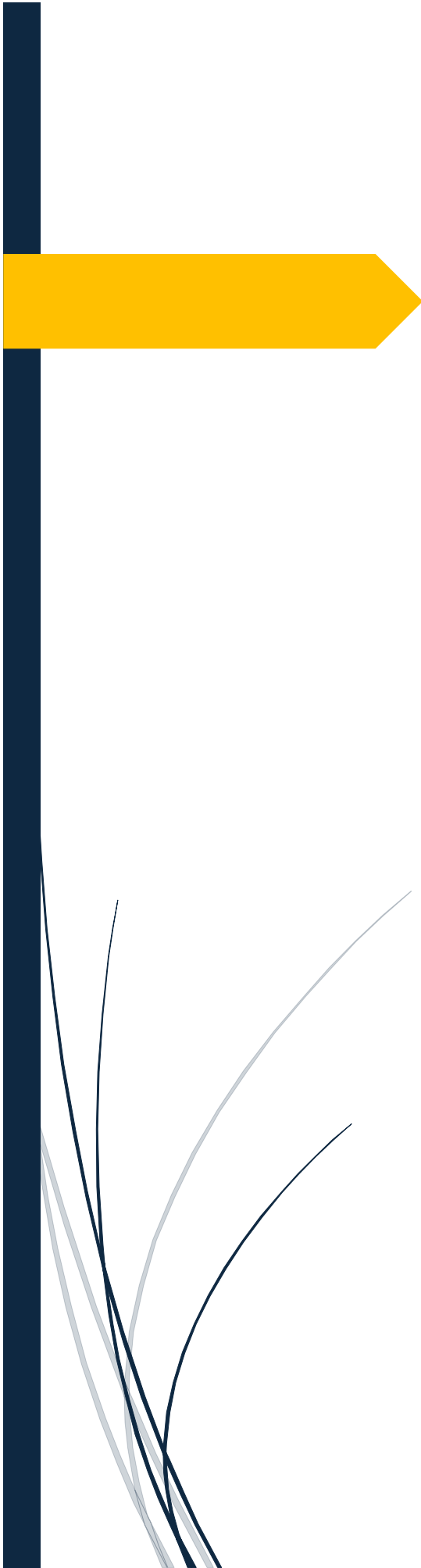




Staying Connected while Apart

Creating a communication
and connection plan when
partners are away from one
another

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Being Apart Changes the System

Time apart is a normal part of many relationships. Work travel, vacations, family commitments, different schedules, caregiving, hobbies, or other responsibilities can temporarily change how partners communicate and stay connected.

Problems often aren't created by the time apart itself, but by **different expectations about what should happen while apart**. One person may expect regular communication while the other assumes fewer check-ins. One may want independence and presence where they are, while the other experiences limited contact as distance or disconnection.

Rather than relying on assumptions, create a shared plan.

Connection + Autonomy + Predictability + Flexibility

The Goal

Develop a shared understanding of **how you want to communicate, support one another, manage responsibilities, and reconnect while spending time apart**.

Think about three phases: **Before → During → After**

The goal isn't to create rigid rules. It's to reduce unnecessary uncertainty while leaving room for both **connection and independence**.

Start With Understanding

Before creating the plan, explore what being apart means to each of you.

- What helps me feel **connected** when we're apart?
- How much communication feels comfortable to me?
- What does **“being thought of”** look like?
- What makes me feel forgotten, disconnected, or anxious?
- How much **space and independence** do I want?
- What responsibilities need to be considered while we're apart?
- What have we learned from previous experiences?
- How would I like us to reconnect afterward?

Different answers don't necessarily mean someone is **too needy or too independent**. They provide information for building a plan that works for both people.

Build Your Blueprint

Before - *Prepare the relationship and the logistics.*

Consider:

- What do we each need before the separation begins?
- Are there household, childcare, financial, or other responsibilities to coordinate?
- What do we know about schedules and availability?
- How do we prefer to communicate—**text, call, video, photos, voice messages?**
- How frequently would we like to connect?
- What constitutes something **urgent**?
- How will we communicate if plans change?
- Is there anything emotionally important we should discuss before leaving?

Ask: *“Is there anything you need from me before we're apart?”*

During - *Balance connection with being present where you are.*

Consider:

- Do we want an **arrival or goodnight check-in**?
- Do scheduled check-ins help, or do we prefer something spontaneous?
- Do we want updates throughout the day or highlights later?
- How do we communicate when we're unavailable?
- How do we show we're thinking about one another?
- How much independence and space do we each want?
- What happens if one of us misses a call or can't respond?

Connection can take different forms: **Text • Call • Photo • Voice Message • Video • Humor • Encouragement • Affection • Sharing an Experience**

There isn't one correct amount of communication. Look for a rhythm that supports **both partners**.

After - *Don't forget the transition back together.*

Reconnection can require adjustment too. One partner may be excited to immediately reconnect while the other needs time to decompress, unpack, sleep, or transition back into home life.

Consider:

- How do we want to greet each other?
- Do we need time to **decompress or reorient**?
- When will we catch up?
- Are there responsibilities that need to be transferred back?
- What kind of connection would feel good?
- Is there anything from the time apart we need to discuss?

Returning home is another transition. Not simply the end of the separation.

When the Plan Doesn't Work

A missed check-in, changed schedule, or misunderstanding doesn't necessarily mean the agreement failed.

Get curious: **What happened? → What did we expect? → What did we need? → What should we adjust?**

Avoid turning one experience into a larger conclusion: “You didn't call, so you don't care.”

Instead: “When I didn't hear from you, I realized that check-in mattered more to me than I expected.”

Use the experience as **information**.

Keep Testing & Learning

Your needs may change depending on **why you're apart, how long you're apart, what each person is managing, and what is happening in the relationship**.

The blueprint should evolve with you.

Discuss → Agree → Practice → Notice → Adjust

The goal isn't constant communication while apart. It's creating enough **understanding and predictability that you can remain connected while still having space to live independently**.