

FREEDOM TO FLY

SCARED OF FLYING?

Are you scared of flying? I was, but it was much more than that. I even refused to get myself a passport, as that meant I was definitely unable to go abroad. You see flying was only one aspect of my fears.

During my early years it did not matter, as I had neither the time or money to go abroad on holiday. Holidays in this country were great – good venues – good countryside – plenty to do. But expensive.

However as time progressed some of these reasons for not flying began to wear thin, and certainly were no longer sufficiently valid for not going abroad.

Friends tried to encourage me, telling me about all sorts of exciting places I could go to. Places I could see, and experience, instead of merely watching them on TV. To tell the truth, I didn't even really enjoy seeing those travel programmes and friends who assured me that real life was far better!

Then my nephew and family thought they might emi-

grate, "Only to Australia!" he said, "You'll be able to visit me!". No passport! Scared of Flying! The other end of the earth? "No way!", I thought

Let me explain further: flying was only one aspect of my fears. I was unable to drive a car up higher than the third floor of a multi-storey car park. I was unable to go down the escalators in all those modern shopping centres. I did not like lifts, and so it continued.

Then a number of things happened. I told my friends to stop hassling me to go aboard. This was a pressure I did not need. I 'phoned one of the national airports and asked if they knew of a Fear of Flying course?

They gave me two telephone numbers. One for a national airline, who had vacancies in about three month's time. I then phoned the second number, which was that of Elaine Iljon Foreman, who said she could offer me a place on a course in ten day's time.

DECISION TIME

Having made the momentous decision to seek help, I wanted to get started as soon as possible. I very much liked the description of Elaine's course. She asked about my other difficulties and suggested she could help with these as well. I therefore decided to join the course in May 1996.

I was stood holding the 'phone and shaking – what had I done! Until then I had only confessed my problems to a very few friends, in order not to have to explain myself to too many others and thus increase the pressure. Now I was really terrified! What had I done!?!

It felt like an eternity until the first session. There were so many T.V. programmes about flying, and, as usual, I avoided watching them. Oh! by the way did I mentioned that I was in my fifties (early) a difficult time of life to let people know you are scared!!

However the time soon arrived and I was off to London. I am so pleased that I joined Elaine and three other people. I have since seen programmes which show a class room of maybe over 100 people all suffering the same problem.

No way was that for me! Then, or now!



The view of the clouds is wonderful

*"It's like being in a
No 9 bus"*

*"They are just like
cotton wool"*

*"It's just like watching
television"*



*"Just remember it is
normal"*

*"I can see the rivers and
the coastline"*

NEXT STOP!



Which coast is this?

The course was just two sessions. The first was in Elaine's consulting room, where we talked and discussed our fears. Elaine showed us how we could each deal with our own difficulties. I was amazed to find I could talk about my problem, as previously I couldn't even go into a travel agent, or to the airport, without breaking out in a sweat.

We finished our afternoon and then went home. It was hard to know that I had a whole week before we were to fly. But I can see why Elaine doesn't do the course in a day, as there's normally time between booking the ticket and flying, and Elaine taught us how to deal with our worries.

The following Saturday was 'D-Day' in no uncertain terms. Would we all turn up? What would it be like? Were we going to be scared? Yes!!!!

FLYING

We arrived at Heathrow. All of us. We got our tickets. We passed through passport control - all new experiences for me!! Some of the others had flown many times, and it was amazing to see how at the start of the course that they were just as scared as me. We got onto the plane.

Then off we went. Going along the runway was very much like being in a bus! Once we were up in the air, we even went to see the pilot - the view from the cockpit was amazingly exciting! Elaine said "Look around you. No one knows

how you feel - and you look just like everyone else." I looked around and once more she was right-again.



WHAT HAPPENED NEXT!

We arrived at our destination! We had flown! We got off the plane - in a foreign country!

On the return journey I asked if I could have a window seat, and I've sat by the window on every flight since then. The view of the clouds is so beautiful, and flying over mountains and coastlines is a fantastic experience. There's so much to see, and there's plenty of time to look at everything.

Since the course I have managed successfully to go to the top of buildings in many parts of the world and I've flown to Amsterdam, Malta, Paris, San Francisco, Florida, Tenerife, Rhodes, Venice, Barcelona and Antigua, Cyprus and Budapest.

I've actually enjoyed flying most of the time. Of course there can be moments of doubt. But then, one can have such moments on a bus, train or ferry.....

BUT MOST OF ALL I WISH I HAD DONE IT YEARS AGO. GO FOR IT NOW - BEFORE YOU REGRET THE YEARS. GO ON - JOIN ELAINE AND FLY