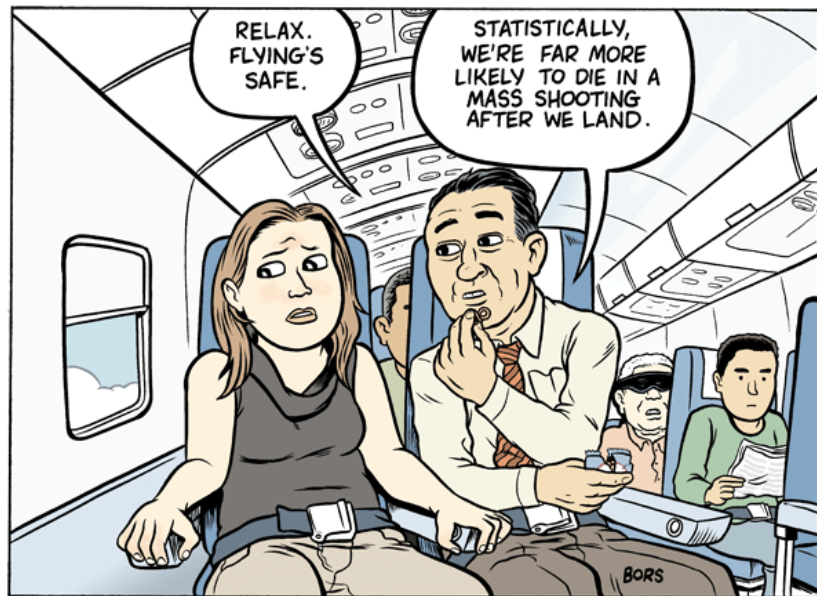


Overcoming the Fear of Flying



Although flying is considered to be one of the safest forms of public transportation, in fact, 29 times safer than travelling by car, the fear of flying is a very common phobia, which a person can develop at any time in their life.

The reason the reassuring statistics don't appear to stop people being afraid of flying is that the fear has little to do with risk itself and more to do with the uncomfortable awareness that life is fragile and none of us has any real control over it, whether in the air or on the ground. And because we were not designed to travel in the air, whenever we get into a flying machine, we have to confront these deepest fears of human vulnerability - let's face it, it is unnatural to find ourselves up in the sky, sealed in a machine, travelling at ridiculously fast speeds!

Anyone who flies, even someone not afraid of flying, understands there's always some risk, just as with anything we do in life, but those with a fear of flying become disabled by the fear and experience psychological symptoms which can make flying a nightmare for them or even impossible!

The good news is that although none of us is ever really in control of anything, we can learn to be psychologically in command of our own thoughts and feelings, and therefore our reactions.

Fear of flying is a phobia, one of many kinds of anxiety disorder and as an anxiety, the fear is more about what might happen, than what is actually happening. There are many different elements to this fear, not all of which are specific to the flight itself. Anxieties about heights; enclosed spaces; crowded conditions; the risk of germs spreading; being made to wait; not understanding the strange sounds and sensations; turbulence; being dependent on someone else's judgment or the

mechanical engineering of the plane; not feeling in control and terrorism are often stated.

Worrying unnecessarily about the future and what may happen, will cause physical and emotional reactions within your mind and body, just as though something dangerous really were happening. Generally, people who experience a fear of flying report two basic types of symptom: physiological reactions to fear and stress e.g. heart palpitations and chest pain, and psychological symptoms - such as negative/catastrophic thinking.

Here at The Hitchin Hypnotherapy Practice, we work with clients who present with a fear of flying and help them through a range of different techniques to feel differently about the experience.

We use a combination of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques such as 'Scrambling' for anxiety symptoms, and 'Anchoring' of positive feelings. Clinical Hypnosis is used to focus on letting go and trusting, and EMDR (eye movement desensitization) and 're-processing' are used to desensitize clients to their worst image or memory and replace it with one which leaves them feeling safe and secure - like a successful landing!

The process takes about two hours and at the end of this session, clients report feeling totally neutral about the flight, with no fear reactions in their bodies, and no negative thoughts in their mind.

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Author: Karen Kelsey

Clinical Hypnotherapist and NLP Coach