

Flying high after hypnotherapy

For those who suffer from a fear of flying a dream holiday can turn into a nightmare. Here Sutton woman Caroline Deeman tells how she conquered her own fear through hypnotherapy – and then decided to train as a hypnotherapist.

It's that time of year again. The perfect holiday has been booked. All that's left to do is count down the days in anticipation of ... my worst nightmare.

I am scared, no, terrified of flying.

I have heard all the rational arguments of how I am statistically more likely to be kicked to death by a donkey than die in a plane crash, but as anyone who has a phobia will painfully understand, it doesn't make any difference. But in this ever-changing world, flying is becoming as common as catching the number 50 bus.

Nowhere is beyond my reach if I can only get on (and stay on) a plane.

I've tried it all – medication, positive thinking, deep breathing, distraction, alcohol, rationalising my fear, even shouting at myself. Nothing has worked. I decide I can't stand it anymore and make one final attempt at freeing myself of my fear. I try hypnotherapy.



■ Off into the blue: Sutton woman Caroline Deeman decided to train as a hypnotherapist after the technique helped her overcome a fear of flying.

I've always been interested in hypnosis and marvelled (albeit sceptically) about how simply talking to someone can remove a phobia.

I book my therapy and am told it will take two sessions. I sit there listening to the comforting and pleasant voice of the therapist and am surprised to find that as I open my eyes, I can remember most of what he said. Is that it? I've paid a complete stranger to sit and talk to me? I walk out the

door feeling somewhat disillusioned and rather lighter in my wallet yet concerned I still wear the heavy burden of my phobia. Only time will tell. My second session is pretty much like the first one only this time I leave to the sound of my therapist exclaiming "Enjoy the flight!". I smile and hope beyond anything else that he's right.

The day arrives and I'm terrified all morning. I can't eat, sleep, even pack

my suitcase coherently ... and then I get in the car to go to the airport.

Just as I was told under hypnosis, I feel great! Even as I check in my bags, go through passport control, shop around Duty Free, I still feel great.

As I board the plane, I pause for a moment and listen to my emotions, waiting for that blinding panic to knock me down, but instead I'm greeted by a calm sense of relaxation. As the aeroplane speeds down the runway, I'm no longer crushing my partner's hand and praying for eternal life, I'm staring out the window and finding myself saying "Wow! Look how fast we're going!".

I eagerly arrive home to inform all my friends I am no longer frightened of flying and immediately rush out and book two things – my next holiday and a place on a hypnotherapy training course.

Anybody who would like more information on how hypnotherapy can help them should call Caroline on 0121 240 0694.