



# Finding Your Purpose

## By Examining Your Fears

**H**ow many of you love to travel but hate to fly? I would imagine quite a large percentage of you feel that way. Have you taken steps to eliminate that fear or explored why you are afraid? Or, like me, do you just deal with it the best you can to get where you want to go? I love to travel. It doesn't matter where or when, business or pleasure, I just love to travel. There is nothing more exciting to me than to start planning a trip. Choosing a destination, picking a hotel, deciding on a rental car and booking my flight. There is absolutely no fear or anxiety involved in any of those decisions for me. I count the days until my next getaway, plan every outfit I'll bring, do some research on the area and sometimes even make a dinner reservation ahead of time. I like to have a plan – what will I do while I'm there, what restaurants should I go to, what's the shopping and nightlife like – I can't wait! I might even start packing a week ahead of time – that's how I know I'm really excited to go. No stress, no anxiety, no fear. Until I wake up the day of my trip and think, "oh yeah, I have to get on a plane". Then it starts. Nervous stomach, sweaty palms and I start thinking about what might be my last day on this planet. I used to think the only way I would be able to fly without fear is to accept that I might die and it would all be over. Will the plane crash from a mechanical failure, pilot error or now in this day and age, terrorist activity? It never occurs to me to imagine what it would be like if the plane

arrives safely. Although I have never been completely relaxed about flying, my fear and anxiety have definitely increased over the last 4-5 years.

So, I should tell you about my past experiences on planes which might help explain some of the fear. As one of my close friends said, "of course you're afraid to fly, if all the things that have happened to you on planes happened to me, I'd never get on one again". From the aborted landing in Philly to the emergency landing in Fargo (yes, Fargo – the first and last time I'll ever be there) to the wake turbulence landing in Atlanta to what felt like a thousand foot drop after takeoff from Dallas, and countless other flights with pretty bad turbulence – you name it, I've experienced it on a plane. Now some of you more seasoned fliers might read this and say, that's nothing – been through worse than that. But let's put it into perspective, all of these things have happened in the last couple of years to someone who flies maybe 6-7 times a year.

Either way, I have to deal with it because I eventually want to go to Australia, will probably be flying more for business in the near future and really just would like to have a peaceful, relaxing flight. I've read all the books and I completely understand the logic behind why fear of flying is illogical. I know all the statistics and ratios and I do believe it is safer than driving your car. But one option I had not investigated

was hypnosis. Probably because I didn't think it would work for me and I was also a little nervous about what might happen if I was hypnotized. I envisioned these people I used to see on these stage shows at college that would do outrageous things or just fall out of their chair into an unconscious state from the mere suggestion by the hypnotist. Luckily for me, I met Lisa, a hypnotist who owns Mind Matters Hypnosis Center in Canton who explained in great detail what hypnosis was and wasn't and that you would not do anything in hypnosis that you wouldn't do normally. She told me that many fears are released after one appointment, but sometimes it may take a couple of sessions to work through them. My first appointment was on a Thursday morning and the first thing she had me do was watch a video. I immediately relaxed and identified with what she explained being in a trance state was like. She said it was like driving in your car and thinking about something and then realizing that you didn't remember the last few miles you drove. That's when your subconscious takes over and that's similar to hypnosis. She also said that all hypnosis is self-hypnosis. If you're a control freak, you'll love that one.

What is hypnosis like? She first had me relax every part of my body and start with some visualizations. I don't remember exactly at what point I was in hypnosis, I just remember following her verbal instructions and being so relaxed

I could almost fall asleep. She took me through a typical day leading up to a flight, getting to the airport, getting on the plane, taking off and landing. I could feel the anxiety as if I was actually on the plane. She then took me to a point in time where this fear started and had a conversation with my subconscious mind, even though it was my voice answering her questions. She asked me to visualize pulling the fear out of my body and holding it in my hand and examining the size. We also did some other techniques with positive affirmations and eliminating negative thoughts. She had me visualize a light that enveloped me and took the fear away. Before the end of the session, she took me through the entire day of the trip again, getting on the plane, taking off and landing and I felt no fear or anxiety at all. It was the most amazing and inexplicable thing I've experienced.

Fast forward to a week later as I was getting ready to leave for a trip to Chicago. I woke up that day and felt no fear and no anxiety. My husband brought me to the airport, I got on the plane and it was a great flight. I couldn't believe it – my fear was gone. Or so I thought! You can probably guess what happened on the return trip. I can say that I was much less nervous than I usually am, but it was still there. As Lisa said, sometimes it takes a couple of sessions, so I was not discouraged. The fact that I had a great flight out was really encouraging to me. So, I went back for another session. We talked about what happened over the weekend – who did I meet and talk to, where did I go, what did I see, trying to connect something to the change from the great flight out to the not so great flight back. Interestingly enough, there was a connection. I went to Chicago for a weekend workshop for a coaching certification I'm pursuing and while I was there I worked with a coach on fear of flying. She asked some thought provoking questions and we determined that it wasn't really flying that I was afraid of... it was dying. She told me to tell my hypnotist so that our sessions would be more focused on working on the fear of death.

During my second session, Lisa

moved me into a trance state much faster than the first time. Again, it was a feeling of complete and utter relaxation, almost to the point of being asleep. She worked again on my visualizations and we did uncover some fears surrounding death. My father had passed away when I was in my late twenties and so it was natural that I would have developed a stronger fear of death as someone close to me was taken quickly and unexpectedly. We explored what happens when you die or at least what my thoughts were around the subject and the possibility of being in a past life. It truly was a fascinating experience. I left there with so many questions about life after death, but realizing that if we are eternal beings I could eliminate that fear and I would never be afraid to fly again.

Unfortunately, I have not had a flight scheduled since the second session with Lisa, but I do feel that I have less fear of flying as a result of hypnosis. Sometimes it's as simple as eliminating negative thoughts around the fear and sometimes it's exploring and finding other connections or relationships to the fear that must be dealt with. Either way, hypnosis is an option that many people do not consider because of their concern about being hypnotized or a lack of belief in the modality. For me, what started as a simple process to get rid of my fear of flying turned into a whole new way of thinking about my life, my purpose in this life and the possibility of other lives to come. And the realization that your fears may not be what they seem - that is truly amazing!

## A Word from the Hypnotist

Most of us suffer from one fear or another to varying degrees. Whether it is fear of a situation or activity like speaking in public or flying or a fear of an object such as a food, bug or snake. Interestingly enough, many fears are actually inherited – because as children we are imprinted by the fear behavior of an adult. If our mom screams and yells at the sight of a mouse, because we don't know any different, we conclude from that reaction that mice are to be feared.

Most fears are the result of what's referred to as an imprint when we're young – typically before the age of 5. An imprint is a situation that has either a strong mental, emotional or physical component to it. For example, if our curiosity gets the better of us and we stick our hand on a hot burner that action and the pain associated creates an imprint which actually kindles or connects neurons in our brain to protect us from making that same mistake again. So imprinting is actually intended to be



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a protective mechanism and as such our fears are designed to protect us from things that the mind deems dangerous even if they're not. Once an imprint is created the emotional energy associated with that imprint is stored in the body and anything that happens or that we perceive to happen beyond that adds to that pile of fear. That fear brews below the surface until the energy of it gets so big that it breaks through and we become consciously aware of that fear and then it tends to continue to grow over time. When the fear breaks through is more dependent on the state of the energy inside than anything happening on the outside, which explains why some fears just seem to come out of the blue without rhyme or reason. If the fear energy gets too great our minds will actually attach that fear to other things as well. Agoraphobia is a perfect example of fear energy getting too big and attaching to many things until the person is confined to their home.

The reason hypnosis works so well to release fears is that the type of hypnosis I practice –which is called root-cause hypnosis - is literally a conversation with

the subconscious mind. Because the subconscious mind not only houses all our emotional energy, but our long term memory as well, it is able to identify the exact moment that the fear started or that the imprint was made and help the conscious mind look at that moment objectively, understand the truth of that moment and attach the proper emotion to that moment. For example, one fear of flying client's imprint came from when she was a little girl and her father threw her into a pond – that old sink or swim teaching method that some of you might be familiar with. It originated as a fear of water, and then turned into a fear of flying over water and progressed into a fear of flying in general. Once that imprint moment was cleared her fear released and she's now flying like a flight attendant. Another client's deathly fear of spiders came from a childhood experience where she and her little friends were playing fort and used an old blanket that they'd gotten from a shed that just happened to be a spider nest. Again, once that moment was cleared her fear of spiders was released. Once the conscious mind can see the situation objectively it

can shift its perception of the situation, thereby releasing the fear.

In Diane's case, her fear of flying was a layered fear. The bottom layer was a fear of flying that started when she was a little girl as a result of her father flying away on a business trip and feeling like her father was "missing." So flying got attached to a feeling of someone missing or being gone. That fear then got compounded over time by some of her experiences while flying as an adult. On top of that fear was a fear of death. Those fears got connected because that first imprint – her father leaving felt to her like he was missing or gone permanently, (with children out of sight is gone forever) the same feeling that she felt when he passed away when she was older.

The subconscious mind has an amazing ability to find the origin or imprint of fears and help the conscious mind process through those pivotal moments and clear those imprints. Once the initial imprint is cleared it's like a game of dominos, when you knock down the lead domino the others fall. You can live fear free.

*Co written by Dr. Diane Hindman and Lisa Zaccheo. Lisa practices at Mind Matters Hypnosis Center in Canton. For more information, please visit [www.mindmattershypnosis.com](http://www.mindmattershypnosis.com) or call (860) 693-6448. See ad on pg 29.*



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