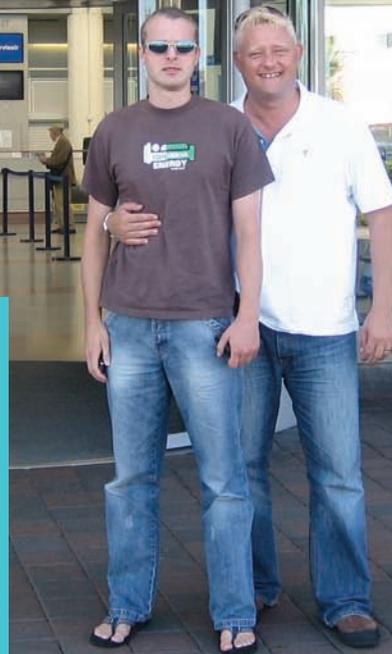


MARK SHEILDS

DEPARTURES



“ISLANDER TAKES TO THE SKYS TO OVERCOME HIS FEAR OF FLYING.”



“Facing the fear and Doing it Anyway.”

Last August’s issue of Jersey Life featured my article on Aerophobia and the fear of flying. In this months issue we are taking a look at how one of my clients, Richard Stent visited my clinic to learn how to overcome his fear of flying. The results were astounding and we are here to tell the tale....

Let us remind ourselves... what is Aerophobia?

Aerophobia is the term used to describe a condition where a person is afraid to fly. The anxiety encountered by the sufferer can be extremely distressing and can be triggered in different ways; from a past experience or a lack of knowledge of how aeroplanes function to even a wild imagination that envisages an accident or disaster prompted by a news story or film.

It is common that the sufferer not only fears the actual flight but they will spend a great deal of time beforehand thinking and worrying about the flight sometimes weeks or months before take off. This only heightens the fear inside, intensifies the anxiety and creates an impression that the event is unmanageable.



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About the client

Richard Stent who works in IT has lived on the island all his life. Richard says, "I have suffered with a fear of flying for at least ten years now. I can't pinpoint exactly when it started but it was in my teens. Since then it has escalated and affected my career, personal relationships and my lifestyle.

Several things come to mind when I think about why I suffer with this phobia. Global terrorism and the constant media attention surrounding air travel and other means of transport really unsettle me. When coupled with some uncomfortable experiences on planes years ago it has built up into a serious problem for me. I hate the feelings of anxiousness, worry, and fear, at just the thought of getting on a plane.

I realised earlier this year if I wanted to be free of this phobia and be able to fulfil my personal and professional goals I needed to seek some help to overcome this problem.

I read one of Mark's articles in the Jersey Life magazine and tracked him down. I was immediately filled with confidence within minutes of speaking to him when he simply told me to take the pressure off myself, not to worry and that he would get me through it. It was almost too good to be true."

The techniques used

On meeting Richard for the first time last July I found him to be a focused individual who understood his problem and simply wanted a strategy to help him overcome his fear.

In summary, the strategy we adopted was to look at the control of his feelings, his trust in the process, an insight into a program to help with distortion and change of his thought patterns and mental approach to flying, and several reliable coping techniques he could find confidence in when needed. We embarked on a program addressing and supporting all of the above principles using Hypnotherapy, NLP and relaxation exercises to get him over his fear. After three sessions I felt Richard was ready and he agreed to book the flight.

The big day

On the morning of the flight I had phone call from Channel Television announcing they wanted to cover the story. Richard, being the brave and focused young man he is, agreed and following our final session we headed up to the airport for Richard's flight.

Richard appeared composed and confident when arriving at the airport with myself and the camera crew following closely behind. Just prior to boarding the plane I could hear Channel Television's presenter, Adam Fowler talking planeside to the camera setting the scene for Richards's arrival.

I had another good look at him and once again he appeared relaxed and ready to face his fear and prove it to the world. In fact he was so keen to get on the plane I had to chase him up the aircraft steps to keep up with him.

As the British Airways jet taxied down the runway Richard and I went into our relaxation routine of my "chill-seeker breathing" technique and some meridian point tapping just to keep him calm. He was fine and as the jet became airborne he relaxed and managed to take in and enjoy the experience.

We landed safely at Gatwick airport where a well deserved lunch awaited however we were both aware that we

still had to make the return flight back to Jersey this time at night.

The flight home was equally successful even though this time it was amuch busier and more turbulent flight. Our pre-flight planned techniques proved invaluable and Richard successfully completed his mission.

Home sweet home

A nice surprise awaited him back in Jersey as his proud father was waiting for him in the Arrival's hall. His father was overwhelmed with how brave his son had been as he had proved to him that you can face your fears head on and gain fantastic results. After congratulating Richard, I did stress that he needed to board another flight within a few weeks to consolidate his fear. He told me that he was already planning a holiday somewhere exotic.

I headed home that evening feeling a mix of delight in Richards achievement and some pride in the small part I had played in helping him overcome his fear. Job satisfaction evidenced at its best. It simply re-enforced to me how powerful the mind is and how we really can achieve anything we put our minds to.

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