

## **YOU CAN HAVE THE WEDDING OF YOUR DREAMS.....**

**Getting married abroad was something that I'd always dreamed about. The only problem was that I was so afraid of flying that I'd always thought that it would never happen.**

In 2003 I decided to do something about it. After seeing the information about fear of flying courses on Airfraid.com I decided to try one. My husband to be wasn't afraid of flying and encouraged me to do it.

I picked the course run by Virgin – "Flying without Fear". It was with some trepidation that I set out that morning in July to go to Gatwick to start the course.

Arrived at the hotel near the airport first thing in the morning – amazed how many people were there! Everything was nice and informal, which was so nice, and helped everyone to relax. We went to the hotel conference room and were seated in groups of 8 with either a member of cabin crew, a pilot, or someone from the Flying without Fear company. We all took turns in telling everyone exactly why we were afraid to fly, which was nice as we all found that many of us were afraid of the same things.

Then the guys from Flying without Fear gave us a talk about themselves and what was in store for us. Then we were introduced to two senior pilots – Dominic and Mark, and also David Landau, who is a psychoanalyst. Together they explained absolutely everything about planes and flying – ok so it probably wasn't everything, but they went over everything that we'd all been worried about! They talked about atmospheric, take offs, landings, even what the "ding ding" of the intercom system was – and it wasn't a secret code between the cabin crew and the pilots as one of the people on the course thought.

We had a break for lunch, which was just what we needed, as we all felt quite tired and stressed. Then back from lunch Dom, Mark, and David took off again answering all of the things that we were worried about – how the engines work, gliding, crashing in water, what turbulence was, why the engine noise changes, and what the moving bits on the wings were. We were all feeling a lot easier about everything, then David stepped in with a relaxation session, which was very enjoyable.

Then came the moment we'd all been waiting for / dreading – the flight. We all got on a coach and went to the airport, and were taken through customs and on to the plane. It was great as the cabin crew, pilots, and David stayed with us to answer questions and to get us through the flight. It was nearly all too much for one woman who wanted to fly to Australia to see her sister for the first time in 30 years – she ran to the door shouting that she wanted to get off! David and everyone were fantastic and they got her to sit back down and they stayed with her throughout the flight. She was fine after that.

The flight lasted for about 45 minutes, and I have to say that it was one of my best experiences ever! Now that we had the knowledge of what was going on we really were not afraid any more, and could actually enjoy the flight!

After we landed we all went back to the hotel for a de-brief session, and everyone was so amazed at how much we'd all enjoyed the flight. We all seemed to be more confident about flying and almost all of us had booked a holiday later in the year so that we could try flying without the back up of the Flying without Fear people.

It was a stressful and tiring day, **but it was one of the best and most useful days of my life.**

After finishing the course all I can say is that it's fantastic! Everything was explained so well that they completely eased my mind and I felt that there really was nothing to stop me from going ahead and arranging our wedding in Barbados!

## **THE WEDDING.....**

With everything arranged (talk about one or two headaches!) the big day grew closer and closer, and I started to get a bit nervous about the flight. Luckily on the course we received a CD with some excellent relaxation techniques from David, so I listened to it each night. It really helped and I actually started to look forward to the flight!

The day came and I got on the plane and took my seat. A few minutes later we started to taxi. It was all so easy! For the rest of the take off I sat there and gave a running commentary of what was going on to my husband to be! The rest of the flight went just as well, apart from a little bit of turbulence, which wasn't a problem. The landing was the same as the take off – nice and smooth, with a running commentary from me.

The day of the wedding came and everything went according to plan and was completely perfect. Wonderful flowers, a fantastic location (just off the beach in the grounds of the Glitter Bay hotel), a wonderful Pastor (Pastor Roach, who looks like Danny Glover!), and perfect weather.

The end of the holiday came too quickly and it was time for the flight back home which was just as easy as the one going, although I think my now husband was getting a bit bored with the commentary all the time, but at least he didn't have nail marks, or broken bones like the last time we tried to fly anywhere!

Since going on the Flying without Fear course we now regularly go on holiday and have visited Ireland, New York, and Barbados again, and I just wanted to say thanks to everyone on the course as they really have changed my life. Also thanks to Lindsay at Airfraid.com for giving people the information that they need to really get over their phobia.

## **AND NOW.....**

After getting married in Barbados it's now one of the top places to get married that I recommend to people. After getting back from our wedding I realised just how much I enjoyed organising our wedding, so I decided to take things a bit further. I now run a wedding, party, and event planning company called **Purple Pear Events** ([www.purplepearevents.com](http://www.purplepearevents.com)). We help people get the wedding or party that they want, and can provide as much or as little help as they need.