

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FEAR OF FLYING:

Why the Safest Thing Feels So Dangerous

≡ Fly a Little Easier Guide ≡

Same
Sky.
Brighter
Possibilities.

1

WHY A SAFE THING FEELS DANGEROUS



- Humans often overestimate very small risks.
- Vivid, rare crashes stick in memory.
- Comparing flying to driving doesn't work, because we feel in control on the road.

2

CONTROL, AND NOT HAVING IT



- Not having control can trigger strong feelings of helplessness.
- Even when we know flying is extremely safe, statistics often don't calm the feeling.

3

WHAT THE FEAR USUALLY IS



- Claustrophobia (feeling trapped).
- Fear of panic (and what it might feel like).
- Fear of losing control.
- Turbulence feels unsettling, but it's a comfort issue, not a safety issue.

4

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS



- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can change unhelpful thoughts.
- Graded exposure builds confidence over time.
- Virtual reality (VR) exposure can help.
- Fear-of-flying courses provide education and support.
- Slow, steady breathing calms the body and mind.
- While rituals can feel comforting, they may keep the fear going in the long run.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

The anxious passenger is not being irrational so much as being human in a situation human risk cognition was never built for. Fear of flying is common and highly treatable, and seeking help is a practical decision, not a weakness. If flying is limiting where you go, a psychologist or a well-designed course can help.

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GOOD THINGS
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SAFE
JOURNEYS
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Connection heals. Conversations help.