



Session 20 – Flying High

Flying high can be interpreted in so many ways. It can give us great observations from a distance, but you can actually also learn to fly high on fear. Fear can be looked at from so many angles. The first thing I'd like to discuss is the acronym 'False Evidence Appearing Real' because so very, very often with fear, we actually have it when there's literally nothing to fear at all. So it's false evidence, but it appears real to us. That's how we sort of deal with it.

Another way I'd like you to look at fear and consider it is to learn to not only recognize it, but not deny it, definitely not, but also to start embracing it. And another acronym for Fear is 'Friendly Eyes as Reality'. To put that to the test, I decided two years ago after being involved in fear and recognizing it and dancing with it and enjoying it, to really challenge myself on fear, because the adrenaline that we all feel sometimes I was starting to miss a little bit because I got comfortable with fear. And we all know that when we get too comfortable, everything becomes routine and it's very important to challenge ourselves to grow again. And I love growing and I. I love sport and challenges.

So I thought, you know what I'd been doing Tennis Holiday's many, many years ago in Chamonix, a beautiful place in France by the Mont Blanc. And all of those years while I was teaching tennis, I'd seen paragliders fly over the tennis courts. And I thought, you know what? I'm going to go to Chamonix, so I can help my coaches see my customers because I hadn't been on a tennis holiday for years and I'm going to fly over the tennis courts and that's going to be really good fun because it's going to scare the hell out of me. And at the same time, I'm going to be in great connection with my coaches and with my customers and I'm going to be enjoying myself. So I sort of created this visualization of me jumping off Plan Praz, a place in Chamonix and flying over the tennis courts. And I thought, right, I'm going to do that because I'm going to be really frightened. And I wanted to observe what fear would do with me, as I've been coaching so many people on it and also great athletes. So it was time to, it was the only way that I could sort of get the same challenge that I used to get on a professional tennis circuit. Now, I'm not suggesting that any of you do this fear for everybody, we all do at our own tempo and no tempo is better than another speed of the other. This one for me was pretty cool. And I think what I learnt from it might help you. That's why I'm telling you the story. So off I went. And in Holland, of course, we don't have mountains, everything's flat. So I went to this course where you learn to paraglide, you run over the field and you bring the paraglider up above your head and you play with it the balance. And you feel it, it's really cool, this huge thing above your head. And they were telling me how slow I was because I was the only woman and I was, of course, the oldest by far with all of these men. And everyone was laughing at me for how slow I was. Now believe me I used to be the fastest, really fast, so that was also very good for my ego, everyone laughing at me, telling me to run faster. I ran fast enough, fortunately, to get the thing above my head. But I thought, you know, I'm not really very good at this yet. I don't know if I dare to go up with the winch. It's just like with those airplanes (gliders) without a motor,

they pull them up and that's what they do with you, with your paragliding in Holland, because we don't have anything to jump off!

But I saw all of these men already on the third weekend going up into the air and I thought, but I don't dare to do that yet. I watched them when they were doing it and I thought, 'but I'm just as good as them'! And it's not about comparing, but it's understanding your own fear, that it seems that some of the young men, maybe it was bravado, maybe it was wisdom. Who cares what it was? But they went straight up into the air and they did incredibly well. And even just noticing the feeling to go towards the winch and to put it onto my stomach, this harness, you know, to latch it on and to get it pull me up to 450 meters. I was already starting to shiver.

I was observing that due to all the meditation practices, that my body was shivering because of the thought of going up into the air. And this is what we have in life, too, with many other situations. But this was like really big time and stomach ache, you know. Well, I'm sure you recognize it from different situations from yourself. So I was practicing observing that. And even when it was going on, before I'd even gone up in the air, I would put a smile on my face and feel my breathing going high and, you know, really try and observe it like I do with meditation. So then the day came, I thought, you know what? On the second day of the third weekend, I'm just going to do it. And I didn't go up with a tandem jump first. I thought I saw these men doing these solos, I'm going to do it, too. I got the winch latched on to me and had all of the instructions and I had this very big harness on. I'm quite small. And the thing started pulling me. And then you pull up the paraglider above your head and I'm running as fast as I can. And then woohh... I felt myself lifting.

It was going really well. You know, I went up into the air. Of course, my heart was pounding and I was sweating. I was so frightened. And the technique is that after you get to about 20 meters into the air, you sort of move back into your harness so that you're really sitting nicely. Well, unfortunately, the harness was so big and I didn't really have the courage or the experience yet. I was just hanging there like a scarecrow because I couldn't get back into the harness. So my legs are just hanging down there and I'm holding onto this thing. The harness is still on me and I'm pulling up and up and up. And I'm so frightened by now. I'm sort of gasping for air, AAHH AHH I just couldn't sit down. It was in one way absolutely terrifying and in another way, I could keep observing it. And from all of the breathing exercises I've done in my life, instead of gasping, I kept saying come on Jackie, breathe deeply. But I was still hanging there like this little scarecrow! Literally. And when I got up and they said, (you've got this radio in your ear), 'Okay, Jackie, let the winch go', you know? So I had to let the harness loose and to let the harness loose, to be clear, I'm hanging there, I'm not sitting down. I'm just hanging there like a loony and I'm panicking. Yeah, but I'm not panicking because I'm observing that I'm panicking!

I had to let the paraglider go. So not only am I not sitting down, but I have to let both of the handles go, that's how they teach you to let the harness go. So I let the handles of the paraglider go and by now I'm almost throwing up. But I'm still laughing because I'm observing what's happening to the body. So there's something observing that, it's quite a good test! Anyway, I let the harness go. Thank goodness that went well. And I'm still hanging there. And you don't know the techniques the first time you've ever been in the air alone, so you don't really know the technique. I was sort of steering the paraglider around this field and they said, go to the car park. I was so frightened I couldn't see the car park for the for the life of me! That's how much panic was in me. And at the same time, there was something behind that, observing it, saying, you're okay, Jackie, this is great. This is what

you wanted to do. And I started singing. I started singing The Sound of Music because I like that it makes me happy. And while I was singing, I was still so frightened, which was totally okay with me at that moment. And I kept guiding the paraglider. And fortunately, within about, I think 10 minutes, I was approaching the ground and I saw the ground coming and I was literally like 'brrrrr' this from panic. I still wasn't sitting in my seat. I was just hanging there like a little scarecrow. And then finally I touched the ground and I just fell down. And I swear, you know, that when you sort of 'Arg, arg', you start throwing up like that. That's how I felt. And I was killing myself, laughing at the same time.

I was so joyous at this challenge that I've given myself, because for me personally, it gave me the confidence to speak with you and to really say to myself, this is observing fear because the body does react, but the silence behind the awareness is still there. And it was worth every single second because that summertime in August, that was in May. I went to Chamonix with my partner and with my wonderful coaches and customers, and I jumped off the mountain and flew over them and they waved at me. And it was a beautiful moment for all of us.

I get emotional just from happiness, not from any bravado or arrogance, I hope you understand that. But to invite you, to at your own tempo and speed to choose something in life that is going to maybe scare you a little bit or be frightening for you and do it out of love and friendliness for yourself. And if it's got to do with somebody else out of love and friendliness for them too, but take the step. And while you're doing that, observe yourself from the kindness and the silence that is always there. And I'll be giving you visualizations to help you learn how to prepare yourself for that, because I visualized a lot about that paragliding, believe me. And I visualized about the joy of jumping off the mountain, running, running, running, jumping. And it was crazy joy and crazy fear at the same time. And slowly but surely you become comfortable with fear and fear becomes your friend. It becomes 'Friendly Eyes As Reality'.