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Airline crashes: Afraid to fly? You're not alone

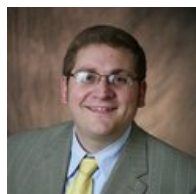
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Tuesday, July 9, 2013 - Sightseers' Delight by Todd DeFeo

Todd DeFeo



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ATLANTA, July 9, 2013 – A pair of fatal air crashes in recent days will do little to help people who fear flying, or may be on the fence about flying, from taking to the skies for their next trip.

“Travelers are worried and the fear of flying meter just elevated into the red,” April Masini, a relationship expert and author, told Sightseers’ Delight. “Anyone who thought, ‘I’m safe – it can’t happen anytime soon, since it happened yesterday,’ – should have skipped a heartbeat, when within 24 hours, an air taxi crashed in Alaska killing all ten passengers aboard.”

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Ten people were **killed** Sunday when a small air taxi crashed at a municipal airport in Alaska. A day earlier in San Francisco, two people were **killed** and dozens injured when Asiana Airlines flight 214 from Seoul, South Korea, apparently clipped a seawall at the edge of the

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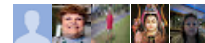
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runway as it was about to land.

“Every time there’s a plane crash, it breaks through people’s denial about the risks of flying and makes them think twice about booking a flight,” Dr. Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist and bestselling author, told Sightseers’ Delight. “It also makes them more frightened once they do fly again because the memory is still fresh.”

It’s hard to say with certainty how many people are afraid to fly. Some estimates indicate it could be as high as 40 percent of the flying public, but is probably lower .

“People are afraid to fly because they feel a loss of control, being countless miles high in the sky, and dependent upon a pilot, and others they don’t know, to protect their life,” Lieberman said.

SEE RELATED: Asiana Airlines plane crash lands at San Francisco Airport (Video)

Lieberman – who created an audio and video program titled “Shrink on Board: The Art of Relaxation” aimed at taking travelers “on a relaxing journey through a series of guided images” – notes many “passengers quell their fear of flying by drinking at the airport.” That, of course, “can have very dangerous ramifications,” Lieberman added.

“Fear of flying is very detrimental,” Lieberman said. “If someone is plagued with anxiety when they are up in the air, they are at risk for physical problems such as a heart attack or deep vein thrombosis.”

Lieberman added: “And, psychologically, fear of flying can prevent people from having a fulfilling life because flying is necessary for many careers and exploring the world on vacation.”

More than 1,500 people have died in commercial aviation crashes in the United States since 1992, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. Roughly 40,000 people die on the nation’s roads each year.

“The accidents in the air are few,” Miami’s WSVN-TV quoted Dr. Catalina Jacobs-Fernandez, a psychologist at Baptist Health in South Florida, as saying. “Millions of people fly on a daily basis, and they’re perfectly safe. You have to focus on that and try and get your thoughts away from negative or [catastrophic] thoughts where you imagine that you go in an airplane and the plane is going to blow up, or you imagine the worst.”

For those afraid to fly, the numbers provide little, if any, solace.

“Yes, there are fewer annual fatalities in aviation than in car accidents, but statistics don’t make any airline passenger feel better about boarding a plane these days – and by these days, I mean, this week, this month and the coming weeks and months while the Asiana crash is fresh in our minds,” Masini said.

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