

Pass It On®...

Overcoming Fear Sometimes Requires a Patient Friend.

How a flight attendant took the time to comfort a passenger who was having panic attacks.

Every day, there are 25,000 flights in America. Accidents are so rare that flying is much safer than car travel. But that doesn't stop many people from feeling panicked when they are moving at 500 miles per hour, 33,000 feet above the ground. Not being at the controls makes us feel a bit helpless. That's when the negative thoughts begin to swirl, and the cycle deepens until, even in a very safe place, we suddenly feel panic.

That's what happened recently to a woman flying on a commercial airline. Many of us can go along doing ordinary things and suddenly be overcome with fear. The physical symptoms are real, and it requires a calming force to steady our emotions. In panic mode, the senses are hypervigilant. Every sound and movement feels like a threat. The passenger responded accordingly, jumping at every sound and the slightest turbulence.

Floyd Dean-Shannon noticed the woman's distress. As a flight attendant, he has plenty to do during a flight. But he paused and spoke reassuringly to the woman. Floyd calmly explained what the noise was and that it was normal. The landing gear, the wing flaps, all perfectly routine sounds you hear as a plane flies.

As the woman began to calm down a bit, Floyd sat down in the aisle beside her and held her hand. He told her she was safe. He made her feel safe. He sat with her through the entire flight. At one point, Floyd learned it was another passenger's birthday, so he led the plane in a song to celebrate — another way of making the woman feel safe by distracting her from her fears. He stayed by the woman's side until it was time to land.

We all have friends who become distressed, who over-worry, who may struggle with some internal demons that keep them from enjoying life. Like Floyd, we can be open enough to see, to be there. We don't have to be professional counselors; we just need to be friends.

In a world that seems most focused on what's happening on a screen, we can look up occasionally and check on those around us. According to the Mayo Clinic, having a friend reduces the risk of many significant health problems, including high blood pressure and depression. And having a friend when you most need it not only gets you through the rough patches in your life — it also gives you the confidence to be a friend to others.

Be a Friend... [PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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