

THE 'PLANE' TRUTH

by Robert F. Otto, C.Ht.



It was in the autumn season of the year, in the early 1990's. And as a private pilot, the changing seasons was a gentle reminder that the time was quickly approaching for my bi-annual flight physical. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the procedures required for that of a private pilot, a bi-annual physical is one segment of mandated procedures required by law in order to comply with the federal governments' rules and regulations regarding piloting an aircraft. I have always taken pride in my fundamental beliefs that a regimen of healthy eating habits, proper rest, exercise, hypnosis and vitamin supplements, was the way to go in order to maintain a healthy, balanced mind and body. Therefore, I felt confident of the outcome that lay ahead. In my opinion, taking the bi-annual physical (that was comprised of a complete and comprehensive examination) was just another venue to ensure the safety of myself as a pilot and any passengers aboard an airborne aircraft under my control.

As I sat in the small, yet inviting waiting room of the doctors office, I couldn't help but review in my minds eye the last few years concerning my overall good health. I was certain of the positive outcome of the procedure that lay ahead and quite frankly was a little annoyed at the stringent requirements that took such precious time out of my busy schedule.

At the time, I was traveling extensively throughout the 48 continental states. Conducting group seminars in the private and public sector for the benefit of smoking cessation and weight control. To mention that my schedule was a bit hectic is an understatement to say the least. It was not at all uncommon at that time for my schedule to keep me away from home for weeks and sometimes months on end. I truly enjoyed my work and equally enjoyed the time off when the scheduling allowed. I was always of the firm belief of working hard and playing even harder. The daunting task of repeatedly performing at three to five speaking engagement locations each week; (and each consecutive engagement being held in different areas, and sometimes different states;) dealing with the mass audiences; (all new and all curious about hypnosis), the traveling, and especially being away from my wife and children caused me to savor every moment I had available to spend at home.

While sitting in the doctor's office lost in thought, my name was spoken. And when called upon, I obediently went through the formalities that had become so familiar to me. After the rigorous examination, and answering a barrage of questions, it was now time for the eye exam. I pressed my forehead and chin firmly onto the examination mechanism and methodically began to utter the letters, numbers and symbols as instructed. To my surprise I noticed a slight hesitation in the voice of the technician in

charge. When asked if there was a problem concerning my responses to the test, she pointed out that I had 'barely squeaked by' the test this time and that I would soon be in need of reading glasses, as a requirement, if I were to continue to fly as a private pilot. Unbeknown to me at the time, I readily accepted the suggestions given of needing glasses in the very near future. Surely I must have been in the waiting room far too long. When I think back on it now, I can honestly say that I believe I was somewhere on the Alpha plane at the time those suggestions were given.

How long does it take to implant a suggestion? We all know the answer to that and I won't waste my time or the valuable time of the readers to delve into answering that question any deeper. Needless to say for the next two years at each appropriate moment in time, I was firmly imbedding and watering the newly implanted seed.

Although neither my habits at home nor my habits at work had changed physically, they surely had changed subconsciously. Because of this small yet mighty suggestion given and accepted at the appropriate time, my thought processes would change profoundly over the course of the next two years.

We all know that traveling long distances can and will cause eye fatigue. It's not uncommon for your eyes to become tired and strained while driving. Consciously I was well aware of that. But at the time, when these occurrences happened in my own daily life, subconsciously my eyes were tired and strained because of the suggestion given that fateful day in the doctors' office. (I was going to need glasses before my next visit). If I stayed up reading into the wee hours of the night, I found myself rubbing my eyes and thinking that the technician must be right. (I was going to need glasses before my next visit). If the lighting in the room was not conducive to the work in front of me, I found myself again thinking that the technician must be right. (I was going to need glasses before my next visit). You get the idea. And you can also begin to see how easily we can become fooled into believing, watering and acting upon any given suggestion. Was this waking hypnosis? Perhaps. Compound this over a period of two years and you can clearly see how I was deceived into believing that I needed glasses!

As the days and months passed and it was nearing the time for my next bi-annual flight physical. I took it upon myself to make an appointment with a local optometrist for the sake of preparing for the eye exam that awaited me in the few short weeks ahead. My eye exam went fairly smooth. The doctor (having given me a complete and thorough examination due to the lengthy and in depth initial consultation we had concerning my symptoms and need for glasses) confirmed what I suspected for almost two years. I needed glasses. Not very strong glasses, but just the same I was in need of glasses. As a matter of fact, he even hedged on the idea of prescribing them. But at my insistence, I was given a prescription for the long awaited glasses that I knew I just had to have in order to pass my FAA physical. I have never forgotten my old boy scout motto of always being prepared, and now, much to my delight, I was prepared for my bi-annual flight physical. I was suited with full body armor, that which included a new pair of glasses.

The FAA examination day arrived. And as coincidence would have it, I found myself

seated in almost the identical seat, of which I had previously occupied almost two years ago. Again, my name was called and obediently I responded. But not before I pressed the palm of my hand on the pocket of my shirt to make sure I was going into battle armed.

Again, the examination was executed without a hitch. Now came the time for the eye exam. Being the proud 'Leo' type that I am, I decided that I wanted to 'try' to pass the test without my glasses. Simply because I didn't want the endorsement of needing glasses to fly an airplane stamped on my license. Once you have such a restriction imposed on your license it's there for life. Stepping up to the mechanism like Babe Ruth up to bat in the bottom of the ninth with two outs and the bases loaded, I firmly placed my forehead and chin into the appropriate areas and... Voila! The test was complete and she didn't even ask me for my glasses! Stunned, I questioned her about what we had discussed two years previously; about me 'squeaking by'; about me needing to have glasses by this exam time; and she looked somewhat bewildered. Being the professional that she is, she took the time to research the records of past, consulted her immediate charts, checked with her co-workers and came back with an answer.

Somewhat embarrassed, she made her way over to the eye machine, where she left me to idle for what seemed like an eternity. With a stuttering voice she began to explain to me the circumstances that led up to this moment in time. "Mr. Otto, she explained, I must apologize for whatever inconvenience this misunderstanding may have caused. But you see, two years ago; the day you were here for your exam; was my very first day in this office. I was not totally acclimated to the eye machine that newly arrived almost at the same time as my hiring. When you were in here for your test at that time, she fumbled; I forgot to turn on the all the lights in the viewer. In other words you took your eye exam two years ago in nearly total darkness!"

Needless to say that within a very short amount of time my headaches cleared up, the eyestrain had subsided, and the need for an optical aid was totally gone. I have taken this experience as a true learning tool. Even for those of us who know the how's and why's of the business, we are not immune to the powerful, sometimes unsuspecting influence of the subconscious acting mind.