

40 Liberated from their fear of heights

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Many of us fear something in our lives. Often these fears may seem ridiculous, and we don't tell others for fear of being branded a coward. Phobias have, thankfully been recognised by science as a genuine condition that needs professional help and we need not suffer in silence anymore.

It was a need to free themselves from this crippling fear of heights that drew Pealing Jaya resident Chia Sai Gok and her daughter, Eng Hui Ann to attend and fear of heights seminar at the KL Tower recently.

Mum and daughter joined 38 others suffering from acrophobia at the seminar organised by Hypnostation KL, a center that offered therapy by working with the subconscious mind. Well-renowned author of many books on hypnotherapy, Valerie Austin, with local counterpart Julian A. Leicester, took the 40 participants through a day long step-by-step therapy to condition their mind to reject the fear.

The result was apparently at the end of the session when all 40 stepped up to the highest floor of the tower and bravely looked over the railings at the KL vista. The happy bunch had good reason to be jubilant. Only they could understand the joy of being liberated from years of enduring acrophobia.

"I used to suffer panic attacks whenever I go to high places. Even going to Genting Highlands was a nerve-recking experience for me," Chia confided. " But I didnt know my daughter too suffered until she was a teen. When she was three, she fell down from the kitchen table, and I think that might have been the trauma that triggered her fear," she explained.

"At first, we thought she was just being a scaredy cat, but later as I felt my own fear, I realised that is was a real thing," she said. Noth mum and daughter say they are completely free from fear now, having put themselves to the test. " It is very a liberating feeling," was all the quiet Eng Hui Ann could say, but her smile spoke volumes on the subject.

For Raymond Foong, 47, fear of heights was a very inconvenient condition to have since he is involved in the construction industry. "The steel roof thrusts in the top part of the building and it requires going up heights. Although my subordinates do the job, I often have to monitor closely and this means going up there," he explained.

"Breaking out in cold sweat doesn't make you look any good in front of your staff, I have had this condition for sometime but I did know where to get help." Foong came to the seminar a

sceptic, but as we went along on the program, he began to see the seriousness of the methods. "I feel so free now," he said, a feeling echoed by fellow participant Zulkarnaen Abdullah, 46. An overseas holiday in the mountains brought out the fear in him noticeable that a friend suggested he should get help.

Asked about what acrophobia sufferers go through, Austin said, "picture yourself with axeweilding man lunging at you across the room. That is the kind of fear we are talking about here."

The seminar was a brainchild of local hypnotherapist Leicester, who said he was glad to have helped people overcome their fears." I hope we can reach out to more people," he added. Menara KL Sdn Bhd CEO Zulkifli Mohamed said the seminar was the tower's managements way of creating out of the ordinary activities. Zulkifli was impressed enough with the program that he whould recommend such a program to be held at other towers that are part of the World Federation of Great Towers.

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