



In the year 1993, at the age of 18 years old, I was involved in a car accident. This shook me so much that I avoided driving completely for 5 years and I only began taking the most simple local journeys when I moved away from the city (out of sheer necessity). These small local drives to get groceries etc sent me into a stressed-out panic for over a year and for 27 years I only drove these routes I knew well and had become comfortable with. Just the thought of driving somewhere unknown gave me stressed out sleepless nights. Visions of car accidents and death blighted both day & night.

This deep routed fear affected many of my life choices both personally and professionally for these 27 years. In my personal life, I missed out on many occasions with family and friends because I was too scared to drive to the destination. As a parent, my sons had to miss out on many trips with friends/family due to my failure to get a grip over the sheer terror of driving somewhere unknown. My career has been hindered due to only applying for jobs in my local area and even avoiding promotion as the job required some driving.

This is something that I and my children had to live with. Well-meaning friends over the years have tried to help me get over this horrible fear in various ways ‘Driving is easy! If I can do it, you can do it!’ was often said. On one occasion in 2002, a friend convinced me to follow her on a short motorway journey to take our children to the Zoo. She assured me that all I needed to do was to do as she did & there would be nothing to fear. From the moment I got in the car, I was shaking, in a cold sweat and became borderline hysterical once we entered the slip road for the motorway. I couldn’t think straight due to the intense fear and I was convinced that my children and I would meet an untimely end on this journey. Needless to say, we arrived at the Zoo but I spent the entire day gripped by the terror of the inevitable journey home. I never, ever attempted another unknown journey again after that day.

Fast forward to 2020, my life would change forever when I met Denise, who recognised symptoms of post-traumatic stress and said she could help me using a therapy called RTM. I knew nothing about this therapy and didn’t see how anything could change my fear of driving after all these years. However, I was so desperate to be free of this awful mental prison that I was willing to give anything a go (that didn’t involve actually getting in a car!). After two sessions with Denise, I started to notice changes within myself. On my drive to and from work, I would usually be tense, but suddenly I realised I was feeling unusually calm on my commute. My sleep improved and I no longer had random visions of car accidents before my eyes during the day. After our third and final session, I noticed that I felt an overall calmness about everything in my life. Certain worries and sensitivities no longer seemed a valid reason to feel stressed.

The real test came within a few days after my third session, when my work required me to make some surprise Christmas deliveries to employees at various addresses which were out of my usual driving comfort zone. I had always hidden my fear of driving from my employers due to the shame I felt, plus the worry that they would think less of me/doubt my capabilities. This request would have normally sent me in to a blind panic and I would have had to confess that I wasn’t able to carry out the deliveries. Instead, my reaction was very unusual for me, as it was calm... I mapped out the addresses and planned my route. I slept well the night before and awoke excited to be making the surprise deliveries. The two-hour drive went very well and for the first time in my life, I actually enjoyed a drive! Without the horrible panic gripping me, I could think clearly and didn’t have awful irrational visions of car crashes and death.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Denise has changed my life. I cannot convey strongly enough how much Denise’s RTM sessions improved my mental health and quality of life. It wasn’t until after the sessions that I realised how much the car accident had affected not only my driving, but also my confidence in many other areas of my life. Paranoia of how I was perceived by my colleagues, for example. Only once the fear was removed, did the full repercussions of the accident become clear as they melted away. I am in awe of what Denise has done for me and will be forever in her debt.