



# BREAKING FREE FROM FEAR

by Monica Pitrelli

**H**eights, rollercoasters, snakes? No sweat. Cave-crawling, train-track trestle crouching (an activity introduced by dear ol' Dad) and midnight roof-jumping as a teen? Piece of cake. My motto is: if you fear it, confront it.

I laugh at those folks on TV who harbour really strange phobias. You know the type – the timid souls that bolt from a room in utter hysterics at the sight of a paper clip or a tie-dyed scarf. It is just so *illogical*, and as a serious Sensing-Thinking personality (as shown by more than one Myers-Briggs test), logic rules my world.

So, can someone perhaps explain why, when I decided to plunge headfirst into the world of skydiving, I awoke on the morning of my first jump

petrified at the thought of ... the flight? Jettisoning from a plane 3 kilometres above the earth with a 185 kilometre-per-hour minute of free fall was not an issue. The process of *getting* to jumping altitude is where I feared meeting an untimely demise.

Yes, my Achilles' heel, a break in the otherwise impervious veneer of my logic-trumps-all mantra – I am, indeed, afraid to fly. As an expat and frequent traveller, this doesn't particularly suit my lifestyle. Deal with it, I do. Enjoy the process? Not at all.

Rather than nail-gripping and teeth-gnashing my way through yet another pocket of turbulence, I contacted Nancy Ho, a clinical hypnotherapist, who harnesses the power of hypnosis to help people overcome everything from daily troubles to deeper emotional issues.

"What most people think is the problem on the conscious level is not usually the real problem," says Nancy. "For example, the fear of cockroaches, lizards or flying is totally irrational. But these things trigger something in the subconscious, which then manifests on the conscious level."

And all this time I thought it was notions of fiery balls of plummeting wreckage that were causing my pre-flight sleeplessness. Nancy probes me further about my fear: when it began, what makes it worse and whether (*gulp*) I am a controlling person. "Guilty," I plead.

"Usually, fear of flying involves control issues because you are not in the cockpit. To add to the problem, you can't see what is happening and you can't jump off – not that you would want to!"