

Ep 6 Mothers Day

2020, Enid Otun
If Women were meant to fly the sky would be pink

Transcript

[0:00] Hello and welcome to the 6th episode of if women were meant to fly the sky would be pink Mother's Day I'm Enid Otun.

[0:10] This episode I'll be giving you some insight into my new flying assignments and I welcome my mum to San Francisco on her first-ever trip to the USA. And I embark on my new journey as a flight instructor and my first officially assigned student.

[0:26] Music.

[0:56] No rest for the wicked as they say and my flight instructors course began in Earnest it was actually a relatively short course and for the first time, I felt that I was really ready for it. I've been flying with my friend Chris a lot and she was giving me the experience flying in the right-hand seat so that I could get used to that side of the aircraft. The one thing with being a flight instructor was I was now the one who was in charge and not only that, I was responsible for teaching my student to fly with all that entailed. It felt rather strange at the time, odd to be on the other side. In my training days if anything felt too challenging I only had to look over to the left for support, but now however I was in the hot seat I was the support. I would feel this even more keenly later on in my career after I'd become a Captain.

[1:49] Since the Flight instructors course was full time I decided to schedule flights morning and afternoon, Practicing how to teach students with my instructor Beth, I think the fact that I just been through it helped it was fresh in my mind. I now had to focus on learning to teach and of course, making sure my aircraft knowledge was watertight. I also spent a lot of time on the ground teaching ground school meteorology and Air Law and got to fly with my fellow students and that gave me additional experience in the right-hand seat, monitoring all their practice flights, So before I knew it my flight test was scheduled with the FAA examiner. He'd briefed me some weeks previously and asked if I minded on focusing on spins, as part of my test. I kind of surprised myself because whilst my initial Instinct was to say, sorry, what you have lost your mind.

[2:40] I thought better of it and decided that I would push my boundaries and accept it as a challenge. I'd flown with this particular FAA flight Examiner before and I knew him to be an experienced and a very fair man. Well the day finally arrived so with the briefing and a walk around we climbed out in the direction of Half Moon Bay in the coast we plan to 5000 ft roughly to begin with and start the first in the series of spins and other Maneuvers that form part of the tour, so towards the end of what I had hoped have been a successful exam Examiner asked if I'd ever spend an aircraft with more than 10 degrees or flats while.

[3:20] The flaps are located on the trailing edge of the wing and they provide a means for the aircraft again additional lift if there is a low setting or additional drag when they set hire I haven't. And so he proceeded to show me that it could be done which was an interesting experience in itself and I learnt rather a lot.

[3:40] Once back on the ground with the breathing over incidental heat been impressed and he's, everything went well there are a couple of things that always are that I could have done differently but I was proclaimed a fully qualified flight instructor, can a hard to put into words are Feelings that were making me break out and Goosebumps a mixture of elation and pride of the type I never really experienced before by my young life this coming from within me in spite of the Demons that I carried the feelings that I sometimes couldn't work through the doubts fears mental and physical scars had plagued me my whole life, that night it was a fun night as I celebrate with my fellow students and friends in downtown San Francisco.

[4:27] So having I reach my goal of completing all the flight courses I've been enrolled, I was offered the opportunity to be able to increase my experience by taking on private pilot students my first student was Sammy, now Samuel was 19 years old and also he lived in the US family were British soap art from being his first flight instructor he had a mutual connection to the United Kingdom as well, I took him up in the Cessna 152 trainer for his introductory flight he always wanted to be a pilot and finally he was being able to realise his dreams and that was very exciting for, I was nervous Sam was my first student and I wanted to make the right impression on him I wanted him to trust that I would look after him and get him to worry one or two. Of course I didn't know that this would go according to plan at the time but I was determined that he wanted this as much as he said he did we were going to do this too. There's something about his eagerness and determination that struck a chord he reminded me of me.

[5:28] Music.

[5:40] I need the worried salmon I got on like a house on fire and in a very short time we were approaching his first solo flight. I've been incredibly impressed with this young man's progress and dedication he was through he was focused and as this confidence grew as a pilot instructor he was a fabulous. An early Sunday morning salmon I met for a lesson we were practicing touch and goes. His handling and decision-making very good and as we touch down I asked him to taxi back to the holding point but stopped him obviously offline, ok Sam off you go let's see three touch and goes on your own you've got this.

[6:23] He looked at me quizzically and then smiled yes ma'am he was always so incredibly polite I hoped out shut the door lingering only to see him go through Asterix before you tax it, I ran up to the control tower where I be watching my first student go search, the on-duty controller smiled and gave me the thumbs up as I watch Sam lineup for his first solo take, windows.com sounds radio calls of perfect I didn't detect a hint of nervousness in his voice, and then he was airborne wings level nice rate of climatic rest of the Redwood Shores, have I done enough was his confident as he seemed was he cope with an engine failure at any of his pattern points will you remember his flaps and is airspace.

[7:10] This was still going through my mind as the lab place the aircraft firmly but gracefully back onto the tarmac in exactly the right place before you added, to the engine for it next take off I was so proud I cried not that he will ever know that. When I met him after successful flights we were as a later as each other it was a huge moment for us both.

[7:34] In addition to same as my first student I took on a lot of introductory flights licence Jackson glider towing so as I Began this new phase of teacher. I was excited and pleased that I would be able to welcome my mum to the United States, it would be a first for her and I was determined to make sure that the two weeks you was here will be the best holiday ever I knew that I would be exceptionally proud to be able to stand before her as a fully qualified commercial pilot. She would stay with me Chris and Chris's mum in summer.

[8:08] When I been in boarding school in my early years there have been several occasions where I would travel up to London to meet her for a few days in the sea but often her flight wouldn't land until about 6 in the morning so I have to tell a little white lie to be able to get the train up to Gatwick the night before, where I would stay all night until have flight arrived often with a purchase bunch of roses that I had to actually try to keep alive until she exited the customs Hall to receive, she was always very pleased to see me and I felt like really done it grown up thing now she was in the US I didn't know quite where the star, I wanted to take a flying with me to Half Moon Bay into the city to experience all that it had to offer Fisherman's Wharf Alcatraz Lombard Street that was prime rib at the best state restaurant ice lollies and lunch at the wall I drive up the coast to experience of wonderful crab chowder that I've grown to love so much about sharing that particular experience.

[9:08] A few months before my friends and I booked a table at a particular restaurant famous for their chowder when we arrived in good time for a booking we were refused entry, the restaurant was far from full and I was confused at first and objectives what do you mean you don't have this plenty of tables, the waitress looks straight at me and said slowly and deliberately what I'm saying is we don't have room for you. She dismissively gesture to me and all my friends Sue all happened to be black as is often the case similar to the times that I was pulled over by the police for driving while black I was to Dunford and upset of joy, we walked away dejectedly and probably thinking hang on the 2nd that just happened. Well I'm relieved to say the in California this and maybe one other occasion with the only negative experiences I had of this nature sadly not so years later in different states as I continued my career.

[10:06] So I took my mum to a different restaurant this time and all went well we started with the Crab chowder experience at Fisherman's Wharf when my mum really enjoyed the long stroll and the beautiful views over the bay. Lombard Street was an experience of a lifetime for her as we drove down the twisty turns made so famous she couldn't believe the feeling of vastness of as we drove along the Golden Gate Bridge and in many ways a world away from the sea. I was able to introduce her to my new world and to take a flying with me something she'd only done once before shortly after I gave my private pilot's licence in Nigeria then it was a short flight out over the coast on a bright and clear sunny day with a landing at the new mobile airstrip which was to be the new home of the LEGO flying. It was barely finished in the runway wasn't much more than a hastily laid rough tarmac the club buildings were still under construction as well as surrounding security fencing and the road in off the main highway the second flight however very. I was taking her to Livermore Airport to experience arriving by plane and walking into have dinner before returning to San Carlos and this was definitely something she's not experienced before.

[11:20] We had a peck 2-weeks where every waking moment was spent making sure she would never forget this Xperia. Another time to return to Lagos weird Forge the mother-daughter relationship that we not had before. My mother and I always been close yet distant and equal measure this wasn't helped by my being at boarding school for many of my teenage years, we were like ships in the night and we develop very different views of the world my mother was all school and wouldn't discuss any of the urgent challenges that I was having with my child, I felt that we didn't have the closeness required to comfort each other through what I've been a trying time since my birth in 1962, her family were the same you put up with what life dishes out to you and you don't complain even if this is detrimental to your mental health or that of your child. So as a direct result I was left to fend for myself emotionally and I was not yet equipped for that challenge.

[12:19] District was a chance for her to see me at my best in a place where I have been thriving despite the odds and where I was folding routes that I've never had the courage to plant before. In some ways I think she spent the two weeks on part of that journey with me although in a different mind, nice was a more practical exercise of parent making sure that a child has achieved something that would carry her through life and him anyway is that was an African approach to life. The practical fark was more her Cumbrian routes of which was very proud have a nose if she hasn't been at that stop she would never have survived my father, I remember sitting with her on the boardwalk at Fisherman's Wharf are weekend her visit and trying to explain my XIV moments whilst we enjoyed an ice lolly together something so mundane but. I was trying to connect to her in a word never done before but this meant that I had to divulge apart of myself and become someone, that was a position I didn't enjoy. My councillor head encouraged me to try to seek areas of mutual interest when making those first tentative moves to reestablish a link with my mother and I was trying to do just.

[13:31] This maternal Instinct which I rarely experienced as a child from her was now present but I didn't know how to receive it. I have to be honest I love my mum but sometimes her behaviour was not that different to my father's when I was going. Over the years of yelling and screaming sinking her nails through the skin in my upper Arms to make me cry and to humiliate me throwing irons down the hallway and the hope of forcing me to be complete. Slaps across the face in public to teach me a lesson after some transgress. The hauei in her face as she advanced on me with whatever she had the hand. Another as I grew older and wiser I knew she was not coping with her mental health and was in a very bad place. At the time I have nothing but contempt for her along with her sense of loss for the mother that wasn't mine. List of courses in addition to the physical and mental abuse I was suffering at the hands of a brutal fight.

[14:29] The complicated physical and mental abuse in my childhood was subjectively awful I suppose but they were my normal and you weren't close in a way that a Mother and Child should. And at the bond we had was gonna born of mental and physical trauma which was never talked about I'm still processing this today. Another I've come along way the stars always be there and this impacted our relationship in her later years. That day on the boardwalk oh I knew she was proud she was learning to show glimpses of it and it was strange for me to feel that after all those years it did make me feel happy. My Mother Never wants acknowledge the violence she suffered at the hands of my father she's suffered great.

[15:13] My question why she decided we should go and live with him when she already knew what he was capable of right she didn't protect me from him why she treated me badly as well as our relationship was never an easy one but she was bad in terms of biological. I think because of that are coming on to her and that image of what I wanted our relationship to be for my whole life.

[15:34] Much much later when my partner and I care for her in her final years eventually saw summer for a softer more loving side and I'll treasure those memories.

[15:44] My final words in this episode will be for her.

[15:48] My mother was complicated but I feel that she was a good and generous woman and despite the trauma that we both suffered in our lives. I'm proud of inherited that stoics strong practical part of her just gone a long way in making me the person I am today. Thank you for listening your comments and reviews are very much appreciated if you enjoy this podcast please leave reviews where you can. Thank you again to Lucy Ashby for the editing of this episode I will introduce you to. The difficult decision to leave the USA and return to Nigeria to take up an offer of a first officer position with a new airline flying DC-8 disappointment set me back a long way as a pilot, confused and alone I return to the UK with no Direction thank you and goodbye.

[16:42] Music.

