

LEOPARD AVIATION



NEWS



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THE ZEN OF LANDING

“FLYING IS THE SECOND
MOST EXCITING THING
YOU CAN DO IN LIFE;

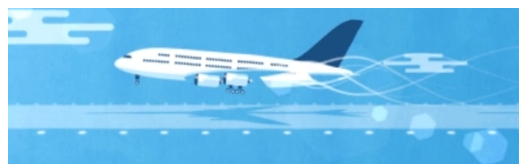
LANDING IS #1.”

Question: A pilot flies an airplane. Doesn't a pilot also **land** an airplane?

Answer: Yes, uh, sort of. It is, in fact, called “landing”. But, the act of landing a plane is not really what it sounds like.

You “drive a car”. That’s like “flying a plane”, right? But, “landing a plane” is not the same thing. “Driving” a car or motorcycle is an active verb. “Landing a plane”..... is it an active thing or a passive one?

We land a plane – but only indirectly. What we really do is position the plane correctly, low over the numbers, on centerline, parallel to a runway & at the right airspeed. And then, it’s more like the plane lands itself after we rob it of its power to stay in the air& nose up a bit.



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That's more like flying than "landing", right? The landing is just what happens as a result of the plane running out of energy.



Another thing. What is really happening when you are landing a plane? Your eyes see, your mind regulates the image and it makes judgments on that image. You see what is in front of you; the "sight picture" is correct when wings are at 90 degrees to the runway, and you've got a target that you are keeping in the windshield until just before crossing the numbers..... then, eyes drift down the runway. The mind sees; the plane reacts.

But, what connects that changing sight picture in your eyes to the reaction of the plane? Is it the yoke? Is it your hands? Is it both?

If you have never learned sight-typing, you can do a simple exercise that will show you what is happening in sight-typing. Just type "W-O-L-F". Then, do it again, wolf.... wolf....wolf. Then, look at the screen only and do it again 5 times slowly. Then try....Foxtrot... foxtrot....foxtrot. Very quickly, you don't need to look at the keys – you are only watching the words appear on the screen.

That is when the fingers and the keys *go away*.

Pretty soon, this activity becomes one where your mind acts and the words appear on the screen and – there are no keys. There are no fingers. They recede into the background.

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That is the goal. We want the plane to do what our mind wills it to do – automatically -- and we don't want the feet on the rudder pedals and hand on the stick/yoke to hinder that connection. You just don't want the rudder or stick to get in the way. This just takes practice.

A crosswind jumps up at you over the runway and your hands and feet respond without a thought.... a clean knee-jerk reaction.

Bottom line: If you are paying attention to your hands or feet, you are distracting yourself from



the real connection that will occur with time – with practice -- the connection of your mind & eyes directly to the movement of the plane.

What did Yoda say to Luke Skywalker? “Luke, don't try. DO!” If you are trying to land that plane, that is what you are doing – TRYING. That's not the same thing as DOING.

When the feet and hands disappear from the process, when the controls in the cockpit aren't our focus, that's when we are becoming.....

one with the plane.

As they sometimes say in golf: “Be the ball.”



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**THE EXHILARATION OF FLYING IS TOO KEEN,
THE PLEASURE TOO GREAT,
FOR IT NOT TO BE CALLED A “SPORT”.**

— ORVILLE WRIGHT



---- THE JOY OF FLYING

