



Airfreddy's Flying Stories

Stories That *All Pilots* Can Learn From

Story #10: Fred I Need Some Spin Training

A little story to think about: Back in about 1992, after I had been instructing for a few years, I was in the office of the local FBO which I was working for. I was waiting for one of my students to come back from a solo flight and a little while later my student came in and he looked as though he had just seen a ghost. He was shaking and sweating and you name it. He flat out didn't look good. I asked him what happened. The answer that I got was one that most flight instructors would not want to hear; "I was practicing stalls in the practice area and all of a sudden I was upside down and then just spinning towards the ground". I didn't know what to do but I heard your voice tell me to pull the power back and just let go of the control column and the plane will stabilize."

If you know anything about small Cessna's they tend to have a forward CG and will recover if you just let go of the controls for a second; that is if you are not in a fully developed spin. So that is what the student did. The even more upsetting part to me was the fact that he stated once the planes topped spinning and the nose started to come up, he looked at the altimeter. He said it was reading about 1800 – 1900 Feet.

If you fly in the phoenix area you know that the ground elevation is approximately 1500 FEETMSL. So my student recovered about 300 to 400 Feet about the ground. This is far below normal traffic patterns. So my question to you is would you like this to happen to you?. Because it can happen to you. Or would you rather have an instructor go over spin entries and recoveries with you?

I was taking aerobatic flight lessons at the time and had practiced plenty of 3 to 4 turn spins, so I got the parachutes on and up we went. I started demonstrating spins and spin entries and he just kept saying “nope that is not what happened”. It finally dawned on me what had happened and I said to him is this what happened and sure enough I had hit the nail on the head.

The spin my student got himself into was one of the worse cases you could imagine. He was practicing power off stalls. So the normal recovery is to lower the nose and add full power and start retracting flaps 10 degrees at a time.

Little did my student know that the plane had started to enter the spin when he added full power. The result was a torque roll that placed the plane upside down at first, then continued to spin with the help of the full power setting. I didn't think that a 152 was capable of that but sure enough it was. So he pulled the power and let go of it recovering about 400 feet above the ground.

I think every pilot out there should have done some type of spin training. Now that I don't have an aerobatic airplane I do a flight that shows the students how to enter and recover from the spin. This is not a full spin lesson but it shows the student what to expect. If the student does get himself in trouble I will let them go as long as I can.

When I had my aerobat I would do spins and basic aerobatics with every student that wouldn't put the plane over weight. Most students would be a little scared but after the first of two flights they couldn't wait to do the second one.

If you can get up and do this before you solo, one thing I can suggest is not to do it in an extra 300. Yes, it will be a fun time but you won't get the feel of the plane you are normally flying. If you can't do it in an aerobat ,try and get in a Citabria or Super Decathlon. You want something that will be a little sluggish to simulate the plane you are training in.



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