

My Biggest Challenge- My fear of Spiders

The technical term for someone afraid of spiders is arachnophobia. I know because I've been afraid of them for as long as I can remember. Over the years, the phobia became increasingly embarrassing and even debilitating.

I think my worst experience with spiders, was when I visited the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Queensland, Australia in 2006. They were having an event, where animal handlers were placing different kinds of animals on people's hands and recorded their reactions.

One of the handlers took out something that made me scream. It was a Giant Huntsman Spider. It's the biggest spider in Australia. Its body is over an inch long and, it has a leg span of up to 5 inches. It was the most massive spider I'd ever seen. I was in the front row and, paralysed with fear.

The handler looked around and came over to me. She asked me to observe the spider. She explained how spiders only attack when threatened. She further emphasised how a spider captures its prey and consumes it. I was still scared of the spider. Yet, her explanation made me curious about them. I began to think about spiders more scientifically than emotionally.

After my trip, I did a lot of research about spiders. I studied the different kinds of spiders in India. I learned that most spider venom is non-toxic to humans. This discovery helped with my fears, and house spiders were no longer scary.

It took several more years and hundreds of more encounters before I got over my phobia. Now, I'm not afraid of spiders anymore. It's all because of Miss Sarah Carlson, the handler from all those years ago in Australia.