Its no coincidence that this sentence reminds one on William S.'s famous " to be or not to be" line, as Speedriding or Speedflying is 100% depending on suitable conditions in order to be safe.

You would not ride your slick equipped road racing bycicle on an icy road ? same with Speedflying in gusty winds, limited visibility or unsuitable terrain: it simply does not work well for long, no matter how skilled and experienced you are.

Especially in your first one or two seasons of speedflying **you are superhot to try out your new toy, you want to be out there** , you want to experience that intense visual flow you have seen in all those videos that made you buy that toy. FORGET IT.

A well known iteration of Murphys Law for outdoor toys says: as soon as you get it delivered you will not be able to use it for at least a week.

No matter if you are an experienced speedflying crack or a bloody beginner: **be patient, wait for the right conditions and pick the right spot. its worth it. trust me.**

So what are the right conditions ?

Lets assume you want to perform some of those super trendy superclose to ground bigballformenonly speedridingmoves. Whats the most important thing ? your action sports camera pointing the right way and beeing switched on? the right brand of wing or skis ? hmm sounds not quite right does it ? yep.

Its **control over your flying path**.

And there is only ONE way to acheive the highest amount of control: NO WIND. NO THERMALS. AIR AS SLICK AND SOLID AS GLASS.

So be wise, if you want to fly low, pick the right day and the right time of the day:

- early morning, late afternoon

- cold air, preferrably inside an inversion layer (you dont know what that is? read up.)

- No thermals (dont forget trees and rocks can EASILY release unexpected thermals in mid winter)

- Slight cadiabatic wind (comes for free with any solid amount of snowcover) that further smoothens the air's boundary layer on the mountain

That was it for those of you with developing functional analphabetism, all others read on for some additional thoughts about the topic ,-)

The full story:

For PG style flying *(50 to 100m (300') over ground with a reserve etc.)* up to 30 kph winds *(anyt hing you would feel comfortable flying a Paraglider in)*
is usually ok, but HUGELY depending on the location and the absence of big
(from a nearby mountain ridge, sharp bend in a velley etc.)
rotor / lee's and - most important - the absence of strong Thermals.

speedflying is fun but not worth to die for (nothing is, at least for me.)

best tactic is to look for deep, shady (North / Northeast faces) dead end valleys that sit inside a cold air inversion and make sure there is no storm coming over the back ,-)

Any sort of passes / deep cuts in mountain ridges etc. are always shitty as you may be safe in the middle (in freeflowing air) BUT near the slopes you always get all sorts of NASTY - and more important - sometimes unforseeable rotors.

Also very often on passes the wind direction may switch as pressure or temp diff. in the adjacent valleys change. KNOW YOUR AREA.

My advise (as a kiter and snowkiter for way longer than I speedfly): **Get a snowkite. so if its windy you win.**

Also you learn the air dynamics of your area - a snowkite teaches you a lot about close to ground turbulence and you will be much more aware of the rotor havoc that wind can create...

Another highly reccommended activity: go speedfly- skitouring and **"earn your run"** - on your ascent you have lots of time to feel what the wind does on different parts of the mountain, you will **feel inversion layers and lee zones** ... will give you a much **better understanding of the mountain you are riding** .

If you choose not to fly (which takes more courage then to fly !) you still had an awesome day out on mountain an can ski down a cool backcountry run.

For ground hugging speedflying just wait for those perfect cold days with good visibility and no winds.... dont get fooled by the videos... its the same all over the world .. also here in the alps .. you simply need to be patient and knowledgeable and pick the right day for superlow / superfast groundskimming speedflying / riding.

Ever wondered why there is so little video footage of speedflying the perfectly lift served aguille north face in chamonix ? (e.g. http://www.schnellcraft.com/index.php/schnellcraft/item/chamonix-2011-teaser) - you guessed it: because there are just a handful of days where it is safely possible to launch and usually you just get only a few hours in the morning until the winds kick in again.

Its not indoor, its not resort skiing, its a nature sport, so wait until nature says yes. its like a precious gift you can't buy ... The right conditions for speedflying make a good day on the mountain even more special then it already is (compared to sitting in an office or wasting your lifetime with similar boring stuff).

PS: I know, its hard to say no, expecially in the beginning, as a speedflying veteran (yea,

sounds a bit funny with just 14+ seasons since 2003 compared to 30+ yrs of year round mountaineering experience ,-) pls believe me: to say no if conditions are not perfect is the right thing to do if you want to live.

All the best and make sure you have LONG LASTING fun out there !

Paul

www.schnellcraft.com