

FAST Pathways Example Successes – Confidence and Performing at Their Best

Matt was 18 months into his first Graduate role, and his HR Manager was getting increasingly concerned about him. He'd not flagged any problems, but he seemed to be on a slippery slope towards burnout – putting in ever longer hours, and still seeming to feel that nothing was ever enough. It turned out he was really struggling to switch off at all, sleeping badly, and worrying almost constantly about what other people were thinking about him.

So his HR Manager arranged for him to have FAST Pathways training. Matt was surprised at how much difference the skills made, and how quickly. With only the first few skills explored, he was already comfortably logging off at the end of each working day, and still getting through what needed to be done. Which meant he was spending more time with his wife (who hadn't been seeing that much of him), and enjoying his evenings. As his over all stress halved, he found himself feeling more motivated. And his business got back the enthusiastic and capable Graduate who they'd hired.

Every Silver Lining had a Cloud

James could easily pick out all the ways in which anything could go wrong, so he worried a lot. Sometimes it got quite tiring, having so many worries fighting for his attention. But he'd developed an array of coping skills, keeping enough of a lid on it to function. He kept himself to himself in work, avoiding unnecessary conversation, and doing the bare minimum to keep his boss off his back. He was managing, until his wife dropped the bombshell that she was thinking of leaving because of it.



He started searching for reasons why he saw only the negatives, believing (as many people do) that he had to start by understanding where it came from. But as usually happens, his search was long, frustrating, fruitless and completely unnecessary. He tried positive thinking, forcing a different spin on his natural thoughts, but it was hard work and never lasted. Then a friend's chance comment led him to FAST Pathways. Rather than trying to work out where the negative thoughts were coming from, or trying to over-write them, he spent a little time exploring how they actually showed up, and how to change them for good.

Over the coming days, he noticed a huge release from the catastrophising that his wife might leave. He was still scared, but he started to feel more hopeful – something he realised he'd not felt about anything for a very long time. Worries still popped up, but they were less intense, and easier to ignore. He felt like he'd cleared space inside his thinking, to engage more with the world around him.

He chatted with colleagues, finding out things that in years of working together, they'd never realised they had in common. His boss saw a big difference, as he started to come forward with ideas instead of grumbling away in the background about anyone else's (his boss later admitted that he used to dread having to tell him that anything was changing!). And instead of just slogging through each day, he started to enjoy finding new ways to add to and apply his many years of experience on the job.

Silencing the Inner Distractor

Kelly's thrives on stress – it comes with the role of managing a busy hotel. It can get pretty chaotic, because when something goes wrong, it's got to be sorted NOW!! She'd go home only once she was sure everything was running like clockwork, so long hours were her norm.

When she had her son, her year's leave flew by. The trouble started when she went back to work: She'd spend her day constantly worrying about her son, watching the clock, and panicking that she might not get everything done in time to collect him. Because now, she had to leave on time. She was constantly distracted, stopping her from multi-tasking like she used to, and slowing her down.

Then she'd spend each evening wondering whether the phone was going to ring with a problem from her team. Or even worse, what if there was a problem, and they didn't ring – and she'd walk into chaos the next day.... Maybe she should phone them, just in case. But then she'd be checking up on them, and that's not fair. But, well, oh maybe just a quick call? And so all that distraction came home with her too. Whether she was at work or at home, her mind was in the other. She felt like she was being torn between two things which both really matter to her. The more she tried to talk herself round or reassure herself, the worse it got. And frankly, she was knackered.



Anything stressful is only a problem when you keep on thinking about it. Kelly had been trying not to – she kept trying to put it out of her mind, but she couldn't. Her mind was persistently holding on to the patterns of making her feel bad. So that's what we changed – and it took minutes. Using Helium

She imagined having a big, shiny balloon full of it. And when that voice in her mind started spouting its disaster stories about whatever was going wrong without her, she'd give it Helium. So that instead of sounding worried or critical and judgmental, that voice got really squeaky. And the more it tried to sound serious, the higher it squeaked. It sounded ridiculous, and instead of making her feel bad, it just made her laugh. She even kept over the last of the balloon, so she could let it go with a ffffffft!

She only imagined it a couple of times, and all that mind nagging stopped. She could be where she was. Fully. She could immerse back into her work on absolute top form, comfortable to leave or delegate anything she'd not finished at the end of the day, and go home to real time with her son.

From Party to Presenting

Charlotte first came to FAST Pathways because she wanted to go to the work party – a fairly lavish annual event for about 300 people. She'd worked for the company for a few years and had always been too anxious to go, so she'd spend the whole week following each event beating herself up for missing out again. She came across as outgoing and self-assured, but inside, she was becoming increasingly anxious around groups of people: If she went to the site restaurant for lunch and more than a handful of people were already there, she'd turn round and walk back out. Good for calorie control, but not much else....

Within about half an hour of starting to explore the FAST Pathways skills, Charlotte had switched off her mind's old anxiety habits, and could comfortably imagine being at the party. She started to think about the event differently, designing it in her imagination to go exactly as she wanted. A few days later, she went to the party and thoroughly enjoyed it, without a hint of the anxiety she used to experience. She felt so proud of herself, being able to join in with all the after-party stories.

So having proved to herself how easily she can change an unhelpful mind-habit, she decided to tackle an even more disruptive one. Every now and again she's asked to give a presentation in work. It used to prey on her mind for weeks, getting progressively worse and eating up endless hours of preparation, trying to rote learn what to say and research answers to every possible question, in the hope of taking off some of the pressure. It didn't. By the day itself, she couldn't eat, she felt sick (a couple of times she'd even been physically sick), and was convinced that her voice would stop working, or her mind would go blank. This was stage fright on a grand scale, and it showed in her delivery.

Remembering the exact way she'd changed her thinking about the party, she took the same steps with presenting. Programming in a natural, effortless comfort, she started small, presenting an update in their next team meeting. Then she progressed to inter-site meetings, and was soon enjoying sharing her team's work on the International stage.



Noticing the difference, her boss and colleagues started opening up even more opportunities for her to showcase their work. Instead of weeks of dread, presentations have become something she actively seeks out and looks forward to.