

# FAST Pathways

*Unlock your life*



*with Sue Evans*

## *Welcome to FAST Pathways – Building Lasting Resilience*

Life misbehaves - throws up the unexpected.... Stuff you've got to deal with that you'd really rather not do. But the longer you leave it, the more it can get you down.

Your resilience is how you deal with it, and I've heard it defined in many different ways. One of my favourites is 'bounce back ability'. I get that – the sooner you're back up from a setback, the better. And we tend to think of resilient people as the ones who've dealt with major adversity, smoothly. Who've grown through their challenges, and maybe now share their experiences to inspire others.

But what if fewer things got you down, to have to get back up from? What if you took more of those setbacks in your stride, without even noticing them? Because many of them, you already do. These are skills you already have, and we're going to explore some ways to develop them even further.

Building on your own resources and experience, borrowing skills and insights from others. Making the best of what's already working, as well as easing away what's not. Harnessing your mind's fullest skills, to create the kind of life you can't wait to dive into.

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## *Building Your Resilience*

When you cut or injure yourself, you can trust your body to heal. You might do a few things to help it out – keeping a cut clean and covered to prevent infection. Perhaps taking it easy for a few days, giving your body time to work its magic. Your immune system and healing do a marvellous job of protecting and repairing you - without you needing a clue, consciously, of how it happens.

You have that capacity to recover smoothly from emotional knocks and setbacks too. Every now and again, when something happens to upset you, you might spend a while feeling bad about it. You might lean a little on friends, talking it through, letting them support you; or maybe you treat yourself to a nice distraction to boost the recovery.

But often, left to its own devices, your system will recover all on its own. There's a popular saying that 'time heals', but I think that's doing you a great disservice. Time isn't doing the healing – you are – and you should take full credit.

The skills in this section of FAST Pathways can be equivalent to a vitamin boost for your emotional immune system – helping it do what it's already doing, even more effectively. Giving you even more resources, to be fully, gloriously you.

So far, we've mostly focused on clearing away unpleasant experiences, changing your brain chemistry, and teaching your mind new patterns to stop that unpleasant from building again. Having less challenges which need your conscious attention to

address them, naturally makes you more resilient. Adjusting your thinking process – the mind’s-eye pictures, the way you talk to yourself, and the characteristics of the feelings which you experience in your body. And we’ll explore a few more ways to do that too. Adding to your mind’s ability to ease away what’s not helpful, making space for what is.

Because the more ways your mind has to breeze through your challenges, patterns which can run all on their own without you even noticing; the less those bumps along the road need get your attention – and the more you can take life smoothly in your stride.



Pleasant experiences have their own process too. So you can take a lovely thought, a memory, or something you’re looking forward to, and notice where you feel it in your body. Where it starts and how it moves, its colour. And as you spin it faster, and the colour intensifies, you can spread that around your body. It’ll build its own momentum, so you can immerse in enjoying its effects. Go on, take a few minutes to enjoy....

You can add in another good feeling – perhaps being proud of something you’ve achieved, perhaps remembering a time when you were utterly absorbed in something you love. Add each of those feelings one by one, each with its own colour, adding to the blend and making it radiant. How does it feel as it spreads through the whole of your body?

As you become more used to adjusting your own thinking process, you’ll start to be aware of its characteristics, and able to make adjustments real-time; so that it becomes intuitively integral to how you think. By maintaining a playful curiosity, you’ll become increasingly adept at changing your thinking, to give you more of the experiences you want.

Now, you may be thinking that this is all very well. You can change your experience when you’re sitting comfortably with your eyes closed, taking your time over it, it feels different. But what about when you encounter that situation for real?

You won’t have to stop and switch to the new process – that’s THE process now. You’ve over-written the old one, like it was never there. Just like you never pick up a book and wonder if you’ll remember how to read; you don’t need to consciously remember the new process. You don’t have to wait until the situation actually happens, to know that it’s different.

As you do start to experience things differently in real life, take a little time to notice. Tuning in your satnav for more of the same, reinforcing the changes you’re enjoying. Give yourself credit for what’s working, and keep on building on those great foundations.

## *The FAST Pathways Exercises*

These exercises can be used in preparation for a specific event or challenge, and also for building your natural levels of background resilience and self-belief.

You'll be using your imagination to access the parts of your thinking outside your deliberate awareness – parts with huge power and potential. A spirit of creativity and adventure (even if it seems a little weird at times) will serve you very well as you explore.

So to get the best results, choose somewhere suitable, and give yourself time to make the best of each experience.

Each exercise is marked with:



*Audio-guided*



*Video-guided*

The exercise outlines, presented in grey, are intended as a quick reminder – there to help you refer back and refresh an exercise. There's no substitute for using the exercise audio or video-guidance the first time you explore.

When using the audio-guided exercises, it's best to use headphones. All of the exercises contain hypnotic content, so please don't listen while driving, as a passenger in a car, or when doing anything else that requires your attention – listen only when it's safe to let your mind wander.

## *Far, Far Away*

In the Foundations, you began changing your mind's-eye pictures by freezing the movement, and stepping out of the picture to see yourself in it. Shrinking it down so you could see its edges, and fading the colour and the focus, until it lost its potency.

There are all sorts of ways to change the characteristics of your minds'-eye pictures to affect their potency. Changing the brightness of the colours, the crispness and depth of the focus. Changing the size of the picture; and whether you're seeing yourself in the picture, or seeing it through your own eyes.

And the more you explore making these adjustments, the more you can tone down those pictures with unpleasant effects, and turn up those you enjoy.

But what if there are pictures which you want to get rid of altogether? Perhaps memories from your past, which it serves no purpose to keep on thinking of, but you haven't yet been able to stop. Or possible scenarios of disaster from the future, which keep playing on your mind; even though there's nothing you can do about the situations they represent.

These are the kind of pictures that it's useful to be able to clear away altogether. So that you think of that situation, past or future, only when (and if) you choose to; taking away its ability to hijack your thinking.

You're best able to change an unhelpful mind pattern when you're working with something specific in mind. The more specific you can be, the more effectively your mind is able to adopt the instructions for replacing it with something more helpful.

So think of the specific situation which makes you feel bad, in enough detail to feel a little of that feeling right now. Step into it, to see what you'd see and hear what you'd hear if it were happening. Like all of the exercises, choose something on which you're able to work alone. If there's something really big, then you always have the choice of one-to-one support with a trained practitioner; or to begin by working on something less overwhelming, to start embedding your new mind skills.

Your mind has the most amazing capability to learn – it happens all the time (even if some of that learning's not helpful!). By learning new patterns, your mind becomes able to apply them to all sorts of different situations – some of them you might not even have recognised as connected. But you don't need to recognise it consciously, to enjoy the benefits of that learning.

So if you're not sure which pictures you want to neutralise, which situation you want to feel better about first; just go with

whatever comes to mind. There's no right and wrong when you're exploring.

This exercise can be particularly powerful when used alongside 'Havening Away Discomfort' from the Foundations, so if you have a little extra time, you can re-visit that too.



### *Exercise – Far, Far Away*

Start by sitting somewhere comfortable, and begin to notice your breathing. Gently slowing it down, and letting it deepen. Noticing your thoughts, and letting them slow down too, so that your body and your mind can both enjoy this little extra comfort.

When you're ready, imagine stepping right into the first of the situations which you chose, as if it was happening right now. What do you see, what do you hear, and how do you feel? Notice all the details – it doesn't matter if it's exactly accurate to how it really happened, just as long as you recreate it clearly enough to feel again the feeling which you're going to change.

Take a little time to take in everything you can about the picture – it's playing in your mind, so you can slow it down if you need to. Notice the colours, and the focus. Is the picture to one side, or fully centred? There may be sounds with it too, but for now, just focus on the picture itself.

If it's a mind-movie, freeze it, so that it stops on a still. I'd like you to imagine that picture, now frozen mid-action, is actually on

a board. Quite light weight, but rigid. And on the back side of the board, the side which you can't see, there's a huge piece of elastic attached to the centre.

Something is pulling that elastic tighter and tighter – at the moment the picture board's staying firm, but it's starting to wobble. In a moment, not just yet, whatever's holding it is going to give way, and all the energy which is building up in the elastic, straining tighter and tighter, will be released – firing the picture far off into the distance.

In a moment – you know it's going to be any moment because the picture board's really starting to wobble now, buckling slightly in the centre – then woouooooosh! Of it goes. Pulled away backwards, at high speed, as all the energy stored up in the elastic is released, and the picture vanishes off towards the horizon.

And take a look at what you can see with it gone. It might be a newer, nicer picture, it might just be space. The kind of relaxing, open mind space, ready for creation. Whatever you see instead was always there, it was just hidden for a while.

Bring back that original thought to your mind, and notice what's different – you may find that you're not able to recall it in quite the same way you did a few minutes ago.

Take a few minutes to run through that same sequence with the other events' mind-pictures: Putting each on a board, watching it start to wobble as the elastic strains tighter and tighter, until woouooooosh!! Off it flies into the distance.

Or you could get rid of a whole series of unhelpful pictures in one go: Allow the first to come to mind, and imagine that this time as you press the freeze frame, instead of putting the picture on to a board, put it onto the surface of a huge stone slab. It's rectangular, standing upright in front of you. It looks really solid and heavy. It looks like a giant domino, standing there, ready to be knocked over. With that picture covering its front face.

Now imagine a whole row of these standing stone dominoes, each behind the other, each bearing the picture of something which has bothered you. You might not be able to see all of them – it's hard to see past the one straight in front of you, it's so large. But you can get a sense of a whole series of them being lined up, ready to topple.

Some of them you might be aware of, others not, and it doesn't matter whether you consciously know what all those pictures are, or what they represent. It's enough that your mind knows they're related, knows that you don't need them any more.

And when the domino run is ready, give that first one a really hard shove – and watch with satisfaction as it falls backwards, knocking over the one behind it, and the next, and the next. It might all happen very quickly, it might be like it's happening in slow motion. As each hits the ground, it sends up a puff of dust. You can hear the thud, thud, as each knocks into the next, and the next

Maybe they'll even shatter as they hit the ground, so you're left with nothing more than dusty fragments. Nothing discernible of what they once were. And take a deep breath, noticing all the

extra space, now they're gone. You can see so much further with those great slabs no longer in front of you.

To access the rest of the Building Lasting Resilience Guide Book, go to the content area

[www.fast-pathways.com/building-resilience-content.html](http://www.fast-pathways.com/building-resilience-content.html)

and enter your email and access password