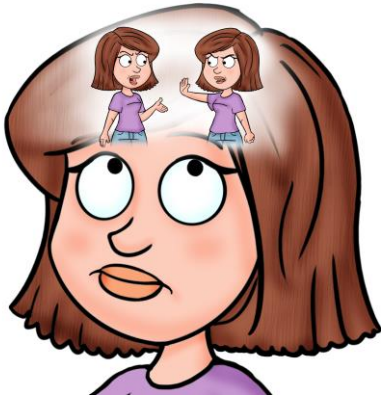


## FAST Pathways® Building the Skills for Stress Success - Too Much Mind Chat



The way you talk to yourself in your mind profoundly affects how you feel. Not everyone likes to admit that they talk to themselves, but we all do. It's an integral part of our thinking.

Often when you're worried or anxious, that voice in your mind sounds worried or anxious too. If you find yourself experiencing low confidence, or being self-critical, that's probably mostly to do with your inner voice. It might be that you've learned to suppress it, so it doesn't always reach your awareness; but by grumbling away underneath, it's still affecting you.

Maybe you talk yourself out of things you'd really like to do; or beat yourself up after a conversation that didn't go so well. Maybe you try to reason with that voice, or argue back – but that just gives it more energy, and it can quickly become draining.

Maybe it's someone else's voice, playing through your mind – the memory of an argument, or some unpleasant criticism; or your imagination creating things which might be said in a particular situation. The might just be too much mind chat, and you'd like to be able to quieten it down and focus on one thing at a time; or sleep more restfully.

So let's explore some simple ways to change your inner voice.... The exercise explores a few ways to get you started. Once you've listened and experimented, you can also practice changing that inner voice's tone: Perhaps it's a doubtful voice, quiet and hesitant – how is it different when you turn up its volume, helping it to speak clearly, with a tone of comfortable authority? Perhaps like a news reader, or someone who always puts across whatever they have to say clearly, and engagingly.

Try using the voice you'd use to read a story to a small child, or to explain something which you absolutely adore – so that every word has depth and texture, a richness of tone which draws you in, engages your attention, and holds it, spellbound. And when you find what makes it feel better, do it some more, teaching your mind the way you want things done.

### ***Rachel's Big Shift***

Rachel was having a really tough time – anything and everything seemed to make her anxious. She'd had a horrendous time when she'd had her son, and didn't feel like she'd ever got over the trauma.

Her confidence was rock bottom, and she often felt put down by the way people spoke to her, especially her super-controlling in-laws. She admitted being pretty good at putting herself down too.

She said her FAST Pathways skills are amazing: The in-Laws don't intimidate her like they used to, now that she's comfortable to stand up for what she wants. She can be herself, be natural, without always putting on a brave face. She loved getting back to the person she used to be, and carried on evolving.