

The FAST Pathways® Academy – Your Worry Arena



Worrying can sometimes serve a purpose – helping to prod you into preparing well for big events, and stopping you from taking unnecessary risks. But too much worrying can get in the way, and it can be exhausting.

That's how it was for Tracy. The skills we've already been exploring are often enough neutralise the emotions of worrying thoughts, and Tracy learned to do that. But for every worry that she eased away, another one started up. Like the worrying was serving some greater purpose, of which she had no awareness.

Effectively changing your thinking, isn't about going into battle with your mind, trying to change it by force of will. It's about being flexible, and working with what's happening, even when it seems to make no sense. So we worked with the habit her mind seemed so keen to hold on to.

She laughed at first, asserting that ten minutes Olympic-standard worrying would be a walk in the park – she could keep it up for way longer than that. She was wrong. For the first few days she managed to keep it going for a few minutes, the time getting progressively shorter. By the end of a week, she'd given up completely; and so had all the worrying in between.

By working with her mind instead of against, she collapsed a habit which had plagued her for years. I love it when that happens.

Michael's bee fear: Michael came to see me about his escalating fear of bees. Now bees are not danger-free – they're a sensible thing to approach with caution; but if there was anything bee-like anywhere near, Michael would have to get away as quickly as possible – even if it meant getting up a running from his school lessons.

Bad enough in itself, but his 'friends' made it sport to creep up behind him and make buzzing sounds, with the same effect. He was deeply embarrassed by his response, but unable to stop it.

And like most people with a heightened anxiety, Michael spend an increasing amount of time scanning his environment, just in case there were any bees around; keeping himself in a constant state of raised alert – which is stressful for anyone.

He used FAST Pathways to de-code his experience, so he could remain calm in the presence of bees; and he re-programmed his response to a 'buzz' from terror to humour – he was excited about seeing his friends' disappointment when he was able to laugh back at their taunting; and years later he's still able to walk past bees without a second glance.