

The FAST Pathways® Academy – ‘Your Control Room’ in Action

James worried about everything. He always had – believing that’s just how he was wired to think. If anyone came up with a new idea, he could immediately rattle off all the downsides – so he was great at shooting down ideas, which didn’t make him popular, in work or at home. He’d developed an array of coping skills to try to keep a lid on the unpleasantness, but he found it exhausting.

He’d been in the same job for about 15 years – he kept himself to himself, and did just enough to keep his boss off his back. No one else knew about his worrying – he just tried to keep going as best he could, day to day.

He’d tried positive thinking, he’d tried to understand why he worried so much, thinking that to change it he’d got to first understand it. It’s a common misconception, but it’s not true. And he’d got nowhere. So when he got introduced to the FAST Pathways skills, he was sceptical.



He imagined a Discomfort Dial in his head (it was a big 1950s-style Bakelite one, apparently). By imagining that dial, and focusing only on the physical sensations of the discomfort rather than what was causing it, he was able to start turning it down. He choose 3 or 4 different things that he’d recently worried about, and one by one, turned each of them right down. That repetition’s so important for teaching the auto-thinking a new pattern.

Over the coming days, every now and again that image of his dial would flash into his head, and he’d realised that he was about to get negative, but never actually did. It was as if his auto-thinking was flashing up the image to say to his conscious mind ‘No problem – I’m on it...’

And all that energy that he’d been investing in just keeping a lid on the unpleasantness got freed up for other things. He started to chat with colleagues, to speak up with new ideas instead of shooting other people’s down, to volunteer for extra responsibilities. To enjoy going to work, rather than enduring. He never looked back.