

## The FAST Pathways® Academy - 'No More Self Critical' in Action

Kelly thrives on stress. Managing a busy hotel, she experiences quite a lot of it, and she was used to putting in long hours to have everything running like clockwork before she went home. Which was never a problem, until she went back to work from her first Maternity leave. Knowing that she had to leave work on time to collect her son, and worrying that she'd leave loose ends, she'd clock watch – from about 9am!

Her inner voice was harsh and critical, ripping her to shreds for any tiny mistake, and reminding her over and over that she just wasn't up to being both a Manager and a Mum. With that distraction, she found it hard to concentrate or multi-task like she used to, and made more mistakes. She'd tried reasoning with it, arguing with it and trying to ignore it, all of which had just given it even more energy. She was exhausted.

She described that inner voice as loud, domineering and incredibly judgmental. Often, the most effective tweak is the opposite of what you're starting with – so I asked her to imagine having that voice inhale a whole balloon full of Helium.

Even though it was saying the exact same things, hearing them in a high pitched squeak made her giggle. She thought of another three things she'd given herself a hard time about that day, each time letting the voice take centre stage, and giving it Helium. By the fourth thing, she couldn't get that voice back again.

To her surprise, it stayed gone. All of the months of battling with herself, resolved by a few minutes imagining. And with the bossy voice banished, it left room for the helpful one to come back – the one which reminds her what she needs to do, and gives her that extra bit of encouragement if she's feeling under the weather.

Maybe Helium's not the way to change your inner voice. Maybe you want to make it quiet, or reeeeeeeeaaaaaaalllllly sssssllllllooooooowwww (because it's really difficult to give yourself a hard time slowly). Get curious, and enjoy experimenting.

