

## The FAST Pathways® Academy – ‘Getting Artistic’ in Action

Big, scary mind pictures play a big part in most fears and phobias. The first spider phobia I resolved was with a friend of mine. She had it baaaaad. She’d once run screaming from bedroom - even after her husband had caught and killed it, she slept on the sofa for the next two nights, because she was so scared that its pals would come out to play while she was asleep. She knew it was ridiculous, but she couldn’t bear being in the room.

Over the years, she’d tried all sorts to try to get better with it, but like a lot of people she thought that it could only be fixed by facing her fear, and it was just too big. That’s a very popular misconception, and it’s simply not true.

As we talked, each time ‘spider’ was mentioned, she’d physically pull away slightly – even though there was nothing there. Turned out that the pictures her mind was making of them were huge, and REALLY scary.

The spiders in her imagination could move way faster than any human, and that was what scared her so much. So as speed was the big thing, I asked what would really slow that spider down.

“Pink slippers” she said. “Really high heeled ones, the kind with the strip of fluffy feathery stuff across the front. Put a set of those on it, it’d never run anywhere”. And as she closed her eyes and imagined it, she started to smile.

“What would make it even funnier?” I asked. “A clown nose” she said. “And circus music”. Within a few seconds, her terrifying mind spider was staggering around in its high heeled slippers, utterly failing to co-ordinate its 8 hairy legs. And my friend was laughing out loud. A wonderful thing, imagination. And suddenly, she didn’t feel bad at all about spiders – when she tried to think of them in the old way, she couldn’t. She’d set a new mind pattern.

A week or so later, we were catching up. “Get this” she said. “I was lying in bed the other night, and I saw one up on the ceiling. I wasn’t very happy with it right above me, but I was too tired to get up and move it. So I lay there, looking at it, sort of willing it to move away. And it did. It went off behind the wardrobe, so I went to sleep”.

Simple. A pattern which her mind had been running for as long as she could remember, terrifying the life out of her, resolved with a few simple tweaks.

