Talking ourselves through challenges

It's only human to talk to yourself, silently or out loud. We can use this ability to coach ourselves through difficult challenges. Although you probably do this to some extent already, there are three techniques that may help you do this more effectively:

1. **Prepare for the challenge** - think in terms of how you'll cope and what you'll gain from the experience, even if it's certain to be stressful. Phrases such as: 'It may not be enjoyable, but I can handle it' and 'I'm anxious about this, but that's only natural' would be good examples.

2. **Confront the challenge** - during the actual event build yourself up by tackling the challenge head-on and talking yourself through things. 'This is tough, but I'll survive' and 'I'm getting stressed - I need to relax and stick to my original plan' might be ways of dealing with the situation.

3. **Reflect on what you've learned** - without being too self-critical, take time to think about what actually happened and ask yourself how you can improve. Visualise yourself as you were coping and getting through the situation: appreciate what you did right, and don't be too harsh while correcting what went wrong. 'I survived - and it wasn't as bad as I thought' might be an excellent reflection after a very trying task.