

## From broken down to breaking through.

*Stephen Travers*

*Stephen Travers is a hypnotherapist and NLP practitioner based in Dublin, Ireland.*

*H: Stephen, how did you first discover Havening?*

S: I was reading an interview by Paul McKenna, where he is talking about this technique that he believes is going to change the face of therapy across the world. That got me very curious. In the interview, Havening was called Amygdala Depotentiation Technique.

Then I went online to research it more. I came across the book When the Past is Always Present by Dr. Ronald Ruden, the creator of Havening. I bought the book online, read it and was very impressed by the neuroscience behind the Havening Techniques® and the results that Dr. Ruden had been achieving with his own patients over nearly a decade. This was about three years ago — in 2013.

*H: Did you then attend one of Dr. Ruden's trainings?*

S: I'm based in Ireland, in Dublin, and I attended one of the first trainings in the United Kingdom. It was the second or third officially certified training.

*H: Regarding your practice, you are a hypnotherapist, is that correct?*

S: Yes, I have been in private practice for the past 15 years as a clinical hypnotherapist, psychotherapist and NLP practitioner.

*H: I would imagine you have a wide range of clients that come to you.*

S: Yes. I work with people on various issues. Anxiety, panic attacks, fears, phobias and other issues like IBS, irritable bowel syndrome. I work with people

dealing with addictive or unwanted behaviors around weight loss, and emotional eating. I also help people quit smoking.

*H: So you already had a number of tools to work with to help your clients, particularly hypnotherapy and NLP. When you discovered Havening what changed? Did Havening have a significant impact on the work that you do with your clients?*

S: Yes. Havening has had a massive impact. First of all, what I found Havening did was it really educated me in the specific neurobiology of how trauma becomes encoded in the brain and body. When I'm working with people, especially with anxiety related issues, the information and the knowledge behind Havening has helped me to pinpoint what causes the specific trauma, how to find it within my client very quickly, and then the techniques themselves then allow me to remove or clear the trauma very rapidly and effectively.

*H: Do you use Havening with most of your clients now?*

S: I do. I use it with all my clients for anxiety based issues, almost all the time. I also use it with my weight loss clients. I find Havening is excellent for helping clients with emotional eating. I run a program called Think Yourself Thin and I do stand alone sessions within that program with Havening on emotional eating. I find that it's very effective. It gets to the root of why they're eating from the emotional aspect; then the Havening Techniques themselves help to clear the negative emotions or drivers that were causing the unwanted eating patterns.

*H: So Havening helps you get to the cause of the pattern.*

S: Yes, it helps me to identify what's driving the negative emotions with the client. What's behind this behavior. Once we can identify that, we then can shift and clear it with the Havening processes.

*H: Wonderful. Are there any particular client stories that represent the power of Havening that you'd like to share?*

S: Yes, a couple come to mind. I remember working with a gentleman, Ken, and he's actually given me permission to share his story.

He came to me with IBS, irritable bowel syndrome. He had been suffering with it for many years and it was really impacting his life every day. He was very anxious when it came to his social life and work because of the IBS. He'd seen many IBS specialists, and medical doctors about it. He was on a lot of medication, one of them being Imodium, but wasn't really getting great results. The IBS wasn't going away and his anxiety was getting worse. Combined with the IBS itself he was stuck in a vicious cycle. He came to me out of his desperation to find something that would help.

Within one session, the IBS completely cleared. It was gone. The anxiety completely shifted. The IBS itself completely stopped, the physical sensations he was carrying in his stomach, the pain, the cramps, disappeared. He had been taking 10 to 11 Imodium a week and his Imodium intake completely ceased after that one session. In the second session we did a little bit more work and by the time he

came back for session three he was absolutely transformed. We did three sessions total. That was about two years ago and it never came back.

*H: That's remarkable. How long had he suffered with this before he came to you?*

S: About a decade.

*H: Wow. Any other client stories you'd like to share?*

S: Yes. I remember I was working with a lady who had a lot of problems at work, a lot of bullying was going on. She ended up having panic attacks. She was also feeling very stressed and depressed. She wasn't sleeping properly at night. When she first came to see me, I remember she seemed broken emotionally, very fragile, very vulnerable, very anxious.

Once again, as we pinpointed what was causing it, and we havened the events that were causing the anxiety, within one session the anxiety disappeared. She did two sessions total; that's all she needed. Because of this experience, she ended up training in Havening and becoming a certified Havening practitioner. She left the job which she was working in. Now she lives in Spain and is a fully certified Havening Techniques practitioner with her own practice. It's been quite a remarkable turnaround for her. That one session completely changed her life direction. So I'm very happy about that. That one Havening experience completely transformed the arc of her life and where she ended up.

*H: It's beautiful to be able to help someone transform their life so profoundly even in a session or two. Many people are skeptical when they first hear about Havening. The possibilities just seem too good to be true. Were you skeptical at first, and if so what changed your mind?*

S: I was more curious than skeptical. I have a lot of respect for Paul McKenna as a therapist, so when I saw his testimonial about Havening, where he shared what he thought about it, I knew Havening must be something special. Then when I read Dr. Ruden's book, When the Past is Always Present, I was very impressed with the depth and breadth of the neuroscience behind the techniques and Dr. Ruden's understanding of how trauma gets encoded and why and how Havening clears this.

Then, the more I started to research and study it and then to use it with clients and see the miraculous results, that was proof in and of itself. I had both the neuroscience and the tangible results that I could see happening with my clients. That's all I needed.

I like getting results for people as quickly and as easily as I can. As I see it, my job as a therapist is to help my client as quickly, effectively, and easily as possible overcome their challenges and problems. Havening does all that and more.

*H: That's beautiful. How about the issue of touch? Here in the United States psychologists and other licensed mental health professionals are not allowed to touch their clients. How do you address this? Do you have people self haven? Do you facilitate it? How do your clients respond?*

S: I've trained and studied in various psychotherapeutic methods over the years. A lot of that approach is talk-based therapy where you don't use touch. With my clients, I explain first of all some of the neuroscience behind Havening and why the touch is so effective. I explain what's actually happening in the brain and the body when the touch is applied and how it actually helps heal the clients.

Then, I also explain to the client exactly what I'm going to do. I explain to them how we can actually test and measure the effectiveness of the treatment, even within the session. So for example, if you have a very distressful memory, I explain how we can then go back to that memory and the emotion after we do a treatment and test and measure how effective the treatment was.

The majority of my clients are very happy to do that. I think the fact that they can actually see and feel the results in real time within the session is a very positive aspect of the Havening Techniques, because people can really feel that something has happened or changed within that moment.

*H: Thank you. You began this conversation by quoting Paul McKenna speaking about how Havening could potentially change the face of therapy forever. How do you see Havening impacting therapy ten to twenty years into the future?*

S: It really depends on whether Havening is embraced by more and more clinicians. I think it will have a major impact in the field of psychology and the treatment of trauma. It helps therapists understand how trauma gets encoded and how they can more effectively and rapidly treat their clients.

There's so much potential for Havening to do so much good for people around the world. I think it could also potentially have a major impact globally, especially in countries that have gone through wars and some of the tragedies happening, for example in Syria. Havening could have a massive positive impact for the people in those places.

What I also find interesting is this. When I look at the field of psychology in contrast to the field of technology, in the field of technology, anything that's new and high tech that works better and faster is embraced very quickly. When a new iPhone comes out, or a new piece of technology or software, everyone seems to want it and everyone's using it very quickly because it works better and faster.

Unfortunately in my experience, I notice in the field of psychology a lot of people are caught up more in theories and dogma. They aren't necessarily very open to new ways of doing things. So I think if people open their minds up more, particularly the clinicians that are out there, that could make a big difference to the evolution of the field of trauma and how we successfully treat it.

*H: Thank you. What excites and inspires you most about Havening as a tool?*

S: It still inspires me even though it's now three years down the line after treating literally hundreds of people with Havening, and doing thousands of treatments. It's the speed and the effectiveness of what Havening can do in terms of creating results for people.

I'm most excited about the new applications that are emerging with Havening. We're understanding how Havening effects the brain, how we can help people change the way they think, how they feel, and how they behave as they move into the future.

We're understanding how we can apply Havening to speed up the process or produce more positive states and behaviors with our clients.

We're understanding how we can use it in conjunction to support the individual's personal development once we clear the trauma. I'm excited with that aspect of it.

We call that Growth Havening. We have the individual learn how to grow and develop or create and design their life to move forward and apply Havening to help them do that.

*H: Yes, that's very powerful. So we have two basic categories of application, one is removing the things that we don't want to hold on to, and the second is actually bringing into our awareness, into our brain and mind and habits the things that we desire. So it works in both ways.*

*Stephen, you are one of the most prominent trainers in Europe. You do a number of trainings in Ireland and all over Europe and you're very active in training people who are new to Havening. The client you mentioned before became a certified practitioner. I'm sure others that you train do that as well.*

*What are you noticing and discovering as you're spreading the word about Havening within your geographical region? How do people respond?*

S: I do a lot of introductory talks on Havening. For example, every year I speak at the Mind, Body, Spirit Fest in Dublin and there's lots of therapists and coaches attending. I find that when people actually see a live demonstration of Havening they're incredibly impressed, if not slightly skeptical, simply because of the speed and the amazing results the treatment can produce.

I find that once people realize how effective the treatment is they tend to be very excited to get involved in it, to learn it and to embrace it. I think all the neuroscience behind it is a great asset for the treatment to have. We can explain actually how we get the results and actually describe what's going on in the brain, what's going on in the limbic system and what's actually happening when we clear the trauma in the brain and the limbic system and the amygdala.

So I find generally therapists who really focus on getting results for clients embrace the treatment. More and more people are now seeking out Havening as a treatment because they can be free of trauma or various problems quickly and quite easily.

*H: Thank you. What advice would you give somebody, for example, a counselor or a therapist or a coach, maybe a parent or a teacher, somebody interested in looking into the possibility of going to the training and adding Havening to their toolkit? What would you say to them?*

S: I would say first of all, do your research. There's some great resources out there like the official website, [havening.org](http://havening.org), and my website [stravershypnosis](http://stravershypnosis).

com. There's a wealth of neuroscientific information as well as videos of live Havening demonstrations and client testimonials. I'd also say to speak to a certified practitioner or trainer in your area or country. Have a chat with them over the phone, send them an e-mail. If you have a problem, go and have a session and experience this for yourself.

*H: Yes. There's nothing like experience. I've noticed that once a person, no matter how skeptical, actually experiences Havening for themselves and they feel and see and know that the change has happened, then everything shifts and so much becomes possible.*

S: Yes, because they get a real personal experience of how effective it is then and that's what is quite interesting. Sometimes I have clients come in and even when we shift a major trauma they're surprised that it went so quickly. Sometimes people are a little bit skeptical; they come back a week later and they say, "I can't get that bad feeling back anymore, it's completely gone."

*H: Very often somebody will say to me, "Is it really gone?, or "How long will this last?" or, "Is it going to come back?." I tell them, "No. It's not coming back — it really is gone." Then a week or two or three or four later they realize it's not going to come back.*

S: Some people go off and they test this to try and get it back and can't get the bad feeling back which is great, because it proves to them that they're completely, permanently free.

*H: Yes, and what a wonderful thing to help people not only just cover up a symptom but to really clear it at the root so that it never comes back.*

S: Yes. One of the main distinctions of Havening is this: a lot of times clinicians are trying to manage the problem or mask it or help you cope with it. But what Havening does is it helps to pinpoint what's causing the problem and then to completely and permanently remove it so it's gone for good. I think that's the big difference.

*H: Yes, what a huge difference that could make in our world if Havening was available widely and universally so that people could truly let go of their problems for good.*

S: It would save a lot of people a lot of time, that's for sure.

*H: Yes. Wonderful. Thank you so much Stephen for your reflections and your stories and your answers and your fine work spreading the good news about Havening in Ireland and all over the world.*

