

Sam breaks free from Shropshire!

... or how a woman beat her fear of being more than 40 minutes from home

Imagine having a phobia that meant you could pretty much not leave Shropshire.

"I felt like I was attached to a piece of string and it would pull at me if I went more than 40 minutes from my home in Newport," says 43-year-old businesswoman Sam Hammond.

"I always had to know that I could get home. It really did affect my whole life."

She adds: "I stopped doing things and virtually became housebound."

Winning an all-expenses paid holiday to Barbados would be a dream to most people, but Sam says: "I thought 'Oh no, I've got to go'," and hastily began having therapy.

Sam is speaking just a few weeks after a "miracle cure" for her phobia gave her back her life - the same revolutionary



BY BEN BENTLEY
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therapy that rid Kerry Katona of bi-polar depression.

Visual Coding Displacement Therapy, practiced by Market Drayton therapist Craig Price, is used to treat a wide range of conditions including phobias, panic attacks, obsessive compulsive

"I would be fine in Newport, but in Sheriffhales I would panic"

disorder and breaking patterns associations with certain foods, alcohol and smoking.

It is based around neuro-linguistic programming, which is a therapeutic technique that works with the connections of the conscious and unconscious mind to literally re-programme your mind from returning to its old disempowering habits.

Craig uses a "magic watch" to create a clock face representing the varying degrees of Sam's anxieties for a given scenario. Once he has detected the location on the dial of the peak of her anxiety, he substitutes this point for one where she feels totally relaxed.

"VCDT re-programmes the brain and deletes the negative thoughts," says Craig who has cured dozens of people, including a woman who had a fear of balloons "and within three minutes she was rubbing balloons all over her face", and a 72-year-old pensioner whose life had been blighted by a compulsion to repeatedly check the locks on his car door.

"It really has changed my life," continues Sam who has suffered with anxiety and panic attacks on and off for some 25 years, perhaps precipitated when her beloved mother was taken ill and she had to "grow up fairly quickly".

"I started having the attacks and lost the confidence to go out. It's like a massive fear that you need to get out of the place where you are," says Sam.

Fearful

"I became fearful of getting stuck in traffic jams after I once got stuck in one on the motorway. I just started to shake and shiver and my heart was racing. Afterwards, every time I drove the car I always expected the same thing would happen. I became very good at panicking!"

Sam had panic attacks on everyday trips to the supermarket and began to avoid situations where she expected her symptoms to recur.

"I would not go back to that



Broken arrow routine has given Sam even more confidence

particular supermarket, my husband would have to go," says Sam. "I wouldn't go out much and I lost a lot of friends."

"I had always been a confident person, I managed a Virgin Megastore and ran a petrol station with my husband."

Six years ago, however, her husband had a heart attack, a crisis which triggered a new series of panic attacks over seemingly everyday things.

After struggling on and running the business alone, she eventually "crashed" and took a year off.

"There would be days when I thought I could not go out of the house. I live only two minutes from the supermarket but I could not walk there, I would go in the car so that I could flee if I needed to. I had to have my oasis of safety nearby - my house or my car."

The condition left her exhausted and withdrawn. Sam took a job delivering catalogues to people's doors, but says: "I would be fine in Newport but in Sheriffhales I would panic because it was that little bit further and sometimes I would ask my husband to help me."

Sam has just undergone a second session of VCDT to reinforce her "cure". In this session, Craig invites her to write down her fears on the wooden shaft of an archer's arrow. The arrow, representing the very things that have held her back in life, is then attached at one end to the wall and at the other to her upper chest.

After a session of motivation, she is asked to step forward and break the arrow into pieces.

"It's awesome," says Sam later.

"I felt as though I could con-

quer the world. I'm going to frame the broken arrow."

Her husband's 60th birthday is coming up, and it could well be the best birthday the couple have ever had.

"I have not been on holiday for so long because of my anxiety and now I want to go on holiday, somewhere nice, to celebrate the occasion," she says.

Since having therapy with Craig, Sam has also set up her own business selling music CDs.

"But the business does not work unless I get out of the house to buy stock," Sam continues.

"It means I can start enjoying my life again. I just feel like a normal person once more. I want to do normal things that normal people do."

● For more information about Craig Price, visit www.pricelessuccess.co.uk



Sam Hammond is being treated by Craig Price