

**EPISODE 219**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:10] AVH:** Welcome everyone, thank you for being here and Supporting Paleo Magazine Radio. I wanted to start out with a quote from today's podcast interview which has got to be one of my top five conversations I've had on this podcast. It's with meditation teacher Jeff Warren.

He may not have been the first person to say this but he said, "Being human takes practice" and I love this so much because it's a reminder of that life isn't easy and being a person in this world isn't always easy and that it's okay, that just existing sometimes doesn't come naturally or easy to you.

I think it's just a reminder to kind of take the pressure off for a little bit and maybe while you do that, I invite you to listen to what Jeff has to say in this interview because he offers up some of the most honest, real and accessible advice about mindfulness and meditation that I have ever heard.

He helped write a book called *Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics* with Dan Harris who is an ABC news anchor who like many of us maybe thought that meditation was not for him and that it was a little too hippy-ish maybe, until he had a full on panic attack live on air which forced him to consider his mental healthcare practices.

He worked with Jeff who has his own rather A-typical introduction to meditation which we'll get into in our talk and they travel together across America, hoping to help introduce the world to meditation and mindfulness in a practical, not so woo-woo way.

I love talking to Jeff because he was a fidgety skeptic too and he never really considered he'd be in the position he's currently in, teaching others how to find their own ideal practice. Honestly, it would be an understatement to call me fidgety, anybody who has ever gone to a movie theater with me can back this up. I really am not into staying still.

This book was super helpful for me and Jeff is such a positive welcoming voice in the mindfulness community that I think that you will get a lot out of this interview.

First, I have to give a shout out to our very first UK based iTunes review, because it made my day and if you're a listener over there in the UK or anywhere in the UK or anywhere outside of north America, really, please make your voice heard.

Leave us a review and a rating, tell me what you want to hear, I'm open to suggestions and new ideas. Please don't hesitate. This review is from Paleo Emma and it reads:

"I discovered paleo magazine radio a few months ago and I'm now listening back through the episodes. If you're new to a paleo lifestyle then it's the perfect podcast to listen to as it's straight forward, easy to listen to and understand and Ashley is an incredible host."

Thanks Emma.

"It's also amazing, even if you think you're a paleo expert. I've been paleo for four years now and I thought I was pretty up on most things but the Paleo Magazine podcast is broadening my horizons, my brain and my lifestyle choices. In the paleo world, it seems that most podcast are delivered by men, that's not a bad thing but sometimes there's a female listener, it's nice to hear a female voice and get a perspective that isn't that all macho. Even though Ashley is an athlete and could kick the butts of most people to the moon and back."

I swear I didn't write this, this is all Emma. "Ashley is down to earth, funny, real and asks the kind of questions that I would ask. She gets her interviewees to explain jargon and break down things into actionable points so we can take away with us."

"In addition, Ashley is also fantastic at interacting with the podcast listeners and lets us know who she's about to interview so we can submit our own questions to the experts." Yes, please do that by the way. "As an aside, I live in the UK and although the audience is mainly US based, I still find it relevant to me and I'm able to access most things that are talked about. I massively recommend you subscribe to Paleo Magazine Radio and discover for yourself how awesome this podcast it. Go Ashley and Go Paleo Magazine Radio."

Dude, Paleo Emma, that is awesome, that made my day, thank you so much for your kind words and for taking the time to put some positivity out in the world. I appreciate you and reach out to me on social media when you hear this, so I can hook you up with some treats. Okay, on that happy note, here is my interview with Jeff Warren.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:04:16.8] AVH:** Jeff, welcome to the podcast, thank you so much for being here.

**[0:04:20.0] JW:** Thanks for having me on Ashley.

**[0:04:21.4] AVH:** We had a nice little opener conversation offline about how we are both in Canada and the weather is warm so we refuse to complain about it. I mean, it does make me happy. I'm sitting – I'm in the corner of my condo, I've got the sun shining in, it's warm, I feel calm, I took some deep breaths before I got on a conversation with you.

We've got a lot to talk about, I need to be calm in my right mind, right?

**[0:04:43.6] JW:** Well, I guess it helps.

**[0:04:45.5] AVH:** Yeah. You're here and there's a lot of things I want to talk to you about but one of the main things is your work on this book called *Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics* which absolutely spoke to me because I am your target audience. I am the person who knows that there's value in meditation and in stillness and all that kind of thing but has a really hard time with it.

Also tends to sort of rebel against like the traditional notions of meditations which is why reading this book, it like really spoke to me. I'm the kind of person who like – I'll go to yoga and the more someone tells me to breathe calmly, the more I don't want to do it like out of spite or something.

I still know that these things are good for me, so I want to keep trying you know. I guess, just to start out, if you could kind of tell our listeners a little bit about who you are and how you came to work on this book?

**[0:05:34.6] JW:** Sure, I'm Jeff Warren. I am now pretty much a full time meditation teacher and writer. I started as a journalist way back, I actually worked for the CDC for CDC Radio and I got in to, I was sort of the science, one of the science geeks there and into ideas and I was really into the brain and trying to understand how the mind worked.

I wrote a book called the *Head Trip* and that was about waking, sleeping and dreaming. For that, it had a chapter on meditation because it was a kind of inventory of consciousness, different states of consciousness and why they mattered. I figured, well I need to kind of make a nod to the Buddhist because apparently, they have something to say about that.

That's when I started going on retreats back in 2003 and it really, they helped me in a huge way. I didn't even realize how much help I needed in some ways. I was sort of angsty in my head, writer type with continual low-level anxiousness and moodiness.

**[0:06:32.9] AVH:** I can also totally relate to that big time.

**[0:06:35.3] JW:** Yeah. You know, I'm just like, that's how I thought, that's just how I am and then suddenly from doing these practices, I started to see how I had more options than I realized and I started to get really interested in it.

I mean, is there any way, anytime you're interested in consciousness, you're probably interested in this deeper stuff anyway, you either don't even know it. But it ended up leading me into really more serious practice then I kind of dedicated my life to meditating as much as I can and communicating what I was learning and I haven't really looked back.

It ended up leading very unexpectedly to teaching, which is not when I was thinking of when I went into it at all. In fact, I felt myself to be uniquely unqualified on account of my being very ADD and very agitable, had a lot of agitation, being kind of a, you know, just not your meditation type, let alone your teacher type. It's been quite an interesting journey and it continues you know? You're continually learning from the practice, it's continuing teaching things about how you are and I'm pretty passionate about trying to articulate what's going on because it's interesting.

Also, because it is very helpful. I think that the insights from meditation practice are applicable to everybody and yeah, we can go anyway you want about that.

**[0:07:46.1] AVH:** Do you think that you became a teacher in part because you had such a hard time maybe with it yourself and being a teacher in a lot of ways helps you teach yourself, do you think there's some element there?

**[0:07:58.4] JW:** No question.

**[0:07:59.0] AVH:** Yeah.

**[0:07:58.7] JW:** No question is that element there, in becoming a teacher – because if you can articulate it in that role, a role of more responsibility for others, you really force yourself to have to learn it. It's one thing to say, understand a little bit how it works for you but as you encounter more and more people, you have to find a way into their experience.

It really helps you get it but then, it's even a deeper reason, you know? For me, I realized, I was actually in a lot of pain in my life you know? I had a lot of suffering, a lot of ways in which I wasn't happy. I was more than that, I mean, I really went through a hard time for a while like I just wanted to off myself, you know? I just couldn't regulate my mind. My internal conditions were totally chaotic.

It was extremely painful, and it was affecting my life and go around me and as I started to learn how to work with it, I became really motivated and try to help other people because I could see other people in my life that were struggling and that's the thing you find, you know? It really is a compassion builder because you start to have compassion for yourself, the people around you and then you want to just try to help people out.

It's a really beautiful relationship between inner work that you're doing and then wanting to like share that and pay it forward. I think actually it's not unique to meditation, that's something you see all over in life, somebody goes through a hard time, you know, their kid gets some kind of

rare disease or something and then all of a sudden, they start a support group for parents around that.

You take what you're learning about this challenge and you decide to make it to apply it to help somebody else and that gives you a lot of meaning in your life. That was a big part of why I did it.

**[0:09:34.2] AVH:** That's a very positive message but it also makes me wonder, do we have to almost experience something negative before we can have some of this compassion and empathy for other people because it does seem in a lot of cases, like you're saying, you're right. When people have someone in their family that gets sick or if someone has an accident and injures themselves really badly, or something terrible, a terrible tragedy.

Often times, a lot of empathy and compassion and love comes from that. It's almost like we're unable to be grateful for things until something like that happens in our life a lot of times.

**[0:10:08.2] JW:** Yeah, that's interesting. I mean, I think that's how it goes for some people. I mean, lots of us, we all have a natural capacity for compassion. The issue is more, do you have a direct experience of really suffering and really being challenged? That direct experience is what makes you really know it. Then all of a sudden, this idea of having been challenged in your life isn't so abstract. You're living it and then you can see when other people are struggling, it's not just –

Because you know, people can say yeah, that person seems like they're having a hard time but it's sort of like still somebody else's thing. It's happening over there but when you've been through it, then you just are going to see it in a slightly different way.

**[0:10:45.2] AVH:** Right, okay. For the book, *Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics*, you and Dan Harris did a cross country tour, you were in a van, you were teaching meditation to other people, what did you learn from that process? What did you learn about yourself, your own practice, what did you learn about teaching other people through that specific experience?

**[0:11:06.9] JW:** Well, I mean, we learned a ton, maybe I'll take that in two parts. The first thing is just learning about, just the universality of some of these challenges like everyone, no matter

who you're talking to, people are dealing with the same thing. They're dealing with low level chronic anxiousness and stress about things, they're dealing with reactivity that kind of screws up in different ways and subtle ways are really strong ways. They're dealing with just – it's the regular slings and arrows and stresses of life.

After a while, the way in which we respond to that can actually start getting us into these pretty damaging habits and painful habits and sometimes they're really fed by things you're doing internally and sometimes it's more about things happening on the external side.

I was amazed by how many people were interested in learning about it from so many different demographics. We would talk to cops, we would talk to military people, we would talk to actors, to caregivers, to social workers, you name it. What was interesting is they're not only struggling with similar kinds of things but they're trying to figure out how to apply it to their particular jobs or worlds.

That's what I thought was super cool, that was for me the big learning was like "Wow, how do you take this stuff and apply it to a cop," you know? The particular things that cop is doing with on a beat when they're dealing with – when things are just going off around them and the stakes are really high in that sense or if you're in more of a caregiver profession, you know?

Or you're a parent, you know, what are the different ways people are uniquely applying it so that was really the learning curve for me was seeing how that was already happening and we weren't going around trying to convince people to meditate, we were going around talking to people who are already interested and are already doing it who were trying to use us to help get more insight into how to do it more effectively.

There's a lot to say, I could say about that and the different kinds of challenges you see, that's sort of what the book was about. Our attempt to kind of provide general best practices answers to different kinds of things but then there's the personal learning and that's always going on. You never stop with that both as a meditator or practitioner and as I guess a teacher and for me, I definably, we ended up having some problems, Dan and I wrote our communication and around just my ADD being a kind of –

I have a tendency to kind of go off on weird tangents, I get fixated about stuff and it kind of ends up affecting the course of the book and I learned stuff about me, as a teacher, as a person, just through that process. I learned a lot about how I didn't really want to be out here in the public eye kind of a way.

I kind of just wanted, you know, it's weird being out there and having people paying attention to what you're saying and writing because you know you're just trying to figure it out and sometimes you say stupid shit and so I had a lot of reservations about that.

I also had a lot of stuff around just being insecure and feeling like "Who am I, I'm just an imposter, what do I have to teach anybody or tell anybody?" I kind of got some clarity around that through this process that was – it actually really helped me.

**[0:14:06.9] AVH:** Yeah.

**[0:14:08.3] JW:** That was part of what happened.

**[0:14:10.2] AVH:** I really appreciate that you guys included some of the tension or the issues that you guys were having with each other throughout the book because first of all, the book was so readable and relatable and personable and the way Dan writes too and it's just, it's like you feel like this is your friend, he's telling you a story and – but I appreciate that he talked about that stuff because again, makes it more relatable but it also was sort of like a meta, it was very meta.

Because it's like, while you're in this process of teaching meditation to others, there is still going to be the stuff that comes up among the authorities that are doing this and the leaders and how you handle it as it comes. I thought that that part was really interesting actually.

One of the things that you've touched on a couple of times already and I'd like to ask you more about this, is the idea of sort of applying meditation practices to different people based on their needs and where they are in life and what they want to get out of it.

I think that that's really interesting for me too because as I said, I have an issue maybe with what the traditional concept of meditation is. Like Ben mentioned in the book, his wife, who felt

similarly, and you had an approach for her that was something a little bit A-typical. If you could kind of get into that a little bit more, how you approach meditation for her and then on a grander scale, how do you even go about when you're working with someone – determining how to incorporate meditation to their life, how do you go about figuring out and drawing out the information from people that lets you help them.

**[0:15:43.4] JW:** Yeah, I'm happy to, I mean, it's my favorite thing in the world actually to do. Because it's a lot around meeting people where they are, honoring that this is who this person is, this is their personality and then knowing that if they're coming to you with an interest or particular challenge in their life. There is a way in which that can be met, you know?

There's a way that both touches on very general things that seem to be true for everyone which I can talk about in a bit. Then particular things that have to do with the weirdness and the uniqueness and the awesomeness of how they are. That's the creative part of being a teacher is saying, "Okay, who is this?" I never liked cookie cutter teachers that say, "This is how it is. You got to fit into this."

I always hated that approach and I was lucky to find a teacher who had a much more customizable way of thinking about it. For me, one of the great things is like meeting people and learning, trying to get to know who they are and going, "Okay, that's interesting based on how they are, how might I frame this?"

In her case, Bianca, that's Dan's wife, she was a busy doctor, you know, she had a super busy practice, she hated the kind of the usual optics of how meditation was kind of – the preciousness of it as does Dan, that kind of, as do I do. She also hated like Dan's holier than thou attitude of being like sitting down on the stool and doing his hour and a half or two hours or whatever it was, and he had this while kind of macho, male attitude to practice that just didn't really fit with how she was and plus, just the fact that he's the guy who tried to tell her how to do it.

For her, it was you know, it was just about drawing up, "Okay, well what are – I just tried to figure out her schedule first of all, "What's your schedule like, where are their kind of opportunities to

potentially apply your practice?" I found out that there is this, she likes to – their baby, they have a young son Alexander.

She likes to kind of lay down with Alexander and chill with him when she gets home or she likes to crash on the floor of the living room, and maybe have the TV on in the background. I thought "Okay, no problem, we can use those two opportunities for places to actually begin to create a practice."

Because the thing is, the key to understanding practice I, practice is just practicing how you want to exist. And anytime you're existing, you can be applying these skills and it's like, you can be applying them when you're walking to work. You could be applying them when you're having a conversation with someone, you can be applying them when you're falling asleep.

In my period, it's just about understanding what the skills are that you're booting up in that moment and being intentional and deliberate about it. It's a little harder to do when you're lying down because you just fall asleep so fast, it's good to have a little period of actually working on it and but what we figured out with her is that she doesn't fall asleep.

She stays awake, I basically gave her a practice that called it something like, I forget what it was called, something about like 'Embracing being lazy.' Basically, just noticing – the essence of a practice is you decide to choose to pay attention to some part of what's going on in your experience. In her case, it was the feeling of being laying down and resting and feeling that connection to her son and just bringing, you build up the concentration piece which is just about you know, trying to pay attention to that sensation.

You bring it back over time, that builds up this universal skill of concentration. There is a skill of being clear about what's happening. Yeah, when I'm doing this, this is how I'm feeling it, this is where I'm feeling it in my body, this is what else is going on, that is what leads to more insight to start to know more about how we are. Be able to see into our patterns of reactivity and stress and stuff.

Finally, there the skill of just being kind of, having that friendliness going on which is easy to do when she's with her son. You're practicing being appreciative of the moment and which is

another kind of skill you can build. Finally, the last skill which is I often think as the most important is the acclivity skill which is a skill of just letting yourself truly be in that moment.

It's the skill that's kind of hard to explain to people because it sounds so obvious or weird but it's skill of not pushing or pulling on experience, you're just letting yourself truly be here, you're being okay with the fact that it might not be going perfect, that there is sounds going on outside that your thoughts pick you up and bother you.

You get sleepy or you get manic or whatever, that these things are all happening, but you just have this larger container being okay with it. That is what we're building in a practice, you're building habits of how to be in the world and the main habit you're learning how to build is a habit of being okay with what's actually going on and that is the paradoxical place from which you're allowed to then –

You're most able to make changes in your life. That's the thing people have a hard time getting. They go, "That sounds like being passive." No, it's the place of just where you begin from. You learn how to accept how the world is impacting you and then from that place, you can have more optimal responses.

Meditation is framework, it's just practicing how you want to exist, you do it anyway in your life, you just may not be deliberate about it and you may be feeding habits that aren't so helpful. It's just what being deliberate now and applying it to whatever part of your life you can. I think people can apply it in exercise, they can apply it like I said, at work and creativity and all these different ways, it doesn't have to look at all like sitting on a cushion.

Although the value of doing it in stillness is that you know when you're – it's easier to fool yourself when there's more going on. In stillness, you kind of know if you're getting concentrated or not, you kind of know if you're getting clear or not. When you get that feedback, it's sort of like a simple place to rehearse these skills, like the gym that you could then bring out into everyday life.

Yeah, hopefully I make sense.

**[0:21:11.3] AVH:** Yeah. Some of it about, the idea of being okay with where you are, it's observing a feeling so that you can then maybe make steps to change it. Instead of just feeling things very raw and then kind of continuing on to another feeling or whatever, it's being able to kind of observe the feeling and then if you can have a bit of a, like almost removed maybe kind of feeling about it, then you can more objectively make changes?

**[0:21:38.8] JW:** Exactly. That's exactly what it is, it's the skill of learning how to make space in your experience. The experiencing something but not having to necessarily act on it. It's a subtle thing that you start to – I mean, a lot of people probably already recognize, the aspects of this but when you meditate, meditation is like anything else.

Just like if you were going into a forest and you don't know anything, it just seems like a bunch of trees and some birds. The more time you spend in the forest and learning with the forest, the more subtleties that you could start to detect about kinds of trees and kinds of birds and same with going into the mind.

It starts out, it's very kind of crude and you don't notice much but over time, you start to see more about what's going on and one of the fundamental things you see is that there's this constant sort of friction in our experience, where we're trying a little bit like control it or manage stuff.

When we have thoughts, we're often kind of feeding the thoughts, we're kind of gripping on, holding on, we're feeding our resentment, our grudges. Yeah. Or we're like a little bit like the opposite, we're trying to get away from things, "I don't want to feel this or I don't want to think that right now," or trying to squash it down. Those things don't work, they just end up feeding the patterns more and so we get more entangled in it.

Meditation is the acclivity, it is the skill of noticing when you're trying to do that gripping and just stop and you just let go and let it – then you let it play it out. So the thing just eventually plays out. For example, if you're trying to – say you're feeling really sad, people will then often feed the sadness, they're kind of like you know, they're trying to either resist it which is making it even get deeper or they're kind of wallowing in it which is also making it continue.

Instead of you just going to let yourself be sad and say, “Yeah, here is sadness, this is how it is” and you have this kind of mature stance of letting it be there for a while and knowing that that’s just what’s going on, that allowing will eventually let it kind of move through you.

It’s a more optimal kind of way to respond. Then, as we have that more allowing, it allows us to see situations more clearly, we see, “Oh yeah, before, I was really trying to control that situation” or “I was kind of blocking what was going on with my own prejudices”. When you just chill and open up a little bit more in the situation, then you can see more clearly.

“Yeah, actually, there’s a more smarter way to respond here,” then you might act that way instead of from your reactivity. That’s the thinking and it turns out to be what a lot of people find in their experience and it’s not just unique to meditation, you know, people describe it in all kinds of different ways, in different traditions and different cultures.

**[0:24:09.8] AVH:** I’ve always been into the idea of walking meditation or movement based meditation because I am somebody who often times uses exercise or movement as a stress relief. I have a challenge with the stillness, the sitting on the cushion thing.

But I hear what you’re saying a little bit, in that I mean, perhaps maybe there’s no wrong way to meditate but that’s some ways, it’s a little easier to get distracted or to not sort of really reach inside because you can like look and focus on this flower instead or this whatever.

What do you think about that? Do you think that some types of meditation might be better for people who are a little bit more advanced or a little bit more comfortable with it? Or do you think that we should immediately kind of gravitate towards the idea that appeals to us most?

**[0:24:58.5] JW:** Yeah, great question. It’s so individual, you know? I like using people’s intrinsic interest as a way to start because it plays to their strengths. If someone is feeling like they really don’t like being in stillness, they’re more like, I’m like that too by the way. I’m super restless and fidgety and agitated. I like moving.

My favorite meditations are more, I mean, I like sitting now too. I’ve learned to do it but my kind of wheelhouse is more movement type meditations. That’s what feels right for me doing like a

Qigong practice or even like being – doing swimming laps or when I'm biking, I'll kind of turn into a meditation. I know now when I'm applying those skills, I haven't had experience I can feel when I'm being equanimous and when I'm concentrating, when I'm being clear and doing a sport.

However, if I had never done a sitting practice, I never would have realized, I never would have had a vivid experience of my own drivenness. My own agitated restlessness, which often a constant movement thing can mask. It is a very useful thing in life to face that at some point.

To sit down and say, you know what? "There's no reason in theory, I can't just be okay, no matter what's going on in my life. I don't have to continually, in a driven way be moving." That's suggest that only in certain conditions of your life are you okay and conditions where you're moving.

But when you're still, "No, no, no, you can't do that, don't want to do that." That's a major condition that you're putting on your life and there will be times in your life when you're not going to be able to move like that, you know? When you get older, when you get sick, who knows what?

Where you just need to be present and it's good to kind of face that in those energies and learn how to work with them. That's one of the beauties of a seated practice. In other words, to answer your question, I would start with where people are strong already and I would help them learn, teach the skills there.

But I would also advise them to at least try out and sample, even for just like five minutes, 10 minutes, a seated practice, just to explore what that's like because it might end up being quite transformative and even beautiful for them.

**[0:27:03.6] AVH:** Similar to that then, do you encourage or are you okay with folks experimenting with different kinds of meditation like if say, I have a meditation practice and it's a lying meditation and I've been doing it for 10, 15 minutes every day for a few months and I'm kind of starting to get into the groove and like it.

I want to try and do some other kind of meditation, whether it's walking outside or it's on the treadmill or whatever. Is it okay to kind of play with different modes like you know, even within the same like week or so or do you think that it's better for people to kind of get into like a really solid practice and stick with it or what do you think about that?

**[0:27:44.7] JW:** Yeah, these are great questions by the way. I think, again, I think it's very hard to give a general answer for everybody. I think what – that is why I focus on teaching people the core skills because when you understand the core skills, like what it feels like to be concentrated, what it feels like to be clear, to be equanimous. Then you can – that becomes the thing that you're training.

Those are true across practices. Then you can move around more easily between a breath practice, a movement practice, yoga, your lying down practice. Whatever. I think it's great to explore, like you want to kind of find, "Hey, what works for me." But, if you were just jumping around in this kind of like totally ADD way without any understanding what was being built between those, I'm not sure how effective the practices will end up being.

In other words, what I would say is, everyone needs to understand the common dynamics. Once you understand those common dynamics, some people will be able to move around and still be building those common dynamics. But other people will actually want to stay more in one single practice.

Just because it's more – that's just how their nervous system works, they're more that kind of a person, it really vibes with them in a particular way. Really dedicating yourself in that way is the exact right thing to do. I'll say as a caveat to that, even for those folks, once in a while, it's good to test the principles in a different practice because you can end up kind of doing only one practice and creating in a way all these blind spots in that one practice, you know?

It becomes just another habit that's preventing you from actually dealing with things in your life. Your life always has to be the litmus test, it's never the practice. Am I more how I want to be in my life, am I more present and more available for my friends and family? Am I more at peace in my heart? Or whatever you're looking for.

**[0:29:31.8] AVH:** Yeah, I really like that. It's kind of like the practice is a tool that helps you live your life better, it's not like, it's not the end state itself the practice, right? It's like a tool that you're.

**[0:29:43.9] JW:** Well, it's exactly a tool you're using but it becomes your life. See, this idea distinguishing between practice over here and life over here, the more you practice, the more that collapses, the more you realize that life is a practice and either you can be deliberate about it or you can be unconscious about it.

I can tell you, definitely one of those is better. In terms of just being you know, happier in your life, you know? Because everyone's going to get stuck in these patterns that aren't really serving you, that's human nature. To have a tool to begin to get some perspective around that and some options is just really going to help you in your life in a big way.

**[0:30:19.1] AVH:** Yeah. Our listeners are obviously always very concerned with health and wellness and all of its forms and whether that's diet or nutrition or meditation or stress management to all of these things. I think it's pretty common knowledge at this point that some form of mindfulness meditation practice is healthy for you in that it can you know, lower cortisol and it can help you sleep better and it can just improve your overall mood and calmness throughout the day. But are there any other benefits that you see that maybe aren't as widely known. That people should know about?

**[0:30:57.8] JW:** Yeah, well, can I get a bit mystical, can I risk going here?

**[0:31:04.2] AVH:** Yeah.

**[0:31:04.2] JW:** Well, I just say mystical for a lack of a better word. One of the things that kind of happens through practice over time is a sense of being – feeling more and more integrated if I can use that. A sense of like, being more and more in flow with your life.

Actually, I think that athletes and people who do a lot of exercise will really understand this because it's a lot like the experience of the athlete's zone or being in flow where you know, in an experience of flow, it's really like how you are acting and the world is totally lining up with how

the world is around you. You know, you're really kind of synced up with it, there's a feeling of being synchronized. What happens over time with practice is there's an even deeper kind of synchronicity that kind of kicks in where it's like.

It feels like your mind is syncing up with your body in a more total way. Indeed, that whole set of you, the mind and body is syncing up with the world. The way I describe it sometimes is like, you can't see the visual here but it's like, imagine you're looking through a telescope but it's all kind of fuzzy, you're trying to line up the telescope with the far sight but it's kind of a back and forth.

Eventually, it lines up and you're looking straight down, you're lining up these three different levels, mind, body, world. What that means, an experience of that is, the way you're understanding of how you are and what the world is, lines up to your direct experience which in turn lines up with how the world responds to you in kind.

I'm telling you, that's like, that's the good stuff man, that's just this feeling of really being in flow with the world that is – it's really deep, it's really beautiful, it's really – you feel in sync with things and people around you, it just feels awesome.

In that same way that sports does. The more – as part of that, you feel more genuinely available to people around you, so there's more sense of intimacy and connection and connection and more sense of meaning. You get in to the kind of deep end of practice there in its very natural way of feeling really connected to your life and that's where I think these practices point us to and again, it doesn't have to happen through a seating practice.

They happen spontaneously to athletes, to people who are creative types to anybody who learns in their own intuitive sense, starts to figure out how to get those skills activated in their life. They all describe coming more fully into their lives in a way like this and that's really the deeper benefits and I can't overstate them.

You know it's the reason I think that this, that's what I think the second world could really learn from contemplative traditions because there's nothing can "contemplative" about it. It's just part of being human and it's a language that we need to start to be able to speak and to feel

comfortable no matter who we are because this is just going to make happier people and then which will then in turn make better solutions for the world we're in.

**[0:33:50.9] AVH:** Yeah, we can all benefit from that for sure. Can you talk a little bit about your daily practice or what it looks like from day to day or week to week and also what you're working day is like, I am just curious what your work life is like but also how do you incorporate meditation into your own life?

**[0:34:09.8] JW:** Sure, well the first thing to say is that it's kind of a disaster in some ways like my actual working life because I've got ADD. So my ability to – I tend to have a lot of projects on the go and I have a hard time managing it all. Meditation hasn't changed the fundamental fact that I am ADD. What it has changed is that I have a lot more equanimity and acceptance that this is just one of the things that I have to challenge with, I am challenged with in life. So that's there. So there is a lot less suffering around it and I've learned that practice really helps and so because I am ADD there are times where I am really, really in a more structured good set of practices but then there's times where I fall out of it. So when it is going really well, it looks like waking up in the morning, sitting down and doing right away a core practice, a body practice. I find that a core practice really helps to bring my mind together.

We talked about that mind-body connection, it's like if I work on a core thing I find my mind is more centered and I'll do a mindfulness practice within that. I will be focused on that feeling of centering and the feeling of the breath and whatever and then sometimes, I will do a little sit after that but usually I like to sit at night and then I have also almost always another physical practice during the day where I'll swim, or I'll bike or I'll go hit a punching bag or I'll do Qigong and that makes a huge difference.

And again, I'll be applying the mindfulness skills. I always 27/7 or at least the waking hours but sometimes it even happens in dreams, I always have a continuous practice of monitoring my heart. Monitoring when I start to go into a contraction like when I start to get close to somebody or when I start getting fixated on something or when I start to get all pissy about something and I will notice that. I will try to just like, "Ah" and I will notice it through my chest.

And as that happens, I will try to relax, breathe out, let go and be like, “Okay” and so I have that going all the time. That’s my main practice and it’s the corollary of that is I am learning to notice the absence of that. The plain regular feeling of being at ease in my heart as the only place I need to get to. I’ll just notice that with appreciation as something that is actually pretty cool and the more I notice that, the better that feels. So that’s an ideal day.

Now the reality is all that goes out the window when I am getting busy. I just get too busy in the morning. I suddenly lose my morning practice but I don’t ever lose the monitoring one. Pretty much now, I’ve gotten to make a habit of that but you know that’s what it looks like and then there’s also when I am teaching and I actually think of teaching as my main practice because when I am in a teaching situation, you really have to be in that place when you’re teaching.

I find it really helped me be more in that place and so I love teaching and I’ll go do retreats or go to teach a retreat for a week and then I am there all the time. I notice after doing that for a few days, it’s really strong, that feeling of being in your center and it will last. The strong sense of that will last for days and sometimes weeks and then life goes on and you lose touch with it a bit and it is like that.

**[0:37:18.2] AVH:** Yeah, I appreciate that you can be honest about having the good days and bad days as a meditation teacher because I think it goes back to the idea that it is a practice and that we’re all constantly working on it. I think about health coaches or personal trainers as someone who’s teaching other people how to eat and how to sleep properly and how to work out properly and we will still have days where we do a shit job of that. I think that that’s good to admit to people, so they know that it is not a black or white. You are either perfect at this or you suck and give up. There is a wide range in the middle.

**[0:37:53.2] JW:** Big time.

**[0:37:53.7] AVH:** I wonder, do you have days where you just don’t feel like meditating and being still and being calm? I think about somebody like a chef who cooks all day for a living and they comes home, and everyone wants them to cook a meal. Do you ever have days where you come home and you’re like, “I am not feeling it. I just want to watch TV,” or I don’t know, be in a pissy mood and not think about it, how do you handle days like that?

**[0:38:20.3] JW:** Well yeah, I have them all the time. My things tend to be sometimes I just don't feel like dealing with my life. I just want to go and watch a bunch of action movies, go watch Deadpool 2. I want to get out of my life and just be and I also of course react against the goody-two-shoes part of being a meditation teacher which I just never liked and can never identify with. I just want to go party. I want to be a dickhead. I want to go smoke cigarettes and get in a fight at a bar or something. I am just a regular person. I mean I don't know if that is what a regular person would want but those are my degrees of derangements.

So yeah, I do get that all the time and then I try to catch that early and just say, first of all I try to have compassion with that because I am just a regular person like anybody else and sometimes I don't catch it and I end up being a dick or being some way and then I catch it and just go, "Yeah you are allowed to be in this place" and then it usually comes back.

But it happens less and less in the sense that I just had so many tens of thousands of times of being reminded that when I come back into presence, it is just so much better in some ways. It doesn't take away of any of the other stuff. You can be in presence and still be passionate about life or still be super feeling like you want to be an activist about something or being angry and being whatever. Those things don't go away. You are not talking about being a neutered middle person.

You are talking about just being aware of those things but yeah, sometimes even just being aware that I don't want to be aware. I'm like, "I don't want to be aware. I just want to be unconscious. I wish I could go back to never even knowing anything about this stuff," but it is too late. You know you can't go back.

**[0:39:51.7] AVH:** Yeah, correct. So you founded something called the Consciousness Explorers Club in Toronto and it sounds really cool. Can you tell our listeners about it?

**[0:40:01.7] JW:** Yeah, sure. Well it was started a bunch of years ago. In 2012 I started it, a buddy of mine James Maskalyk, we were into meditation and we decided we wanted to create a community where just a bunch of our friends could get together and we could explore practices

and talk about them and we weren't into the religious side of it or trying to convince anybody of anything. We just thought, "Hey we could be explorers together."

And because I had a bigger profile at the time of being a writer and being in that world, lots of people would come, lots of artists and writers and we ended up having this really fun interesting sessions where we'd explore different practices and so it just evolved from there and it has really been a labor of love for me. It is now officially a non-profit. We meet once a week on Monday nights. All of our practices are available for free online. Anyone can list new in the world.

Come to CEC and meditate and we basically do two things. Well we do a bunch of things, we have a retreat coming up in August which is insanely fun. It is the highlight of the year. It's called Meditate Celebrate Activate. It's about exploring different meditation practice but also doing it in a really active, engaged, fun way and then having a physical emphasis and just being jackasses and so we have that and it's very affordable and that happens in Ontario.

But basically, our main this is Monday nights we do a part one. We do different meditation sit works where we practice and then we share what people's experiences were and then for part two, we do a more either an art practice or a movement practice or some interpersonal practice, but the idea is to explore how to actually apply what we are learning in our lives and it costs 15 bucks. It is affordable. I think of it as a one stop mental health shop. You can just go once a week and check in with these different modalities and we often have a special guest.

So I might bring a nutritionist in, well that's not happened yet but I want to do that but different movement people or different artists or different voice specialists or voice coach or a Gestalt therapist and my things is to – I am trying to put together this community resources where anyone can start up a CEC and then just be inspired by it and we share the resources with them and they could do one in their community. I really want to bring in – I love the body practices.

So that's a big thing for me, bringing in more body stealth in and it is all about the community is the teacher, you know? There is different levels of expertise you get to in terms of experience levels when you meditate but everybody needs to learn from everybody else. What happens in I think a lot of spiritual communities – although I guess it's not – it's just a community. What

happens in a lot of communities is when there becomes an authority figure where the feedback channels are closed and then things could go off the rails.

But this is really all about the opposite of that. It is about lots of transparency and so that's what it is and so you could go to CEC Meditate, my website, and read more about it if you are interested.

**[0:42:51.6] AVH:** And can anyone show up like you just have to walk with your 15 bucks and a positive attitude?

**[0:42:57.1] JW:** Yeah, pretty much anybody.

**[0:42:59.3] AVH:** How many people usually show up every week?

**[0:43:01.1] JW:** Maybe an average of 30 or 40. I mean when I am there it is a little more popular because I am the best known person. So we could get 70 to 80 people maybe but other nights, you'll never know. It's usually an average about 40 maybe and there's actually – my friend started a version of it in Ottawa and I have different friends who wanted to start versions of it all over the place. So I am just trying to figure out how to support them.

But the problem is all of it is pro bono and so you live hand to mouth running this organization and we never really have done any fund raising because I suck at that because I got ADD. So we're still trying to figure out how to make it all work but yeah.

**[0:43:38.9] AVH:** It sounds very cool and the retreat this summer, is that something that you are going to have to cap, like people will register online for that?

**[0:43:46.8] JW:** Yeah, we only have room with this but we moved to a bigger space here. So I think we're going to have room for maybe even up to 50 people or so. So I would be really psyched for people who want to join. I mean it's so fun, it's the 5<sup>th</sup> year we're doing it. I put so much work into it. It's the three main teachers in CEC which is myself and Erin and James and we put a ton of work into it. So it is a very seamless four day curriculum where we work a lot with the transitions.

And we have a good time at night and I feel like it has been a good way for people to dip into what meditation is all about. You don't need any experience, you can be a completely new meditator.

**[0:44:23.1] AVH:** Yeah that's very cool. We'll put the links to that in the shownotes so people could check that out and you will have to send me the link where I can look up the one in Ottawa because that would be cool for me to go.

**[0:44:33.1] JW:** Yeah and actually there's another if you don't mind me saying, there's another retreat that I am doing in June 14<sup>th</sup> outside of Toronto.

**[0:44:40.1] AVH:** Okay.

**[0:44:40.4] JW:** That is just the weekend one but that is just me and it's called Retreat for Fidgety Skeptics Cosmic Edition. So, it is going into some of the principles of the book but also really trying to help people connect to that stuff I was saying earlier about the way in which it could bring us into a feeling of being connected to our own lives, our own being. There's this bigger dimension of practice that I wish more people would emphasize because it can be talked about in a way that is not totally new age-y and cheesy you know?

**[0:45:08.0] AVH:** Yeah, that's very cool. We'll definitely put that in the shownotes so people can learn more about it. I have another specific question because this is Paleo Magazine Radio and we have certain focuses, like I said on health and wellness and one of the big parts of that is sleep and as someone who has struggled with sleep issues myself, I was interested in a chapter you had in your book, *The Head Trip*, that talks about ancestral sleep patterns and biphasic and polyphasic sleep. Can you talk a little bit about what that is and then how that relates to our health and to a meditation practice even?

**[0:45:41.6] JW:** Sure, that's cool you read that. I didn't know you had the book but yeah. So that is a really interesting bunch of research that is now more widely known. At the time, it was just emerging and the thinking is this idea that there is only one way to sleep, there is this universal form of sleep that is eight hours at night, that turns out to maybe even more to do with culture

than our innate biology. There may be an innate underlying amount of sleep that we need that is certainly possible.

But we can get it in different configurations and any person knows Mediterranean nap culture and this kind of angle know that that's true and what this research suggested was that when you look at how we slept pre-industrial revolution, when you look at journal entries and diaries and old farmers almanacs and there's also science research now about this in the world of chronobiology what they find is that people actually seem to sleep in two sections.

That they would go to sleep in the first part of night when the sun would go down and that was mostly slow aid sleep which is the deep restorative sleep and then they would come up off in the middle of the night. They wake up to a period of twilight period of sort of dreamy wakefulness where they weren't asleep, maybe they were sometimes fully awake, or they are in a place where they are awake thinking about the dream they just emerged from.

And then they would slip back down into a second sleep an hour later or a little bit later and that second part could be a little bit broken up too and it is a unique character that midnight awakening, which I call the latch in my book. It was much more peaceful, it had a lot of high levels of prolactin in the brain, so the hormonal balance was different and what people described was often that it was a kind of place to think about the dreams that they had emerged from.

So it was some kind of corridor or connectivity to our dreams of thinking about that part in our life but also it is a natural time where people would meditate or people would pray or people would make love and the lesson from it, my lesson from it, is if a lot of us had that pattern, we wake up in the middle of the night, we feel like something is wrong with us so our sleep is broken or I've got to see a doctor about this but if we can actually shift it around and say, "Actually if we got our three hours of sleep..."

And this is okay too, this is just an older pattern reasserting itself and if we decide to experience it in a positive way as something pleasurable, we can actually get a lot of the benefits of having been fully asleep. That is less about falling asleep than it is about being in a more peaceful, restful state and that is what gives the restorative benefits. You can get the big benefits from the

slow way sleep at the start of the night, but you can be in a more quiescent wakeful state in the second part of the night.

And it could end up not being a problem, you could feel pretty restored the next day. When you are not restored, it has more to do with the fact that you are super anxious about that and have been stressed about it all night, you know what I mean?

**[0:48:32.9] AVH:** Yeah, this is a really helpful and useful conversation to have because just like you said, one of the worst parts about my sleeping issues was I would wake up and I would be fully alert and I would be freaking out that I was awake and fully alert, instead of just being able to be okay with the fact that I was awake and maybe do something else that's productive but that makes me feel good until I am ready to go back to sleep. It's an interesting parallel with the meditation thing too, where it's like the more you try to fight stuff, the less – you are going to lose, right?

**[0:49:03.1] JW:** Well it is the same dynamic.

**[0:49:04.4] AVH:** Yeah, exactly so yeah.

**[0:49:06.0] JW:** And actually I would say that if it happens to you, if this is a regular issue for you certainly you could get up and do something productive if that is what you feel like doing. It might also be good for you if you explore once in a while, what would it feel like to not do something productive? To just let yourself have this time and try to find – is there a way that I could just enjoy being here? I mean it's like meditation clichés.

Can I just sit here in this peaceful moment in the middle of the night, in this body, in this life and be okay with that and just connect to something quite moving and deep about that and it is an opportunity to dream, if we are not really meditative to maybe get into play with connecting with some of those meditation principles.

**[0:49:46.3] AVH:** Maybe that could be my meditation practice is that when I wake up in the early hours of the morning and can't get back to sleep that's when I can use my – trying to be calm

and centered and think about what's going on instead of just tossing and turning and freaking out. That could be interesting actually.

**[0:50:05.0] JW:** Seriously, I would try it.

**[0:50:06.8] AVH:** It shouldn't hurt.

**[0:50:08.0] JW:** Exactly, it will either work or it won't but I mean give yourself some time. Practices take time. The main skill is just accepting that this is where you are, "Oh yeah, here's where I am" so that is what I mean about meditation being a lot about sanity. It just starts with the understanding of like, "Yeah this is what is happening. You know maybe I will just accept this is happening instead of fighting with it" because it has already happened. You have already lost the fight, it's already here.

So just accepting it and then go on, "Okay so what does that change?" Even with that simple act of accepting. Often that is the main thing.

**[0:50:36.3] AVH:** Yeah, this conversation has been so helpful to me and I hope it will be to our listeners too and I think this is starting to be a good place to wrap it up but I guess one final question I have for you and I think that based on the conversation we've had already, meditation isn't something that you force somebody into or that you tell them a bunch of rules to do when they're unsure about whether they want to do it or not.

It is not something that you try to force yourself to do but for people who are maybe somewhere similar to me where they recognize the benefits, they're interested, they're curious, they're doing research, they like the idea of starting a meditation practice but maybe they are overwhelmed or maybe they just don't feel like they are quite ready yet or they don't know where to start, what are some pieces of maybe advice or some thoughts or some direction you might give somebody who is interested in coming to you for questions but just isn't quite there yet?

**[0:51:36.0] JW:** Yeah, well I mean a lot of it I guess is not to be – maybe it is a lot of summarizing the book because there is so many ways people might be caught up and it describes different responses to it but I would say and again, if you are somebody who is really

more of a community, more of a social person, I would say then do it. Just go to a class. Just do a class, go to a course where you are stuck. It's like when you go to a yoga class or you go to a martial arts class.

You're like, "I don't really like to feel like this," but then he already signed for it or whatever it is, a fitness class so you just do it and then you can see what it's like and then eventually, you start getting the reward benefits and then that makes it easier to start. So putting yourself in a sort of social situation where you're stuck to do it, that to me I every year sign up for two retreats and often when it comes up, I am now looking forward to it.

But first, I'd be like, "Oh God I can't believe I did that" but I would just lock myself in. So that is one way but if you are more independent, I would say just try it. Go to my website, there's ton of free meditations. Just listen to one and try it out and see what it's like and if you find that you don't mind doing it then you can get started that way and it doesn't have to be a big thing. I mean I guess you have more of a concrete thing.

It could be five minutes, it could be literally just, "Oh you're trying this out? Okay that's it for today" the next day, let me go try another five minutes so I will try ten minutes. Just don't make a big deal of it. It is not a big deal. It's just existing a little bit more deliberately for a few moments. I would say also to make it your own like have a sense of humor about it. What would it look like to do this with integrity with you and your nervous system in your life and your background?

That's really the question and then own it just try that out but you know it may probably be looks a lot like just making it match your schedule and your existing set of interest and actually there's a practice on my website, I call it finding the right practice and it is all about trying to help people with exactly that question. So it is a 20 minute meditation you listen to so maybe kind of agitating but offers some different options of ways to work and talks a little bit about the skills and you can maybe from there that might help.

**[0:53:42.9] AVH:** Great. Well I know you said earlier that you weren't super keen on one of these public figures because that is weird, and I get it. However, I do think that what you're doing is super helpful and important and so cool and so I am going to ask you to tell me where

folks can find more about you online or maybe where they can connect with you in some way online or social media or wherever you play online.

**[0:54:07.9] JW:** Sure, I think I mentioned the CEC website, [www.cecmeditate.com](http://www.cecmeditate.com), and then there is my personal website, [jeffwarner.org](http://jeffwarner.org) which you can check out. I have a newsletter that I never send out. I do it like twice a year.

**[0:54:22.1] AVH:** Perfect. That is the exact right amount that people want to get newsletters.

**[0:54:24.8] JW:** Yeah, I am trying to do it more. People tell me I got to do it more, but it is just so annoying getting these newsletters and also, I am trying to find like a manager. You know maybe you could help me with this.

**[0:54:34.8] AVH:** Yeah, I will talk to you offline about that.

**[0:54:36.3] JW:** Because I've got all of these projects like I have a thing for – I want to start a podcast for teens. I've got these kid meditation things I am doing and I have the CEC stuff. I've got corporate people. The RCNP wanted me to come to Ottawa to do stuff but I am not a good organizer. I am hoping to find, I am trying to find somebody who can sort of just be – it is so interesting. It's all about how to bring this idea of creating your own practice to all of these different forums.

And somebody who is passionate about that but is really good at organizing who isn't ADD. Who care about people and this stuff like trying to figure that out, but Ashleigh I have a question for you, is that okay?

**[0:55:09.6] AVH:** That's great.

**[0:55:10.3] JW:** Well it's more like for you and for your whole community because this is a weird thing that I have noticed and I am curious what the paleo folks would say and that is the effect of diet on my mind and body. So I had always been – like I know you know tons about this and your listeners do. I have always been, I ate pretty healthy but it's only in the past year or so that I really tuned into the fact that carbs kind of mess me up.

Not all carbs but a certain like eating a carb based diet and what I noticed was and this is going to sound maybe weird but in Buddhism there is this idea of Dukkha, of suffering, and people think in a way that is such a negative thing about Buddhism but what they mean is this idea that there's this constant kind of un-satisfactoriness that is often there where we're just kind of antsy and having to go right now. Trying to get to the next thing, trying to get to the next thing.

So what's weird is what I noticed when I started going more on a keto diet and low carb is first of all, all my cravings came up big time and once I worked through those with equanimity so that is totally the same skill and then I felt so naturally more centered and peaceful, like if I had just done a meditation retreat or something and then what I noticed, where this is the part that really blew my mind is that it isn't just that my cravings for food and stuff went away.

It was also my cravings to be somewhere else started to go away a little bit, like I didn't have the same restless angsty, "Oh I want to go see a movie" or I want to do this. I mean some of it is still there but some of that actually started to cool out and so I started thinking, are carbs Dukkha, you know?

**[0:56:52.4] AVH:** Carbs are suffering. I love that tagline.

**[0:56:55.6] JW:** Yeah and I know that is super reductive in order to that but it's this idea that the inflammation-y part of carbs, does that feed into our nervous systems in this bigger way and also creates this sort of disease in our experience that is related to that Buddhist understanding of un-satisfactoriness, you know? Does that make sense to you?

**[0:57:15.7] AVH:** It is such a cool conversation to have and I imagine our listeners when they are listening to this are going to be nodding their head like, "Yes I totally get what you are saying," because I mean working on a meditation practice is so similar to working on your diet and I use that word just to mean the food that you eat not necessarily a diet, because it's not as simple as find the foods that nourish your body physically and eat them when you're hungry.

That sounds great and perfect and in perfect world we could all do that but there is so much emotion tied up in what you eat and how you eat and who you eat with and when and all of

these things, right? So, if it was just eat this list of foods and eat them in this amount, then we'd all have a six pack and we'd all be happy and we'd all be fine and no one would have dysfunctional attitudes towards food and so many of us do and so many of us go in and out of it.

The same way you may go in and out of a meditation practice too, but there is increasing evidence and scientific research to back up not even so much carbs but sugar which is obviously there also, it creates inflammation and it creates this sort of addictive cycle that is physiological in your body that makes you crave more of it and then you crash and you get negative feelings associated with crash. I mean these are all things that are physiologically biologically happening to you.

But they absolutely affect your brain too. So that is why I think it is crucial to find – and it doesn't necessarily have to be keto although that works for a lot of people. It doesn't have to be even paleo although I am a big fan of natural unprocessed whole foods because I think that in some iteration works really well for most people. But it is about finding the balance for you that makes you feel good, makes you feel healthy and you know it is something that you can be mindful about it and you could enjoy.

Because it is that balance of enjoying your life and enjoy the way that you eat and the social things that are around it but it's super complicated, which I would imagine it is the same with the mindfulness practice.

**[0:59:21.0] JW:** Well it's the same. We are talking about the same thing. We are talking about the need to get curious about how you are in the world and to start making customizations about how you think, how you act, how you respond, what you eat, how you move your body and then as you do that in a deliberate way you can come to a happier place. It is so interesting because for me I didn't start – I eat more like a low carb. I know it not fully keto, but I was keto for a while.

But I started because of my moods like I found that even with all of the meditation, I had a lot of up and down mood swings and when I started eating more low carb, it really smoothed out a lot of that and I haven't had a manic episode in probably over six months ever since I started doing it which is really interesting. So I think there is an intimate connection here and that's really what I am interested in is this like totally holistic thing of integrating diet, meditation and exercise.

And in fact, the book that I am working on right now is called *How To Teach Meditation: A Guide For Everyone* and the idea is that everyone that basically has a basic understanding of our mental health is as fundamental as our basic understanding of diet and exercise and that as we learn how to, there are certain principles that are universal for everyone that we can learn for ourselves and that we should definitely share with other people and not in any kind of culty weird, this is what we got to do it way.

It is more like “Hey, make this your own,” you know? It is like any parent or caregiver would want or any friend would want to share this. So that is the whole book, really that as its premise. It is demystifying the whole thing, the basic universal principles and how do you share them in a way that could be not creepy.

**[1:01:02.5] AVH:** Yeah, when is that book going to come out?

**[1:01:04.9] JW:** Well I am just working on it now with my friend, Juliana Ray, who is another meditation teacher. So we don't even have a book deal yet, we just got really passionate about it and we are starting to write it and when we get further down the line. I will probably try out my publisher and probably put it out late next year or something like that.

**[1:01:20.1] AVH:** Okay, we'll have to keep our eyes open for that but I love that we brought it full circle to the food thing at the end here because I think that for a lot of people one of the main drivers behind wanting a mindfulness practice is for health but even more specifically to deal with their relationship and their reactions to food. I think what you're saying is this concept because there are few people in the world who don't have weird dysfunctional emotional reactions to food but most people on some level do and for some of us it is debilitating.

For some of us, it could be extremely stressful and dysfunctional and it's a really difficult thing but part of what you have been talking about this entire hour is the idea of being able to step back and look at things objectively and to observe an emotion maybe that you have, a craving, a desire to do something that you know isn't good for you. I think that that's a super important skill or awareness to have. I think that those like you said, they are all connected and all of it just

works to make you sort of a happier, more aware person and that's what we're all trying to do, right?

**[1:02:23.6] JW:** Word.

**[1:02:25.3] AVH:** I love it. Thank you so much Jeff, this was amazing. I had such a great time and I am going to try to get to Toronto because I am very close. I want to try to get to Toronto and come to one of your sessions on a Monday and say hi in person. I would love that.

**[1:02:37.0] JW:** That would be great and actually you know what? I think in October I am going to do a workshop in Ottawa called How To Teach Meditation. So it is really pretty cool even for people who don't – just kind of what I talked about. So it would be great to meet you in person.

**[1:02:48.2] AVH:** Awesome, thank you so much Jeff. Enjoy the rest of your day.

**[1:02:50.2] JW:** Awesome Ashleigh, you too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[1:02:55.9] AVH:** Okay, thank you everybody for listening. I hope you enjoyed it and if you want to have a conversation, ask me any questions, you know what to do. Reach out on social media. Next week, we're talking with Aglaee Jacobs. She is a registered dietician and nutritionist and she's the author of *Digestive Health With Real Food*. She has dealt with her own fair share of digestive and hormonal issues including IBS, SIBO and PCOS and she's learned to heal her digestive issues through her own holistic and natural protocol which she talks about in the book.

And you'll notice, when you hear her charming francophone accent, that she is actually French-Canadian. So Jeff, who we just spoke with he's Canadian. Aglaee is Canadian, I am a Canadian, I hate to say it but we're slowly taking over this podcast and the world, insert evil yet polite laugh here. Okay, don't forget to subscribe to Paleo Magazine Radio. Follow us on all social media @paleomagazine and please join me next week where we will be talking all things digestive health.

All right, until next time.

[OUTRO]

**[1:03:57.8] AV:** Paleo Magazine Radio is brought to you by the Paleo Media Group and is produced by We Edit Podcasts. Our show music features the song *Light It Up*, by Morgan Heritage and Jo Mersa Marley, and on behalf of everyone at *Paleo Magazine*, thank you for listening.

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