

Dialogues with The Masters

Jim Dreaver



JANET ATTWOOD: This is Janet Attwood, and I'd like to welcome you this morning to our Dialogues with The Masters call. This morning we have my dear friend Jim Dreaver, who lives in Sebastopol, California. For all of you who want to know more about Jim, go to his website at www.JimDreaver.com. Actually, I should say 'd' as in darling. www.JimDreaver.com. His latest book, just published, is *End Your Story, Begin Your Life*, which is available as an ebook at www.EndYourStory.com.

This book reveals Jim's simple three-step process for discovering the freedom and love inside us. It also tells his own story of awakening. I do want to say that I was reading it, and it truly is so simple and clear in the writing. For any of you who are listening, if you really want to own that inner freedom, it's a wonderful, wonderful way that he's written this step-by-step process. I found it very wonderful—I loved his stories—and a very easy read.

Jim has taught his work at numerous venues around the country, most recently in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boulder, and at Esalen Institute. He is returning to Boulder to give a talk on Friday, November 30th, and an all-day intensive the Saturday following. Any of you Boulderites who are listening, and those of you who love to travel, Jim will be in Boulder on Friday, November 30th and his intensive will be the Saturday following. You can visit the schedule section on his website for more information on his calendar. Jim, good morning.

JIM DREAVAR: Good morning.

JANET ATTWOOD: It's wonderful to be with you again.

JIM DREAVAR: Yes. Me, too.

JANET ATTWOOD: I would love it if you would like to start off by sharing the practice that you have.

JIM DREAVAR: Yes, good. The practice is we do it whenever we are experiencing conflict, upset or suffering. We've got plenty of opportunities to practice, because whenever a button gets pushed, that's when we do the practice. The practice is this, and you've got to remember to do it; repetition makes perfect. Every time you get upset, conflicted, or a button gets pushed, you've got to stop, you get really present, you've got to breathe and relax as much as you can.

Then step back with your awareness. This is the revolutionary practice. It's the subtitle of my book. You've got to step back with your awareness, but still be very present in your

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body. Step back with your awareness and see that you're not your story. Step out of your story. You've got a story between your ears that's causing, that's the reason behind, the upset, the suffering, the conflict. There's always a story behind every emotional contraction.

When you see you're not your story, you can tell yourself, "I'm not my story." You're going to make an affirmation like that. That helps, a belief that helps undo the whole realm of beliefs. It's the one belief that's true because it is true. We're not our stories. We have stories; we're not our stories. This practice of stepping back out of the story, seeing that you were caught up in a story for a moment helps get you a little bit freer, and brings a little more clarity.

Then you can approach whatever is causing the upset, the situation, with fresh eyes. That's the practice. It's simply stopping, being present, stepping back with your awareness, realizing you're telling yourself a story of some kind, and realizing you're not your story.

JANET ATTWOOD: Can you just share with everyone what you mean by 'story'?

JIM DREAVAR: A story is anything between the ears that we tell ourselves. A story is any aggregation of thoughts that exists between our ears like: "I'm no good," "This is a threatening situation," "I feel guilty because that person's looking at me the wrong way," "I feel judged by that person." Those are the stories we tell ourselves.

JANET ATTWOOD: The practice that you just gave us, how is that effective, and how is it practical in everyday life?

JIM DREAVAR: It's the most practical practice that we know of. The whole goal, the idea, of spiritual work, of course, is to be free. People are moving toward freedom and to discovering the love inside them, discovering that they are love. Their true nature is love itself. We are loved by the Universe. That's the great spiritual discovery that people who are awake have realized.

Their very nature is love. We use the practice, as I said, whenever we have conflicts, upset, suffering. You do it again and again and again, and you finally begin to realize, "I'm not my story. I can't find a thought anywhere." Thoughts are relatively real; they're brief ephemeral flashes, and we use them, of course, to create with and communicate with, but you can't actually find a thought anywhere.

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JANET ATTWOOD: Can you tell us a little about your story and how you came to the realization that you're not your story, the story between your ears?

JIM DREAVER: Yes, right. I had an experience with enlightenment when I was 29. I woke up one morning, and I talk about it in the book, at the end of the book in the appendix of my story. It was so liberating that I realized that I want to live in that awareness, with that awareness, all the time, so I spent the next 18 years by learning how to do that. I studied with different teachers. I was really into J. Krishnamurti for many years. Then I met, in Northern California, a man named Jean Klein.

He was an Advaita Master, and Advaita was kind of a non-dual philosophy in Vedanta, and he realized his true nature. He was free. I spent the next 11 years just going to a few talks every Spring when he was coming to France, and do a workshop and private sessions. Gradually, I saw, I began to realize the truth of what he was saying. Identification with names and forms in our minds prevent us from experiencing reality, that prevent us from experiencing our true nature.

The freer we get of the world between our ears, as I call it, the world inside our heads, the less identified with that we are, the more established we are in our true nature, which is beingness, which is presence, which is clarity, which is wisdom, which is love.

JANET ATTWOOD: Jim, one of the things that you just said was that love is what we are. What does that mean? It's such an overused statement.

JIM DREAVER: When you get quiet, still, relaxed, very present, you're in the moment, just here, now. If anybody's had this experience, it's a feeling of wellbeing, of being in the flow, of being perfectly content. That's when you realize, "Wow! There's nothing missing." That's the experience of oneness, being one with life. When you feel that oneness with life, it expresses through the human heart as love, so when you act, you act in a way that is loving.

The key to experiencing love, an unconditional love, is to experience the oneness first. Oneness translates naturally and effortlessly into love in our actions, and they're always unconditional, because we just love unconditionally. We love unconditionally because there are no conditions on our love. Our love doesn't depend on anything. It doesn't depend on any belief, on any idea.

JANET ATTWOOD: What is the barrier to the discovery of the love that we are?

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JIM DREAVAR: The main barrier is the belief and identification with this idea of ‘me, myself, and my story,’ ‘I.’ As long as we identify with the story between our ears—the ‘me’ story, the ‘I’ story, our personal history—we can never love unconditionally. We can never truly love. We can love our family, we can love our wife or husband or a family member, but then when the person does something wrong or disappoints us, the love can often turn into something else, because we’re still identified with the story, the world between our ears.

The main barrier is this world between our ears that we’ve built into something real, that we think is real. People, until they wake up, walk around believing that there’s really somebody living inside them. They really believe that there’s this person inside them that’s separate from their body that will go somewhere after death, which is why people are often concerned about death or freaked out about the idea of dying, because they wonder what’s going to happen to them.

When we awaken to our true nature we realize that who we are doesn’t die because our true nature is consciousness, its presence, and consciousness is always present somewhere in some form.

JANET ATTWOOD: Yes. I was reading in your book, and one of the things you were talking about is that we’re not taught that we are one. We’re taught that we’re separate. Why do you think that is? It’s not a new thought that we’re having here, right? Yet, we’re not taught, even now in schools, except for some schools, like the Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, where they are taught that they’re one, but very rarely. Why do you think that is?

JIM DREAVAR: Because people, I think, don’t know where else to look. They don’t look within, basically. You’ve got to really look within and find out the truth of your own being, and most people don’t want to do the work of looking within. I think that’s partly it. They’re just fed the cultural and religious beliefs, social beliefs that their parents had. A little kid born in Pakistan is raised Islamic, someone born in Israel is raised Jewish, and someone born in this country is raised Christian, maybe.

They’re all stories. All religions are just stories. They may be beautiful stories, and they are beautiful stories. They’re very noble and idealistic stories, but still, they’re just stories. We’re not our stories. We are the consciousness, the awareness, that gives rise to the stories. I have a quote in my book from Anne Forest, a theologian, who calls us human beings ‘homo narrativus,’ storytelling man. That is true. We live by stories. We all have stories. I have stories, but we’re not our stories.

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What we are, fundamentally, is the awareness, the presence, the consciousness that creates the stories. When we know that, then we can use the story, tell the story, share the story, and learn from the story, but we do so in freedom without fear. When we're attached to a story of some kind, when our identity is hooked up with a story, the fear then; because if the story starts to change, we're very identified with our family, and then a family member dies, we plunge into despair and misery because we can't live without that person.

There's this huge adjustment process we have to make. The more awake we are to our true nature, as awareness, as that which gives rise or birth to the stories, the more in the flow we are, of course. When someone close to us dies, for example, we grieve them because grief is part of the natural process that's honoring the story that we shared together. It's a very natural, authentic grief, which has its season; it passes, and we come back to the present.

JANET ATTWOOD: I loved your vision in the beginning of your book of humanity awakened to their own inner freedom. I loved that very first part, one of the very first things you read is your vision of what you have, seeing humanity awakened to their own inner freedom. Do you think that's possible in this lifetime?

JIM DREAVER: In this lifetime? Did you say in this lifetime?

JANET ATTWOOD: I did. That's my story.

JIM DREAVER: It's a nice story and it's a nice ideal, but I don't think it's going to happen for many years actually, probably way beyond my lifetime. If enough of us work toward this, we'll see it happening more quickly. You're working toward this, and our listeners are working toward this in their own lives and in their own ways, so this is good. Calls like this are good.

JANET ATTWOOD: How does the world between our ears, as you say, create our emotional reality?

JIM DREAVER: Yes, that's a good question because all contracted emotion is fueled by a story of some kind. I was talking with a therapist friend the other day; he's a guy of about 55. He was recently in a relationship that broke up. He was telling me how sad he was and upset at the breakup. I said to him, "What's the story behind it?" He said, "There's no story. It's just raw emotion," he said. I said, "If you dig deeply, you'll find it's the story about that somewhere, which is fueling the upset, fueling the contraction."

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When he thought about it, he had to acknowledge that there was a story there. The wonderful thing is as we get free of our stories, we start feel and experience a natural, emotional harmony. It was in the last workshop I taught at Esalen, which was few months ago. It was called 'Living in the Flow.' That's what happens; as we get free of the stories between our ears, we just experience more increasingly an emotional wellbeing. We always feel good.

We always feel calm, relaxed, at peace, present. That's our basic feeling, with occasional flights into bliss, ecstasy, grief, sadness when, as I said, someone close to us dies, but basically, we'll always feel emotionally calm and stable and clear.

JANET ATTWOOD: That's when we're telling the story of what feels good, isn't it?

JIM DREAVAR: No.

JANET ATTWOOD: Is it, would you say?

JIM DREAVAR: No, no.

JANET ATTWOOD: That's what many people think. This is a question here that someone had written in: Is that when we feel good? Can you explain the difference between that feeling good and this centeredness?

JIM DREAVAR: Yes. Feeling naturally good, our true nature, doesn't depend on any story. It's precisely what happens when we free ourselves from all the stories by seeing they're not real. This path that I teach, the Advaita path, is all about perception. It has nothing to do with practice. The practice is a key of stepping back with your awareness and stepping back out of a story.

Then seeing that you're not the story; the story is not real, so the natural state is when you feel the sense of relaxation and ease, which doesn't depend on any story. You're not telling yourself a story about feeling good. You're just feeling good naturally. Your mind is empty and clear, you're alert, present, and you feel good. That's the natural state.

JANET ATTWOOD: One minute, Jim. Chris, can you mute out? Thank you.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: I am muted out, Janet.

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JANET ATTWOOD: Okay, thank you. Can you mute everyone out for us? What is awakening? Would you say this is awakening, what you just described, what you call awakening, enlightenment, is self-realization?

JIM DREAVER: Yes. To awaken is to realize that even the storyteller, the 'I,' the 'me,' there's a fiction in this. We still have an 'I,' a 'me.' We still have an ego, but now you realize that you're none of those. You're the awareness that creates the 'I,' the ego, the 'me,' the storyteller, and that's enlightenment, that's awakening, that's self-realization.

JANET ATTWOOD: Is there a difference between an Advaita's viewpoint on self-realization and say, for instance, a spiritual practice where you use a mantra, and they say you eventually reach that state of enlightenment? Would you say there's any difference?

JIM DREAVER: No, because you finally realize that your true nature is present-time awareness. You're aware of this awareness here and now. You know yourself as that, so whether you're a Zen monk, a TMer, or a Buddhist, realization is the same for all. It's realizing yourself as consciousness, as pure awareness, as a grounded being, the consciousness that gives arise to all the stories, to the body, to the mind, to the personality, knowing yourself as that, that underlying, ever-present background.

From my perspective, it's the same. Enlightenment is enlightenment, is awakening. If sometimes you need to do a practice like a mantra to experience that piece, then you're still not quite there. I'm not knocking the practice, because that may be what a person chooses to do to get in that space of oneness, ultimately, when you see, when you perceive, that the world between our ears is totally unreal. When you see that, that's liberation, that's enlightenment.

That's when the light bulb turns on. "Wow! I'm free. I always have been free." Then you sometimes burst out laughing with that realization, because it's a great blessing to be truly free. You're still here, you still have a mind, you still have your relationships and your job and whatever, and now you're free. I love the Zen saying, "After enlightenment, nothing changes, but everything is somehow different."

JANET ATTWOOD: That's perfect. I love that one. "After enlightenment, everything..." Say that again. "Nothing changes, but somehow everything is different"?

JIM DREAVER: Yes, exactly. "After enlightenment, nothing changes, but everything is somehow different."

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JANET ATTWOOD: That's great. What about passion? Now we're talking about one of my favorite subjects. Thank you so much; it was so wonderful to be with you in Sebastopol during our book signing, so thank you.

JIM DREAYER: It was great meeting you, hearing about your book, and hearing about your success.

JANET ATTWOOD: I have followed you, so to see you sitting in that audience was such a surprise to me. What is an Advaita Master doing here?

JIM DREAYER: Once you realize the truth of your being, you transcend all paths. I use the Advaita path to learn about myself, but ultimately, I've gone beyond it.

JANET ATTWOOD: How does what we love influence who and what we are? Let's talk about that for a minute.

JIM DREAYER: Yes, that's a really good question. Every human being is born with a gift, a talent of some kind, and it's different for every one of us. The freer we get, the more connected we are to our true nature as consciousness, as awareness, as a grounded being, the more we discover what that gift is. It just happens naturally. My gift, my passion, is for teaching, for writing, and sharing the message of awakening.

As more and more people awaken, they won't all do that. People will awaken and discover their real gift is chemistry, science, mathematics, politics, or whatever, but they'll bring that awakened consciousness to whatever they're doing, and they'll have a passion for it because your passion is naturally ignited when you awaken. The more awake you are to the truth of your being, the more passionate and fired up you are about whatever you're interested in.

JANET ATTWOOD: Can I ask you a question about that? That was very interesting what you just said.

JIM DREAYER: Yes.

JANET ATTWOOD: When you're awakened, you're very, very passionate about what it is that you're up to, but there are very passionate people who aren't awakened.

JIM DREAYER: Yes, of course. Yes. I would say that awakening isn't necessarily to live with passion, and there are passionate people who are not awake in the sense that

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they don't see the big picture. I would say that once you awaken, you're always passionate about something. Sure, plenty of people are passionate about their lives and work and their contribution, and they're not awake in the sense that we're talking about. They may be really trapped in some identity of some kind.

JANET ATTWOOD: It would be, also, a very small opening of passion if you're not awakened, a window, wouldn't it? When you're awakened, every moment, if you choose, you would be passionate about every moment, wouldn't you? Passion is just being awake to something great. When you're awake, everything's great. Would you agree?

JIM DREAVER: Right. Exactly. When I first woke up, which was 12 years ago, I had a tendency to just want to be on the mountaintop, like Eckhart Tolle sitting on his park bench. The desire to really teach this and finding the language to teach it didn't happen until much later in me. It's always evolving, the teaching, the exploration. Definitely, for me there's no desire anymore to be on the mountaintop, but I did want that initially, for a while.

When I was on the mountaintop, so to speak, I was happy. I was awake and free, and I didn't particularly want to share it. I just wanted to dwell in bliss by myself. That was the tendency initially, so that was the passion for my own awakening, you might say, but then, in the end, I realized that the world needed this.

JANET ATTWOOD: That's just your own individuality speaking through you, right?

JIM DREAVER: Exactly. We're still individuals. We still have our own will, have our own intention. Will and intention themselves become transformed the more awake we are to the truth, because we realize the old Christian saying, "Thy will, not mine, be done." This is one of the ways in which ambition gets transformed. We become more ambitious. We still have ambition and drive, but ambition is now much larger. Our ambition is now to serve humanity in some way, in whatever small way we can. We're here to serve.

JANET ATTWOOD: Once you awaken, what I just heard you say is that you'll have that desire to somehow serve humanity?

JIM DREAVER: Yes, right, in some way.

JANET ATTWOOD: That is what we're doing here. Is that your belief?

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JIM DREAVER: It's not really a belief. It's just like when you awaken to oneness, which is the essential experience of awakening, when you realize that everything is one, there's all one flow, that humanity is one. Then when you put that into action, that oneness into action, you serve people, you are there for people. You realize that people are in conflict, upset, sad because they don't know themselves.

They're buying into an illusory story between their ears. They think their story is real. That's the fundamental perception that people have; that their stories are real, and they're not real.

JANET ATTWOOD: When someone wakes up, they'll instantly have an impulse to help other people achieve their own inner freedom—Is that what I'm hearing you say?—whether it's in large groups or one-on-one.

JIM DREAVER: Exactly. I know people; I've met some people who are awake and who just share the message of awakening with individual people, other people who, like us, teach groups or speak to groups.

JANET ATTWOOD: What about our deeply held religious stories and beliefs? Do those have to be given up, too?

JIM DREAVER: Yes, we have to see them for what they are. They're just stories. I know this probably sounds heretical to some people—and to many people it will—but I don't think to our callers, because you have to see that these stories have held us enthralled for thousands of years, these religious stories, but they're just stories. No one's story is truer or falsier than another story.

As we awaken more to the truth within us, we get freer naturally, and the stories drop away. We can still honor our religious stories, still go to church or temple or whatever, but we now do it with a difference. We see more of the truth of the religion. It's a wonderful story, but it's not a truth. The truth is what is here now.

JANET ATTWOOD: What happens to our feelings and our emotions as we become more awake or enlightened?

JIM DREAVER: They just flow naturally and beautifully. They just flow. Our feeling and emotional sphere is always one of ease and wellbeing with the occasional slip, as I said earlier, into bliss, ecstasy, sadness or whatever. The emotional state is always one of wellbeing.

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JANET ATTWOOD: Do you never get uptight or angry?

JIM DREAVER: Never. Jean Klein told me about residues. Once we awaken, residues of old ego patterns can still arise because this stuff is stored in our bodies. Awakening kind of happens from the neck up. You suddenly get really clear about everything. The memory, the story, of your personal history is still locked away inside the cells of your body.

Occasionally, the residues of the past ego patterns or reactions or upsets can occur, but as you spend longer and longer in the awakened state, so to speak, those residues happen less and less. For example, a residue of fear. Once I was in the emergency room; it was four years ago. A residue of fear came up because I had to sign a waiver for a procedure that could have resulted in death or a major stroke.

It had a 25% risk factor, so it precipitated a momentary contraction of fear; that was a residue. Then I saw what it was, I relaxed, and I signed the waiver anyway and just came back to my normal way of being, which was being present here and now and going with the flow.

JANET ATTWOOD: Again, it's just their story that they're telling them, just like you were for that instant, right? That, "Oh, I could die."

JIM DREAVER: Right. That was a real threat, and that was why it came out, I'm sure, that fear, the psychologically emotional fear. Fear is based on what might happen to me in this kind of raw, I would say, instinctual fear, that is really not a story. That's based on when your life is threatened. Maybe there's no story there, but yes, that was a case of survival fear.

I think about this as once you wake up to the truth of who you are, then you see these stories and you realize, "I'm not my story." You quickly settle back into a flow, into a relaxed and natural way of being and moving.

JANET ATTWOOD: Let's do this just for a moment, Jim, if you will. Would you walk everyone through? I'm sure there are many people who are listening who fly in planes. You're on a plane, there's heavy-duty turbulence, and there's that fear of, "Oh, my God! I'm going to die!" Walk people through your process right in this moment with that story.

JIM DREAVER: Yes, it a very real one, actually. A friend of mine actually died in plane crash along with 88 other people a number of years ago, so it's a very real thing.

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Whenever I actually flew, after she died, I was very aware of her dying in the plane crash. When you fly in a plane, of course, you take your life in your hands to some degree. It doesn't happen very often, but crashes do happen.

When the turbulence occurs, and you feel fear rising, just get yourself very present. You've got to very, very present. You've got to be fully, totally here, more present than you've ever been. Step back with your awareness, step back just slightly behind and above your head. Look at the story you're telling yourself. You're not your story; you're the one who's looking at the story.

You can tell yourself any story, but I'm not my story. Breathe and relax and be very present. Wait until the turbulence passes, as it probably will. That's a simple practice of stepping back, getting really present, seeing that you're not your story, about the plane crashing. You're not any story; you are the awareness, the timeless presence, the consciousness, the luminous consciousness who looks at the stories.

You've got to keep reminding yourself of that until one day it becomes a reality and you realize, "Wow! I am that. I am that luminous consciousness. That is my true nature. That is the true nature of every human being on earth. Every living thing on earth has this true nature of pure consciousness." Keep reminding yourself of that and eventually it'll become reality for you. Then you can go out and share your gifts with others in whatever way you're moved to do that.

You look at animals; animals are naturally in the present state. There's no story behind animals. They're just present and there and alert. We can learn a lot from just watching animals about our true nature, because the consciousness that looks through the animal's eyes is the same consciousness that looks through our eyes, who we are, that consciousness.

JANET ATTWOOD: When you are in a plane—and you were just saying that you had a friend who died a few years earlier—now once you're awakened, you don't need to use your practice, because you already are present. You use that practice to remind yourself that it's all a story, or do you still do it?

JIM DREAVER: Exactly. Once you're free, once you're fully awake, then people can experience the turbulence of the plane. You just go with it. If you crash, you die. You realize, "That's my time." I know my self of consciousness now, and I have no fear. That's the chief characteristic of enlightenment, awakening, or self-realization. It's a state of fearlessness. We truly have no fear.

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We may feel a residual and instinctual fear, a physical fear of dying, but it's very brief. We're truly surrendered to what is. Another way of saying what the state of awakening is, is truly surrendering and accepting what is. We don't want to die in a plane crash, but if that's our fate, then that's our fate.

JANET ATTWOOD: I love what you said earlier, that it's a practice. For everyone listening, it's a practice. It's a practice that takes continuously becoming a conscious creator and setting the intention—wouldn't you say, Jim?—of "All right. Now whenever I see myself in my story, I'm going to step back and practice this, so that eventually there are no, as you call them, residue experiences, and that you're just tapped in.

JIM DREAVAR: Beautifully said, Janet. It's practice, yet it took me 20 years to wake up, so it took me a long time really. I'm almost 61 now, but when I look back, it wasn't such a long time, actually. It took 20 years or so of practicing. It didn't really start until I met Jean Klein and he showed me the way, proved the way for me. He taught the practice of stepping back with our awareness. I learned that from him.

JANET ATTWOOD: Do you think that everyone needs a teacher until they no longer have that dual experience going on?

JIM DREAVAR: Yes, it certainly helps. If you can have a personal guide, that's the greatest thing because it's that the person can actually guide you along the way, kind of encourage you, and let you know you're on the right path. I was fortunate to have Jean Klein as a personal guide. Yes, very much so. If other people don't have a personal guide, they get some books, audio tapes, or whatever.

JANET ATTWOOD: Why would you need a personal guide if all you have to do is practice this process?

JIM DREAVAR: You don't. That's the whole idea. That's why I published my book, *End Your Story, Begin Your Life*, so that people who couldn't or may never work with you personally could get it from the book. My book, if you really absorb it and read the book, you can do it on your own. That's the whole idea of writing a book.

JANET ATTWOOD: I love your title: *End Your Story, Begin Your Life* because that's really the beginning, isn't it? How do our actions and behaviors change once we step into that space of freedom, eternal freedom?

JIM DREAVAR: That's great. You have a change, and it's a subtle thing, but basically freedom from conflict, freedom from suffering. In a way it's eating our power

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because in this world cause and effect primarily refers to negative effects, so we're not creating any negative effects in the world anymore, where everything we do, everything we say, is positive in the sense that it supports the general wellbeing, the communal wellbeing. That's a beautiful thing when there are more and more of us who are acting in a way that's truly benevolent, truly good.

JANET ATTWOOD: I would say that for everyone listening, let's set the collective intention for our awakened consciousness and humanity awakening to their inner freedom, as is in the beginning of Jim's book where he shares his vision. Jim, this has been wonderful. We're going to bring Chris on in a minute to just bring up some of the points that we've covered and give it another flavor. Chris, are you with us?

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Yes. I think I'm on. Janet, can you hear me?

JANET ATTWOOD: Yes, we can hear you fine.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Good.

JANET ATTWOOD: That was funny.

JIM DREAVAR: I can hear you.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Sorry about that.

JANET ATTWOOD: That's okay. I love that!

CHRIS ATTWOOD: I pushed the wrong button. Jim, what a treat to be with you this morning. Thank you so much for sharing with us both this vision and this picture of how close and easily accessible is freedom from conflict, freedom from suffering. Jim began today by sharing with us this simple practice that he teaches and presents in his book, *End Your Story, Begin Your Life*.

He said that it begins by noticing, paying attention when you get upset, when your buttons get pushed, when you're in conflict. Then stop and get completely present. Breathe, relax as much as you can, and then step back with your awareness and notice that you are not your story, that there is a story, there are thoughts that are going on, a story that's going on between your ears that's causing this upset or this suffering.

He said there's always a story behind every emotional contraction, so when you step back, when you allow yourself to step back and notice that you are that awareness which

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is observing what is going on, and seeing that the story is not who you are, he said just tell yourself you are not the story. He said this is the one belief that is true. The practice is stepping back from it and seeing that you have been caught up in the story.

Doing that brings a little more clarity, more freedom, with ongoing continued practice. Then one increasingly identifies with the truth of who you are, which is that pure awareness, pure consciousness beyond any story. He described what he means by stories as anything that we tell ourselves, anything that's going on between our ears. It's any aggregation of thoughts that represents things that we're saying: "I'm no good, I'm judged by others, I can't do it," or any of these things.

Or, judging others, I would guess Jim would also say: "They're no good, They're doing the wrong thing," or "They shouldn't be doing that." All of these are also stories. He said that idea, the whole purpose, of spiritual work is to be free, to discover the love that's inside oneself. Awakening or realization is realizing that we are loved by the universe, by all that is, and all that is is nothing but that love.

That's the great spiritual discovery of people who are realized, he said. He said that the practice that he described is something that we can use whenever we're upset, whenever we're in conflict. He described how he came to this is that he had an experience of enlightenment when he was 29, and in the appendix to his book, he describes that story. He said he spent many years with J. Krishnamurti, and then he met a man named Jean Klein, an Advaita, or non-dual, Master.

He spent 11 years learning from Jean. Jean was the one who first introduced him to this concept of stepping back from the story, noticing, "I am not my story." He said that he came to realize that the names and forms in our minds are what are preventing us from experiencing reality, from experiencing our true nature. The freer that we get from this world that's going on between our ears, the more established we are in clarity, in presence, in wisdom, and in love.

Janet asked him, "What do you mean by love in this context?" He said that when you get quiet and still, when you're fully relaxed and present, here, now in this moment, what you notice is a feeling of wellbeing, and it's a feeling of being in the flow, utterly and completely content. It's in that that you realize there is nothing at all missing. That's the experience of oneness, of being completely one and connected with all life.

When you feel that, then it expresses through the human heart as what we call love. The key to experiencing love is to first experience that state of oneness. Then we step into the experience of love that is unconditional. That love doesn't depend on anything. It

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doesn't depend on any belief; it doesn't depend on any idea. Janet asked him, "What is the barrier to discovering this love if that is what we really are? What is it that prevents us from doing that?"

He said that the primary barrier is beliefs, the identification of 'me,' of 'myself,' and of 'my story,' of my story about myself and my life, this concept of 'I.' As long as we identify with the story that's going on between our ears, we can never love unconditionally. We can love our family, we can love people who may be dear to us, but as soon as someone, even someone who we love, does something we think is wrong, that they shouldn't be doing, or that we feel is betraying or hurtful to us, then the love turns into something else.

This is not that unconditional love, which is in that state of fully awakened consciousness. He said until people wake up, they believe there really is someone inside them who is going to go somewhere after death, after the body dies, that they're going to go somewhere. When we awaken to our true nature, what we realize is who we are doesn't die.

We are that consciousness, that presence, which is always present somewhere in one form or another. Jim was saying that people don't know where else to look. The place to look is to look within to find the truth of our own being.

JIM DREAVER: Are you there?

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Yes, can you hear me?

JANET ATTWOOD: Chris, we can hear you fine. Keep going.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: He said we have to look within to feel the truth, the find the truth of our own being. Most people, they have cultural or religious beliefs that they learned from their parents, but these are all just stories. The religions that we grow up with are just stories. They may be beautiful stories, but they're still stories, and we are not our stories. We are the consciousness that gives rise to these stories.

Our life is expressed through these stories, and yet, awakening realization is the stepping back from and recognizing ourselves as not the stories that we have created. Fundamentally, we are that awareness, that consciousness that is creating these stories, and the more we awaken to our true nature, the more we find ourselves in the flow of this life. It's not that when someone close to us dies we don't grieve. We grieve them because grieving is part of honoring that story.

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Then we come back to the reality of who we really and truly are. Jim went on to share with us that in that awakened state, that awakened state is a feeling of naturally feeling good, of being in a state of wellbeing that doesn't depend on any story. It's not about the practice. Janet asked him if there was a different state of enlightenment for people who may be practicing meditation or using some other practice, and he said, "No, enlightenment is enlightenment. Realization is realization."

The practice of meditation is simply a mechanism, a means, to step back to that place free of the story. Whether we practice or don't practice meditation, it all comes to the same thing. It comes to this recognition that I am that state of being, which is beyond all stories. He shared with us this beautiful Zen saying that after enlightenment nothing changes, but everything is somehow different.

I love that, so I'm going to say it again. After enlightenment, nothing changes, but everything is somehow different. Then Jim talked about the subject that is so dear to Janet and me, which is passion. Janet asked, "What about passion? Does one still have passion when one is in that realized state?" He said that once you realize the truth of your being, you transcend all paths, yet you find yourself connected to the deepest part of your own nature.

He said every human being is born with a gift of some kind, and the freer we get, the more we know ourselves to be that state of consciousness, true being, that more we discover our true gift in this form as a human being. As more and more people awaken, he said as he awakened in his awakening in the beginning, his inclination was just to sit on the mountaintop, to simply be in that state of blissful beingness.

Yet, then he saw that the desire began to arise to teach this and to be able to share it. In that, then he found himself completely caught up in this passion or experiencing this passion to share the knowledge, which has brought freedom for himself. What he said is that it's not necessarily the case that as people awaken they will necessarily want to be teachers or to share that with others.

As people awaken, some may awaken to their love for mathematics, for science, or for some other direction. The truth of realization, or what he shared with us in terms of this experience of enlightenment or awakening is that we feel passionate in every moment. We feel excited in every moment. We feel turned on in every moment because we're connected to that, which gives rise to that state of fullness, that state of complete connectedness to life.

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He said, also, that it's certainly not necessary for one to be awakened in order to feel passionate, but that passion will come and go, that passion will not be a passion that is fully present in every moment. It's like a taste of the full experience of awakening. The one thing he said is that as one awakens, that when you're awakened to oneness, to this state of one flow, humanity as one, then as that becomes expressed in action, you feel yourself naturally drawn to serve others.

You're there to serve, and you realize that it's not about achieving this or that or the other thing, but it's allowing what's coming up in this moment to be there and to be expressed. He said that it's more this experience of 'not my will, but thy will, be done.' There is, of course, much more, but just coming back to this idea of someone on a plane and there was turbulence, he said this is how you would practice when that turbulence occurs and you feel some fear arising inside.

Consciously become fully present, completely here in that moment, more than ever before, and then with your awareness, step back and see yourself as separate from this body, this mind, this plane, and the possibility that something could happen, which is just the story of that moment. Then wait until this turbulence passes. Keep seeing that you are not your story; you are the conscious presence who looks at the story. Janet, I hope that that's a reasonable summary. Jim has shared with us this morning, really, the experience and expression of real fulfillment in life.

JANET ATTWOOD: That was really beautiful. Thank you, Chris. Jim, thank you so much for honoring us this morning with your presence and your great knowledge. For those of you who would like to hear more from Jim, go to www.JimDreaver.com. His latest book, just published, is *End Your Story, Begin Your Life*, which is available as an ebook at www.EndYourStory.com.

He's also going to be in Boulder on Friday, November 30th, and giving an all-day intensive that Saturday following. For more information on Jim's programs, visit the schedule section on his website. On December 20th, we'll have the wonderful Guru Singh, a great Kundalini Master, author, composer, and musician who will share with us his knowledge.

We thank you, as we always thank you, for joining us on this wonderful Dialogues with The Masters. What a great way to start the day with so much wonderful knowledge. We just wish for everyone that you just have a wonderful, wonderful conscious day, staying awake to what is. Thank you again. Chris, do you want to open it up, and we can say goodbye. Goodbye, everyone. Thank you so much. Bye-bye.

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CHRIS ATTWOOD: Bye-bye.