



Steph: Hi, Tom, and welcome to the show.

Tom: Hi, it's great to be here. Thanks for having me on.

Steph: I'm so excited to share your story. It's one I've heard myself by tuning into other podcasts where you've been interviewed. So, I'd love for you to share with me and our listeners, what your personal background is, and certainly what has led you to where you are today.

Tom: Yeah, sure, more than happy to. I started out as a broker in finance, I was, gosh, been backpacking around the world after finishing high school, and I took a gap year which was picking apples in orchards in Western Sydney and then eventually buying a plane ticket and just hitting the road across America and Europe. And then I came back and I had a few months to fill in before going to university and doing a degree in journalism. And I thought, "You know what? I'll just apply to a bunch of jobs in the paper." That was the old days when we used to have the Saturday Morning Herald and you'd fill in, or you'd get this massive employment section. And so, what happened was, I managed to land by default a job on this massive trading room floor.

They were looking for some new employees for this new section they were opening up. And I didn't tell them that I was going to go to university in a few months time, I just thought, I'll just make some money and then go on leave, which probably wasn't morally the right thing to do. But in the end, what happened was, when my trial came around after a few months, they increased my salary from the sort of test period to being an employee and it was quite a massive jump. And I thought, "Wow, this is exciting." And I just got swept along by the excitement of what the position was on this very hectic, crazy adrenaline rush trading room floor. And that was the start of this, what ended up being a 26-year career in finance, of all things.

But, in the early days of that career, it was late 80s, early 90s. It was actually the same year. I started in 1987, it was the same year that Jordan Belfort started his career, who was The Wolf of Wall Street. He was 22 and I was 19, and it was actually the year, Wall Street, the film, came out, which was Gordon Gekko and Bud Fox. And it was when the markets were crazy, I mean, money was fast and everything was very... Gosh, I think that quote summed it up in Wall Street greed is good. It was very much the theme of the day of those days. And so, the very much a me period of time, and I just got so pulled into that whole thing. But before long, I ended up

having a six-figure salary, a very fast sports car given to me by the company as a perk and given a corporate Amex card and just told to go out and win clients' business.

And a big part of that culture back then, and I think it's changed a bit from what I'm hearing, but a big part of the culture back then was a lot of drugs and drinking and partying and really reckless abandon with no rules. There was no HR and no, "This is right, this is wrong," in the workplace. It was like the Wild West of finance world. So, this was all exciting and great fun. But what happened for me was, I started to get a lot of the symptoms of wear and tear on my nervous system, a lot of insomnia, some pretty severe anxiety. And this kept exacerbating. I didn't really do anything but just keep doing the same thing over and over again, and eventually, this culminated into a full-blown meltdown where, a few years into that career, I suffered really extreme panic attacks and depression and agoraphobia. I had to leave my job and really severe anxiety.

And so, at that point, I was facing medication, seeing psychiatrists, seeing doctors, put on suicide watch at the local clinic. And it was a really, really dark time in my life. I was really struggling with my addiction with a dark sense of distaste about who I was, or self-loathing, and just not knowing how to find my way out of that mess. And so, it was then that maybe divine intervention, I'm not sure, but I found meditation. And that was really quite a significant turning point in my life. And it's before it was mainstream, it was really quite unknown as far as in the Western world. I mean, people knew about it, but no one was really practicing that. Yoga was just starting. And I really was quite affected by my meditation practice.

It was like everything that I was looking for in all the other things I was addicted to, I started to find in this deep inner peace through that transcendent experience. It was really quite profound. And so, I just kept doing my meditation and then went back to work and did another 16 years in that career and eventually left to teach meditation and share that message of the power of its effect on us with the world through multiple different means. So, that's it in a nutshell, I guess.

Steph: Yeah, it's a huge story and one I really respect that you have shared because I'm sure you're not alone with whether it's a finance-based career or not. The pressures that a lot of people have in this day and age, means they really need something else, something to support their choice of career and the balls that they juggle on a day-to-day basis. And like you said, back when you found meditation, it certainly wasn't common in the Western world. And even though it's more of a household conversation now, I'd love to get your thoughts on whether people truly understand the benefits. Because I think that even though the research is there, and the literature shows us how powerful it is, there's still a lot of, whether it's barriers or just maybe disbelief around the importance of implementing a daily practice. What's your experience? Or are you often preaching to the choir?

Tom: No, I do a lot of corporates and there's a lot of non-choir in a lot of places that I go to, schools, corporates and places like that. So, look, it really comes down to basic science and biology. And if we look at the body, it has two operating systems. Unlike our phone, which has one, we have two. One is the sympathetic nervous system, and one is the parasympathetic nervous system. And they're both part of our natural design for survival and healing. And so, the sympathetic, think of as for

stress and as for sympathetic. The sympathetic nervous system is part of the design to protect us in dangerous situations. And a number of things will happen when we're in that sympathetic nervous system response, that's the stress response.

And that is, physiologically, our blood start to coagulate, breathing starts to change, our blood sugar levels change, we start storing fat cells, red and white blood cell count starts changing, all of these things are happening quite dynamically on a physiological level to protect us from a dangerous situation. Chemically, we start to see huge levels of cortisol, norepinephrine and adrenaline pumping through our veins, and we shut down production of melatonin, serotonin and oxytocin, the by-chemicals to help us sleep, feel happy and feel love. All of that, again, to protect us from danger. Your body's primary objective, in a precarious situation, is to survive. It will trump anything else we're doing, whether we like it or not. If the body feels it's facing danger, it will simply switch on all of this functionality.

Brain functionality starts to change. Rather than being creative, intuitive, adaptable, and thinking about wise and thoughtful contemplative intelligent things, we start to get very primal in our thinking and start to operate from reptilian part of the brain, which is really very basic survival mode. So, we're really cramping down and constricting our ability to be creative and successful in life, which is why some of the top companies in the world are embracing meditation for their staff. When we go into the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the peace response, which is a very specific design in the body to actually heal from the intensity of what just happened in that sympathetic nervous system, then all of that completely reverses itself. Everything just switches from one side to the other side, and everything just reverses.

So, there's no more cortisol, adrenaline, norepinephrine. We stop producing melatonin and serotonin and oxytocin. I'll be in a big audience of 500 staff, which I was at recently, the fairly large company as I shared Qantas and doing a big guided meditation there. And very quickly, at least two-thirds of that audience within four minutes of me taking them through a meditation and literally seeing their heads nodding down, they're falling asleep, and feeling really tired, and that's because their body, very quickly, switched into the parasympathetic and all those by-chemicals are changing. And all of physiological changes happen, all the brain activation starts happening as well. So, it's just pure science.

And why meditation is so effective at doing that is because it's an ancient technique that was cognized or created for two specific purposes. One is to rejuvenate and heal the body, and the second one is to access a level of ourselves that we don't normally access, that's not in the very gross level of reality, which is where we're normally functioning in. That's the world of form.

Steph: Yeah, totally. I mean, you've already answered the question so succinctly, but I mean, it is about acknowledging the difference between that sympathetic overdrive or that sympathetic dominance, and unfortunately, where a lot of us spend most of our lives. So, for you and your personal story, meditation was obviously that switch to start to bring you back in, into that peace state. What was the direct result on your physical and certainly any symptoms that you were experiencing, and then, of course, your mental health?

Tom: It was quite dramatic really for me, just the first few weeks was, the main thing I noticed, in a big way, which is what I see with corporates when I'm teaching them in a massive room with bright fluorescent lights and air conditioning and 400 people and 500 people in the room, is that you can go into a restful state very quickly. And that's, for me, being able to sleep again was just huge, to overcome the insomnia that was rippling through my life and wrecking my life was very powerful. Then, because you're no longer in that stress response, which means your body's lacking the production of serotonin and oxytocin, so, now, you're in the peace response, and that means that you're starting to feel just lighter and happier.

Interestingly, what happens is, when you're coming from this empty state of lack and hunger for insatiable desires, you start to develop addictions. But when you start to feel naturally more fulfilled within your own self because you've got more serotonin in your blood, then, interestingly, you just don't have the same cravings that you had before. So, when I work with people generally with addictions is that I don't really have too much attention on the addiction at all, that's not the issue, it's the underlying state of lack that's driving the addiction, and that's where I work with through meditation is getting their body to start to produce more of the serotonin and oxytocin so they feel innately fulfilled and those aches and desires and hunger start to just melt away, and they feel more sustained in themselves.

So, those were some of the ones that I noticed in my life quite significantly. And I was back at work in that chair, doing the same job for, as I said, 16 more years. So, I generally come from the angle that there are no stressful situations in life, what we have are stress response is to situations determined by the subjective viewpoint of the person that's going into that situation.

Steph: Yeah, absolutely. I totally agree. And I think, again, a really important conversation to have. And it's just amazing to see the transformation, I'd love to then hear your thoughts on what you've observed in the last maybe five or so years around, certainly what the literature looks like, but how we're seeing so much more acceptance of this. What is it, do you think, that's really making people finally understand the importance of that daily commitment?

Tom: It's interesting, isn't it? That this has been around for close to 10,000 years, and it's only just now that we're starting to embrace it. And that's what really blew me away when I found it. I was like, "Why is the world not doing this? This is crazy." And so, that's why I started doing the things that I do with the film and the book and The Stillness Project. But, in the last few years, we really just lean so much on science as some form of validation. We really come down to our various cerebral intellectual minds that we need some sort of validation, rather than just pure acceptance that people are being changed by it, we need to have a science behind why people are being changed by it. So, it's taken us quite a long time to start to collate that because it's expensive to do science studies.

And spiritual communities didn't really want to put money into that, they just knew that it worked and that's why they kept doing it. In fact, I remember doing a retreat in Maui, and I had one of the American students came out of the sessions like, "Holy shit, this stuff really works." It's been around for thousands of years, there's a reason for it. So, for most of us, that's personal experience, but now we've got science and that's what really kicks it along in a big way into the mainstream that

you can just simply look at the science, look at the data, and go, "Oh, that makes sense. Now I know why it's so effective." And so, that's when it starts to get embraced by companies and organisations because they can see some quantifiable effect of it.

Steph: I know. It's about the ROI.

Tom: Yeah, it's about the ROI, exactly. "Oh, we're going to make money out of this? Holy shit, we should do it." So, I think it's partly because of that, because you can see, I mean, there was a great study done by PWC on mental health in Australia. And what came out of that was that poor mental health in the workplace is costing Australian business \$11 billion a year. And that's just through sick leave, poor productivity skills, poor relationship, poor response rates, poor creativity. So, it's starting to get the numbers into it, which really starts to affect business, and they're starting to see. But that it's working with the science in the studies but also with something else, and that's a current urge and need to make changes because we're on a very destructive pathway right now that really severely needs to see something changed because we're seeing exponential levels of information overload, that, I had a meeting with a large company that is a very household name the other day, and I asked them about the systems that they have in place for communication with their staff and information flow.

And it was just insane what they're expecting their staff to do with it. They're contacting their staff through WhatsApp, through internal messaging systems, through email, there was like four or five different messaging platforms that they're sending this barrage of information to their staff that they're having to be across all the time. And in amongst that, they've got to do their work, and they've got to do their meetings. And so, they're stretched to the limit. And this is while they're in the workplace, because most of them are doing work before they get to work, and most of them are doing work after they leave their work. So, we're at a point now where demands on our nervous system and on our physiology is stretched to a limit where we're going to see huge levels of decay and deterioration in the fabric of our society if we don't start making some changes.

Steph: Absolutely. And it's so good that companies are identifying this, whether it is because they've looked at the bottom line or not, it is really about supporting our staff, rather than just having that ridiculous, or those ridiculous expectations, which ends up, for a lot of people, looking like what your experience is, completely burnt out and unable to work. So then, there's no point, is there? Again, the research is a starting point for a lot of people that are very data-driven to finally understand how sitting still could help your health. But, I just love what you're doing. Tell us more about your upcoming film, and certainly what you've created off the back of that.

Tom: I was really passionate about getting this message of the power of meditation into people's lives. It literally just helped me dissolve and melt away depression, anxiety, panic attacks. And don't get me wrong, I still get some sensations in the body along the way over the years of, when there's intense times. So, it's not like I'm completely immune to the world, but it certainly helps those extreme sort of situations. And so, I really wanted to convey this, and this was through doing online programs, and speaking, and stuff like that. But, hot off the back of The Secret which showcased

the power of bringing an esoteric subject matter like the law of attraction into the households of the world. I was like, "Wow, we could do that with meditation."

So, I really got inspired to create a film around the power of meditation on transforming people's lives. And I didn't want to do it through a very information-packed documentary that just had lots of knowledge and lots of information with many lab coats talking about science, I really wanted to show it through storytelling. We wanted to make a very impacting and moving experience that took us through a journey and an immersion in people's lives and showcased that it doesn't exclude anyone. We have six very different stories that all have very different backgrounds and all have very different crises in them. And then they come out through the other side with meditation.

We wanted to be quite experiential, I don't want to give too much away, but there're some really unique experiences in the film that haven't been done in other films before. So, that was something that we want to start it out with was, from the onset, was to have that in the film. And so, that was the starting point was get the film out. And then on the back of that, we extracted a book, which is in 15 countries at the moment. And the film and the book are the inspiration for the next step. And then we have to provide the next step, which is the app where they can do meditation and yoga, and listen to some podcasts and audios, and then there's also, hopefully we will have this podcast in the app as well, for people to listen to it. And then there will be also, there's also a master class, which is just getting launched as we speak. And that's a master class, 12-week program on overcoming anxiety and depression.

Steph: Wow, I think that's such a beautiful place to start, because it can be really overwhelming for someone that's new to the space. Certainly, for you, you've got decades of experience now, but I can only imagine that a starting point, especially when sitting still is one of the more challenging things you can do when you're anxious. It's so nice to have that guidance.

Tom: Yeah, and we wanted to make it holistic. So, that masterclass, I put all of my research of 25 years into what sort of things you can do to help reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression. And we look at it from that angle. We don't treat them as your life sentence or something that you're born with, we treat it as a symptom, that's giving you guidance to make some changes. And so, we come from the standpoint in that course that if we make specific changes in lifestyle habits, what we eat, what we drink, whether we're doing yoga, exercise, meditation, it's got a lot of different modalities for change in there and for bringing about that parasympathetic nervous system state so that you will start to basically melt away those symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Steph: Yeah, I love it. And so, with the film, *The Portal*, I love how you've made it that, I guess anecdotal, as well as looking at the literature, because it is really learning from others as to how it's really changed their life, as we have learned from you and your journey. So, what was your big takeaway, if you could share one or two things from the stories that you learnt while you were producing the film?

Tom: Well, gosh, I mean, one thing I took away was just how blessed I am. I suffered with anxiety and depression through the years, but when you see what other people

have been through, there's such incredibly intense stories and incredibly difficult childhoods. And I had a really good childhood, I had great parents, I had a great upbringing. Mine was quite self-induced just by the nature of the job and a lot of the lifestyle habits which were indulgent narcissistic drug taking habits. But, it wasn't because I had traumatic childhood and things like that. So, you look at what other people have had to go through, it was just a sense of a gratitude for my own personal journey and experience and how blessed it's been. But also, how challenging some people's lives are, to overcome some of this deep conditioned experiences that they've had in that. Yeah, it's a tough world out there.

Steph: Yeah, absolutely. And it does really give you that perspective. Was there any one story that you could share with us as a little bit of a sneak peek, but also as something that you found quite profound?

Tom: Look, I think, I mean, they're all so amazing. It's hard to single one out because they're all so different, but all so amazing. I mean, Due (pronounced Zway) a classic example of an incredibly intense childhood trauma. Her story in the books got a lot of depth, more depth in the film, but incredible childhood trauma before she's even two years old. And then, obviously, going through, growing up in the ghetto, and seeing people shot, and having to clean horrible dead body parts out of the restaurant that she worked in. And then, dealing with her Harvard journey. But then to come out of that and be a meditation teacher, and to be a voice of calm and clarity. She's got a great business called Calm Clarity. And so, this is what is really what we wanted to showcase, the power of meditation, to clean the slate of all of that past experience and trauma, and to almost build your life in anew.

And we have this incredible capacity for alchemy, we have this incredible capacity for transformation, every single one of us, regardless of our background. And this is what we wanted to showcase, is that, a lot of us get so pulled into our story, and our drama, and our life experiences, that it defines us for our entire lives. And what we have to do is break the shackles of the impact of that. We call it in Sanskrit, moksha, M-O-K-S-H-A, which is freedom from the binding effect of life, your life, your experiences, and to walk clearly and freely in life not affected and bound by those past experiences. And meditation is just one of the very effective and powerful devices or tools that we can use for that to happen.

It's very difficult to do that on our own, without using some form of assistance or tool. And as much as therapy is good, I'm not sure it's enough alone. And meditation might not be enough alone either. I think it's a very powerful tool that works well with other modalities, to break free of that conditioning. So, that's a big story I felt was conveyed very well with Due in the film.

Steph: Yeah, so good. What else did you learn along the way, whether it was your own personal journey, or the film, or something that you continue to share with your corporates? I'd love to see or understand your views on maybe what else we can do, or even where to start for someone that's finding it really challenging to commit to a daily practice.

Tom: Okay, there's a lot of questions in there. What the film did for me in a big way was teach me humility. It was a very difficult process. I was full of hubris and spiritual leadism coming into that project. I thought I had it all down pat and had mastered

enlightenment in the world and spirituality. And then I started this project and realised that that was a long way from home, and just how difficult it was to... We had a lot of challenges, it was very difficult and we're not completely free of them either. So, it really brought up things that I needed to see about myself, and that has been one of my greatest teachers, I think, to learn humility and spiritual humility, and acceptance of all paths, and all traditions, and all methods, because they're all diverse and unique.

As we saw in the film, we really wanted to keep the film neutral, and keep a balance, so that it's inclusive of all traditions and all practices. We had some people that were potentially going to invest in the film and they said that they wouldn't because it didn't have enough Buddhism in it. And we're like, "Well, we're not going to promote any particular religion, whatsoever. And so, that's something that we wanted to try and keep that neutral. So, that's what the film taught me. As far as, you've mentioned something about the corporates look, where do they start? I think, the simple act of whatever the devices they use, because there's multitude of ways that we can quiet our mind down, meditation and various forms of meditation are literally the portal, they're the pathway, they're not the destination. That's why it's called the portal, because meditation is the portal.

It's the pathway through from noisiness and identification with the individual, the ego being attracted and pulled and distracted by the world around us. They're going through this portal into silence and stillness, is really essential for us to really embrace and embody and experience the fullness of who we are. Because, until then, we're in this deluded egotistical state. When I say egotistical, I don't mean, hey, I'm better than everyone else, what I mean is the identification with the ego, which is a very confused state, because if someone says, "You're amazing." You feel amazing. If someone says, "You're a horrible person," then you start thinking you're a horrible person. So, the ego is very confused and very easily influenced by feedback.

But, when we transcend that and start to experience a deeper level of knowingness about ourselves, which is this pure consciousness or pure awareness, that doesn't get influenced by the world around it and feedback, it just is what it is. It's just pure presence and just observation and silence and bliss, and unconditional love. And so, until we experience that aspect of ourselves, we're really walking through life in a substandard experience of who we are. It's a very mediocre experience. And it's the problem that we're currently facing on the world in the moment is that we're just, we just don't have enough awakened experiences on the planet, and that's what I'm inspired to bring to the world.

Steph: Wow, yeah, I think it's a challenging space. I know you've probably been asked the question before, but what are your thoughts on how social media is influencing that lack of awakened experience? And any tips on how you would navigate that?

Tom: Yeah, it's a great question, is that, everything's got polarity, your family life will have polarity. It's got incredible benefits and incredible highs and pleasure in it, and it's also got a polarity of incredible challenges in it. And scarring and all sorts of things, and your job, and your marriage, and money, everything has this sort of polarity playing out. And then social media is the same. Social media is a great platform for conveying message, here I am talking to you in a very different location, and you'll



put that up onto a platform and people around the world will be able to hear that. So, it has this capacity to unite and connect us, and convey powerful messages that can transform lives.

It is part of the evolutionary shift into a new era of time where we can have an awakened then united society. And I think that social media is one of the components for that to actually prevail and happen. At the same time, the negative aspect of social media is that it proliferates and accentuates the ego. As soon as we start looking at our Instagram, as soon as we start liking likes, as soon as we start being attracted to the idea that we look good, and we need feedback, and we need more followers, and we need more comments, and we get more comments, and I have more than that person, or I have less than that person. So, what it does, it really accentuates our egotistical tendencies, and that's why we're seeing extreme levels of anxiety and depression happening in our teenagers today where their egos are very, very vulnerable and sensitive because they haven't quite identified and learnt who they are yet.

And so, most adults haven't either, I'm still trying to work it out myself. But, for teenagers, it's really, really brutally challenging for them. I've got two 17-year-olds, so, we've seen the worst of it now that they've managed to harness the power of social media and not get pulled into it as much. But, certainly, between the years of, I think 13 to 16 is a very vulnerable time for the teenagers of the world and I think we're going to have to walk this one with a lot of tenderness and care.

Steph: What did you share with your children that you thought really helped?

Tom: I mean, it's a difficult one with teenagers because they don't like to be told what they should or shouldn't do. They're in this really interesting time where they're trying to work it out themselves, and they want to work it out themselves, and they need to work it out themselves. And so, a lot of it is about asking them questions, and seeing what they can come up with. And so, "How is that working out for you? How do you feel if you're on your phone till 1:00 in the morning, and you've got to go to school in six hours time, and then you're struggling all day? And how does that feel when you're not getting good grades? How does that feel when you're so stressed because of other people potentially having comments on your social media feed?"

So, just really getting them to do some self-inquiry, and I think that's a really powerful way to get them to start to work some of these things out themselves. My kids don't respond very well to my instructions. I don't know if other parents find the same with teenagers. So, a lot of it's just... and sometimes I can't help but give instruction, because that's, by default, partly the nature of an adult. But, I have to learn over time to somehow let them work it out, but help them to try to work it out themselves.

Steph: I think the questions are a great piece of advice because I see it similarly in being a nutritionist. Like, let's say it could be you, you could be giving your daughter, or your son, or your wife advice, and it's just heard really differently, if it was me talking to them about nutrition. And so, we've got to look at ways that we can approach things differently. So, getting them to understand how they feel when they're staring at a

screen all day or all night is a good question that they could then explore themselves.

Tom: Yeah, and I just think, with nutrition as well, it comes down to the same thing, where we're nourishing their body on just different planes and levels, but it's the same. "Thing is just, do your research. Try this for two weeks, three weeks, and let me know how you feel." And I always come from this angle that there's always this pleasure, pain dynamic. And it's either a little bit of pain first for pleasure, or a little bit of pleasure first for pain. For instance, the pleasure with eating a bowl of ice cream comes first, but the pain will come later. Whereas, going for a jog, instead of the bowl of ice cream might be the pain dynamic first, but then the pleasure will come later. So, this is like, "You're going to play out with this dynamic, anyway. Doing your homework will be a bit of a possible pain dynamic, but then the pleasure will become when you get really good grades."

And you just get to play around with that pleasure, pain dynamic. But if you think you're just going to get pleasure, pleasure, pleasure, pleasure, pleasure, then start to have a deeper look at what you're doing and how you're feeling as a result of those actions, and then come up with your own summation of what you think is happening here.

Steph: The polarity is like the yin and the yang. I think that's just another example. And I love that ice cream versus running analogy, I think I might borrow that with some of my clients.

Tom: Yeah, sure, go for it. It could be the ice cream versus the green smoothie analogy.

Steph: Yeah, absolutely. Gosh, I can't wait to see The Portal. Tell me more about the timeline there and exactly how we can view your film.

Tom: Yeah. So, it is in a sort of a sequence of release phases that we're going through. The first one was where we self-distribute. We did that in Australia, New Zealand, and U.S.A., where we actually took it ourselves as a production team to the cinemas, and we put that in the cinemas. We didn't go through what's called a distribution company, like Lionsgate or Paramount. We actually self-distributed. And that was a really exciting and amazing experience to be doing that with Q&As and to be on the ground with the audiences and sharing that in a communal experience in a cinema. And so, then we went from self-distribution into what's called hosted screening. And we're in that phase still now, we're just coming to the end of that, where people can go to our website, [entertheportal.com](http://entertheportal.com), and say, "Hey, I want to put this film on in a cinema with my community."

And it might be in a small town, it might be in a large city, but if they've got enough people that they think that they can bring to a cinema, whether it's a community like a yoga centre or a meditation centre, or just friends and family or whatever, then they can put that on in the cinema and they get a percentage of the ticket sales, and we help support the sale of that. But it's really, we provide the cinema, we provide the movie, and they just bring the community to that experience. So, that's still happening now, where we've got screenings around the world. And people can either see if it's screening in their local community, buy a ticket off our website for that screening, or they can potentially host their own screening. And then the next

stage, which we're just about to go into as well simultaneously, is licensing the screen.

And that's where, rather than being in cinemas, now we move into yoga centres, meditation centres, libraries, prisons, corporations, schools, universities. And so, we're just bringing on a team of people to start to basically be telemarketers to sell as licenses around the world, where communities can still watch it in a communal experience. We're really trying to keep the film in the community experience as much as possible, because, I'll give you a little secret why, there is a meditation in the film, and it's really powerful when you have people sitting in this group experience in the middle of a movie and meditating in silence. It's really a beautiful thing to watch. And so, we're still in that communal experience through licensing them, anyone can buy a license now, they range in prices depending on the size of the organisation. And they can approach us through our website for that.

And then, after that, we'll go to digital. That's where people will be able to buy it, rent it, or gift it through our own platform, and potentially some other platforms. And then, finally, way, way, way, way, way down the track, we'll get to something like, we call it SVOD, which is subscription on demand, and that's something like Netflix, or, I think Hulu does subscription. Where, once it hits Netflix, they'll give you a very small sum of money, I hope they'll give us a large sum of money. But, once it hits Netflix, then, basically, it will be very rarely people will rent it or buy it or do anything with it outside of Netflix, because nearly everyone has Netflix. So, it'll pretty much be consumed there.

Steph: Oh, I can't wait for that day. That's going to be incredible for it to be truly everywhere in the world.

Tom: Yeah, we're excited, too. It's been hard and it's a very patient journey for us to hold back from that. Because, the first thing you want with your film is for the whole world to watch it straight away, but what that would do would deprive the communal group experience, and we really wanted to, at least, give it as much of that as possible, before it goes to people eating choc chip ice cream, checking their Instagram, or watching the film at the same time while they're patting their dog. That's what's going to happen pretty much it gets to Netflix.

Steph: Yeah, the group experience sounds incredible. So, I can certainly see why creating your own community and putting on a screening would be so, so amazing. And you also have a book that we can access to... sorry, access in Australia at least via Booktopia, and internationally via Book Depository, and then Kindles and audio books. That's also really exciting.

Tom: Yeah, the book's going really well. We're in 15 countries on bookshelves, which is quite phenomenal. It's great to still, it's been out since September last year and to still see it on shelves in bookstores. So, it's obviously, I mean, we get messages all the time because the books are very deep immersion into the stories, much deeper. We interview our stories for four hours, and in the film, we probably get about six minutes of those stories featured. That's where they're actually talking. So, there's three hours and 53 minutes worth of content that didn't make it into the film for each story. And so, the book's a way for us to capture those richer stories in more

depth, and it's, we get messages of people that have been really, their heart has been cracked open.

We had one woman in Taiwan just the other day send us a message that she was sitting in a park listening to it on Audible, and she was bawling her eyes out. And she just said, "This has moved us so much." And so, we love hearing those messages. The book has been really touching people, which is great to see. And the film as well.

Steph: It's incredible. You must get so many stories like that. And again, obviously, as part of your commitment just to reduce stress and chaos around the world. It's just a powerful way to reach almost everyone, for them to learn firsthand how such a commitment to meditation can transform their health.

Tom: Yeah, this was interesting seeing it unfold. And I guess for anyone that's listening, understanding the power of your mind and intention, and visualisation that seven years ago, this was an idea that I pulled out of the field of infinite possibility, pure potentiality. And over time, when you start to put those thoughts and intentions into action, and go about the manifestation of them, then, here we are now, seeing that all unfold and play out is really exciting and really rewarding. And we're still not quite where we had intended, but that's a part of the process that you have to have patience and trust, that it will get to the place that you always intended it to, and just keep moving along that timeline acknowledging that the point of cognition of the intention to the manifestation does require a timeline and patience.

Steph: Oh, doesn't it? And I was at a seminar last week and Elizabeth Gilbert was speaking and she shared with us that it took her 20 years to develop a daily meditation practice, and how much that has changed her life. And it really got me thinking, it got me thinking, "Do I want to wait 20 years to probably say that I've been doing it daily, when I truthfully, deep down, understand and really appreciate the benefits?" So, hopefully, with the book, and the film, and the courses that you've got, we can really start to, I guess, fast track some of that with the guidance that we need, to make it more of a natural behaviour, rather than it being quite forceful.

Because, I don't want to wait 20 years to be experiencing the powerful benefits of a daily practice, I think we can do it, we can start now and we can certainly get some guidance to help us if we do need that support.

Tom: Yeah, I wonder what techniques she was doing, she needs to have a chat with me about that.

Steph: With you, Tom Cronin!

Tom: Yeah, it certainly, when I teach workshops, we see people start to transcend and experience a very profound state of deepness in that silence, even just within the first weekend of the workshop. So, there are different techniques, and some are easier than others, and some can take a really, really long time to master it. So, I think, don't be discouraged by that, it certainly, within days, you can start to establish an experience that's quite unique and significant and transformational.

Steph: Yeah, absolutely, and finding the one that's right for you.

Tom: Yeah.

Steph: You sound like you've got a lot on your plate, which is incredible, because I just know you're so passionate on getting this message so far and wide, but what's next for Tom Cronin?

Tom: Oh, gosh, it's a great question. I keep pondering that myself. I do have a vision of things that I want to see play out, and I'm torn between a global movement that is a significant shift on the planet, and then, also, just wanting to sit on the porch of a farm that I'll buy up north in Byron Bay and go surfing a lot more.

Steph: I know.

Tom: So, I fluctuate backwards and forwards between those two things, but I'm doing a lot more coaching, which is the sweet spot of what I love, and really taking people through an intimate personal transformation. And that's something that I've not been able to put a lot of time and attention on over the last few years with the film. So, doing a lot more of that. Obviously, seeing the film and the book and all of that come out into the world, is also a big piece of my attention. So, navigating between those two things. Retreats is really a powerful journey that I just love taking people through. So we've got Bali coming up in May, Byron Bay in November, we've got Greece next year as well. And we've got a really big event coming up in August, which is a three-day event in Noosa, and that's going to be more Conferency style for really learning and mastering the power of the mind and opening the hearts of our audience.

That's going to be an exciting event called Alchemy, which we'll be talking more about soon.

Steph: Oh, wonderful. So much to come. But I feel your pain between wanting to just escape and just put all the strategies that you've learned along the way into practice and just be in nature, as well as just finding that polarity between that, and then working to contribute and help others and continuing to help others as much as you do.

Tom: Yeah, it's a conundrum that I think a lot of us in this space are challenged by.

Steph: Yeah, I'm with you there.

Tom: The human-ness of it all.

Steph: Yeah, exactly. But also good that you've acknowledged that coaching is what makes you happy. Because I think, for a lot of us, we tend to move away from that one on one support, and then, ironically, we get caught up in the business, and we don't end up doing what really fills up our cup, so, I really respect that you've had time to acknowledge what makes you happy and it sounds like you've made some changes there to readjust that balance.

Tom: Yeah, I look at everyone that was advising me, business advisors and coaches, it's like, scale, scale, scale. I'm like, "This is what I like doing." And I really started to listen in a lot more deeply in January 2020 when I was doing my visioning for the

year and times ahead, and for a long time, everything that I've been doing has been scale, scale, scale, which is films, my programs and apps. And it was keeping me out of the sweet spot of what I love, and so, I made a commitment to really make a focus of things that make my heart sing this year, and that's making a phenomenal shift.

So, I'd highly recommend to really tune in to that for people and try to sift through a lot of the noise. Because, if it's not making your heart sing, then you're not going to be in your sweet spot and you're not going to attract abundance anyway.

Steph: Yeah, absolutely. That's great advice. You mentioned the website, [entertheportal.com.au](http://entertheportal.com.au), where else can our listeners learn more and certainly follow what you're up to online?

Tom: Yeah, it's [entertheportal.com](http://entertheportal.com), and then it's just [tomcronin.com](http://tomcronin.com), they can find everything at those two. And obviously, Instagram is Tom Cronin, and Facebook. So, more than happy to hear from people, feel free to reach out. I'd love to hear people's stories and journeys and questions. So, being available is a big part of what I do.

Steph: Yeah. So wonderful. I've loved talking to you today and I'm just really looking forward, and I think I'm going to start with the book, I'll get my hands on a copy of *The Portal*, and then dive into the film. So, thank you for your inspiration. And I'm sure our listeners are keen to check out more as well today.

Tom: Pleasure. It's been great to be on. Thanks so much for inviting me along.